

# **POLISH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**Journal of the Polish Association for the Study of English  
(PASE)**

**No. 7.2**

**Volume Editors  
Prof. Krzysztof Fordoński  
Dr Anna Kwiatkowska**

**Polish Association for the Study of English**

**ISSN 2545-0131 (print)  
ISSN 2543-5981 (online)**

**Warsaw 2021**

### **Publisher:**

Polish Association for the Study of English  
ul. Hoża 69, 00-681 Warszawa  
ISSN 2545-0131 (print)  
ISSN 2543-5981 (online)

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The present publication received generous financial support from  
the Institute of Specialist and Intercultural Communication (University of Warsaw).

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## From the Editors

We would like to welcome you to the second issue of the *Polish Journal of English Studies* in 2021. The current volume was originally inspired by the conference *E. M. Forster – Shaping the Space of Culture*, which took place on June 7, 2021, celebrating the 51st anniversary of the death of the writer. However, we have decided to transcend the limits of conference proceedings and opened the volume to all Forsterian scholars. After several months of work we are able to present to you a greatly varied selection of ten papers, five book reviews, a conference report, and a bibliography of critical works dedicated to Forster.

We begin with two papers whose authors, Athanasios Dimakis and Dominika Kotuła, approach the works of Forster and the spaces presented there from the point of view of queer and gender studies. Claire Braunstein Barnes and Richard Bruce Parkinson continue with the queer approach but their focal point is the classical tradition. Jason Finch and Hager Ben Driss both concentrated on mobility as their approach to Forster's works. Afrinul Haque Khan chose to study Forster's humanism as key element in shaping the culture of tolerance while Elif Derya Şenduran offered an enlightening reading of Forster's most famous short story. The section closes with two papers dedicated to adaptations of Forster; Claire Monk paints a broad picture of Forsterian adaptations and Niklas Cyril Fischer concentrates on one of the most recent novels inspired by Forster, Lauren Oyler's *Fake Accounts*. All these ten papers form a perfect testimony of the variety and quality of Forsterian studies over fifty years after the writer's death.

The present issue closes our work for 2021 but we are already well advanced in the preparation of the first 2022 issue and our plans go even further. Also in 2022 you can expect a special issue commemorating the centenary of the publication of *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, and *Jacob's Room*, three major works of English Modern literature. For 2023, we plan an issue dedicated to reading old age, the ageing body, and memory. The calls for papers for these issues are included in the present volume.

The year 2021, another one so difficult for most of us in so many respects, has proven surprisingly fortunate for our journal. We have been included in two full-text online databases Directory of Open Access Journals DOAJ and ProQuest One Literature – where you can now find all the published papers –

and in ERIH Plus. We all hope that these developments will help us make our journal even more attractive and accessible both for readers and for authors. We are looking forward to your submissions to the 2022 issues.

Krzysztof Fordoński

Anna Kwiatkowska

## “The Hotel Case” Queering the Hotel in E. M. Forster’s “Arthur Snatchfold”

Athanasios Dimakis

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**Abstract:** E. M. Forster’s hotel literature has acquired increasing momentum within contemporary critical discourses on hotels in modernist mobilities, spatio-temporality, and geographies (Thacker 2003, Short 2019). In Forster’s critically neglected and underrepresented short story “Arthur Snatchfold” (1928; published posthumously in 1972), the hotel and its surroundings come to resemble a space of queer possibility that functions as a homoerotically-charged Foucauldian counter-site. With the story progressively acquiring the semblance of a “hotel case” (1987, 108) through the assumption of an inferred, imagined, but never really lived, queer life within the hotel premises, all normative ways of codifying sexual identity in “Arthur Snatchfold” are challenged. To exist meaningfully and move ahead with the exploration of their sexualities, the story’s sexual offenders have to resort to the green belt surrounding what the conventional morality perceives as “that deplorable hotel” (1987, 106). It is the hotel as a peculiar configuration that opens a range of possibilities for transgressive behaviours. This is also suggested in the failed attempts at policing the hotel premises. The hotel erotica in “Arthur Snatchfold” seems, by the same token, to be born out of the tension arising from the modernist urge to spatialize through the heterotopic transport of the protagonists from monochromatic domesticity towards the multihued hotel. In the immediate vicinity of the hotel and, in an illusory sort of way, within the plasticity of the hotel, the protagonists finally find refuge.

**Keywords:** literary hotels, Queer Studies, Modernism, heterotopia, short stories

Edward Morgan Forster’s hotel literature has acquired increasing momentum and added significance within contemporary critical discourses on the importance of hotels in studies of modernist mobilities, spatio-temporality, and geographies. This essay explores the transgressive potential of the hotel that comes to resemble a Foucauldian counter-site in Forster’s critically neglected

and underrepresented short story “Arthur Snatchfold” (1928; published posthumously in 1972). A straightforward account of the netting of a sensual young milkman by a respectable upper-class father and husband visiting from London, the story underlines the necessity of a physical (hotel) space for queer desire to flourish. Forster posits the hotel and its surroundings as the ultimate space of sexual possibility and erotic fulfilment in a story marked for its bold homoeroticism. I will explore the processes through which a, seemingly innocent, architectural figuration helps Forster queer British modernism. With the story progressively acquiring the semblance of a “hotel case” (1987, 108) through the assumption of an inferred, hypothesised, imagined but never really lived, queer life within the hotel premises, all normative ways of codifying sexual identity and affections in “Arthur Snatchfold” are challenged.

Having said that, the essay also directs attention to the hotel as a sexualized, heterotopic space that poses challenges to the fragile domestic ideal and its reassuring normalcy. I maintain that to exist meaningfully and move ahead with the exploration of their sexualities, sexual offenders have to resort to the green belt surrounding what the conventional morality perceives as “that deplorable hotel” exerting “such a bad influence” (1987, 106). It is the hotel as a peculiar configuration that opens a range of possibilities for transgressive behaviours in the story. In addition to that, the “‘extraordinary case’ connected with it” (1987, 107) in “Arthur Snatchfold,” follows a reverse, unconventional trajectory that interestingly relocates gayness from the conveniently lax urban space of the metropolis towards a country hotel and its surroundings that come to resemble a queer Arcadia.

In the scant criticism on “Arthur Snatchfold” the overarching theme seems to be the exploration of social constructionism through the hallmarks of class and gender. The story, indeed, seems to affirm an immutable class difference. The representative of the elite remains impervious and unpunished, whereas the lower-class individual is ruthlessly scapegoated. The modernist uses of space and the centrality of the hotel in the queer superstructure of the narrative have not inspired any critical attention so far. Christopher Lane explores the material and class dynamics at play in a story known for its pessimistic finale. Belonging to the “series of fantasies that Forster refused to publish in his lifetime,” he maintains that it ends “in possible treachery and ethical compromise,” culminating in the ill fate of the socially inferior, lower-middle class lover (Lane 1997, 167). Richard Conway’s blasé eroticization of the young man and the blatant disequilibrium of power made manifest in Arthur Snatchfold’s



arrest and conviction, indeed, seem to suggest that the story presents a more “realistic conclusion to Maurice’s sexual idealism” (1997, 178). Jeffrey Meyers appears to endorse what the narrator of the story seemingly posits as a superficial, shallow affair that cannot possibly offer much insight given the fact that it largely remains a hurried liaison (1977, 90–113). Bart Eeckhout primarily underscores the fallacies of the story in his exploration of non-normative sexualities in Anglophone literary modernism, suggesting that it “presents a case of problematical sociality” through the example of the single sexual encounter between Conway and Snatchfold and the subsequent, unilateral punitive actions against the latter (2015, 125):

A kind of enduring sociality *is* thus created between Conway and Snatchfold, but it is a retroactive, politically sterile, publicly invisible, and paradoxical one for which the less powerful partner has been severely punished. And it is further complicated by the fact that Forster wrote this sexual fantasy for private delectation only. ... [H]e did not feel he could publish such a story of surreptitious same-sex bonding during his lifetime. (2015, 125)

The story also stands out in that it reshapes and redirects the conventional designation of (stereotypically Mediterranean) foreign locations as Forsterian “homosexual havens” (Fordoński 2010, 90). Having initiated a “back to England” moment of return, Forster creates “a homosexual haven of his own making” within the confines of Britain (Fordoński 2010, 90). Stephen da Silva reads “Arthur Snatchfold” as belonging to the set of stories that “explicitly thematize ‘immature’ homosexuality” (1998, 245) while also claiming that they, in fact, in spite of their inherently flawed nature, have great “potential to do anti-homophobic work” (1998, 266). In his introduction, Oliver Stallybrass humorously maintains that “Arthur Snatchfold” belongs to the sequence of Forster’s “serious” (1987, xv) homosexual stories that lack frivolity in that “the horrors of a vapid, pointless, sham-rural weekend in uncongenial company” are evoked to an extent enough “to drive anyone to a roll in the bracken with the milkman” (1987, xvi). I maintain that the modernist hotel poetics and aesthetics help better articulate these horrors, especially if we are to explore the laden semiotics of hotel life in British and Continental modernity as opposed to the pervasive ethos of post-Victorian, heteronormative domesticity.

More specifically, a single sexual encounter between the considerably older, urban businessman, Sir Richard Conway, and the youthful country milkman, Arthur Snatchfold, results in the latter's arrest and conviction for gross indecency; a fate Conway narrowly escapes. Having enjoyed the pastoral vision of the milkman bringing milk to his countryside hosts, Richard keenly observes the charming young man. Richard's contemplation of the statuesque embodiment of the legacy of classical homoeroticism amidst the rich flora of the Donaldsons' estate and garden constitutes one of Forster's most homoerotically charged passages. Its sexual force amounts to tension. Queer desire transforms what Forster depicts as a banal, grey, and uneventful, provincial weekend where "what was wanted was colour" (1987, 97) into a queer erotica of unprecedented narrative and sensorial stimulation and force:

Of course what was wanted was colour. Delphinium, salvia, red-hot-poker, zinnias, tobacco-plant, anything. Leaning out of the baronial casement, Conway considered this ... The visit, like the view, threatened monotony. Dinner had been dull. His own spruce gray head, gleaming in the mirrors, really seemed the brightest object about. (1987, 97)

The diametrically opposed colourful rendering of Richard's desire for the magnetic, polychromatic hues and tints of the milkman, who suddenly emerges within the monochromatic banality of a dismal household that cannot possibly accommodate queerness, only accentuates the inherent irony. Richard's warm, fervent anticipation of the pleasures of a multicoloured queer future, while striving to identify with a fuller sense of being, is aptly rendered in distinctly life-affirming, prismatic, luminous terms:

He looked at the dull, costly garden. It improved. A man had come into it from the back of the yew hedge. He had on a canary-coloured shirt, and the effect was exactly right. The whole scene blazed ... his shirt golden on the grass beside him. Ruddy brown to the waist he would show now. (1987, 98)

It is Richard's erotic frenzy for Arthur that transforms the story into a narrative of queer desire. The neglected centrality of the hotel in "Arthur Snatchfold"

concerns the fact that, in a typically Forsterian fashion, it is mostly in emancipatory hotel rooms and lobbies that stories will be written, desire will inevitably thrive, and escape from the constraints of the heteronormative matrix will take place. A radical point of differentiation in Forster's short story concerns the fact that action primarily takes place in the circumference of the hotel rather than its premises. When the policeman sees Arthur and Conway having sex in the green belt surrounding the hotel, Conway escapes and the ensuing scandal is avoided. Arthur is eventually betrayed by his conspicuous yellow shirt. Thus, while the younger lover becomes a scapegoat being apprehended for "[i]ndecency between males" (1987, 107), he self-sacrificially conceals the senior's identity and spares him from policing and punitive measures having transposed him from the lush gardens to the demonized hotel itself, a space that evades policing and the normalizing potential of homophobic laws (110).

As such, this marginalized, subversive narrative of an imagined but not lived hotel space functioning heterotopically ephemerally shatters the provincial homophobic inertia and domestic normativity. I maintain that the hotel and its vicinity in "Arthur Snatchfold" function as Foucauldian heterotopias. The critically neglected existence of the pregnant heterotopic schema employed in Forster's story violently disrupts the established order. The heterotopia explored is also underscored by the very location of the British hotel, which is located elsewhere, far from the metropolitan heart of London.

In Michel Foucault's "Of Other Spaces," morally challenging or controversial acts that unsettle the puritan ethos are, often, situated in hotels. The paradigm of the ritualistic deflowering in honeymoon hotels for example, serves to underscore their function as counter-sites or "crisis heterotopias" (1986, 24-25):

[T]he first manifestations of sexual virility were in fact supposed to take place "elsewhere" than at home. For girls, there was, until the middle of the twentieth century, a tradition called the "honeymoon trip" which was an ancestral theme. The young woman's deflowering could take place "nowhere" and, at the moment of its occurrence the train or honeymoon hotel was indeed the place of this nowhere, this heterotopia without geographical markers" (1986, 24-25).

Having been posited as "the place of this nowhere," one of the existing "heterotopias of crisis" (Foucault 1986, 25), the example of the honeymoon

hotel is followed by that of the intensely sexualized American motel and the additional challenges that it poses to the reassuring normalcy of the fragile domestic ideal:

This type of heterotopia ... could perhaps be found in the famous American motel rooms where a man goes with his car and his mistress and where illicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden, kept isolated without however being allowed out in the open. (1986, 26–27)

Seeming to oscillate between the Foucauldian reading of heterotopias of crisis, whereby the first layer of rupture with puritan ethos occurs, and heterotopias of deviation, whereby more radical, non-normative approaches are accommodated, queer hotels better articulate this tension. While Foucault does not include queer hotels in his scant list, which, however, includes rest homes, as well as psychiatric hospitals, retirement homes, and prisons, it is his assertion that the heterotopias of deviation are those in which “individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (1986, 25). The vain attempts at policing the hotel in “Arthur Snatchfold” and the assumption that the queer sex offenders must be contained within the hotel showcases the identification of the hotel as a counter-site of crisis and/or deviation, a place of subversion and otherness, a place that accommodates the marginal and poses moral challenges. In the translation of Foucault’s “Of Other Spaces” deviation and deviance seem to be used interchangeably. With “heterotopias of deviation” being defined as places in which “individuals whose behavior is deviant” are placed (1986, 25), the sociologically charged meaning of deviance, in its implied violation of cultural or moral norms, is loosely correlated with the less radical departure from conventions that deviation seems to suggest.

Thus, the quest for this impossible place of deviation/deviance within the stereotypically shallow parochial setting starts very early on during Richard’s contemplation of the surroundings of the Donaldsons’ residence in the opening sequence: “A man had come into it from the back of the yew hedge.... *That* was what the place wanted – not a flower bed, but a man, who advanced with a confident tread” (1987, 98). Richard’s initial, topographic deviation from the confines of the domestic trajectory of the Donaldsons’ estate and his urge to get near the hotel incur sexual deviance. Being a widowed father of two daughters,

Richard falsely assumes that “[p]leasure’s been left out of our packet” (1987, 98). The narrator’s *faux*, lighthearted take on Richard’s cheeky queer agenda later becomes graver. It soon becomes a precarious, libidinal, impudent flirtation, whereby “the smaller pleasures of life” must be approached (1987, 103). It takes two-and-a-half pages to finally witness Richard’s full-fledged sexual crisis as per the omniscient narrator’s emphatic assertion:

He believed in pleasure; he had a free mind and an active body, and he knew that pleasure cannot be won without courage and coolness.... The female sex was all very well and he was addicted to it, but permitted an occasional deviation. (1987, 101)

This is exactly the point where Forster’s short story seems to function proleptically. It seems to anticipate later theoretical formulations in clearly suggesting that spatial deviations – like Richard’s clandestine exit from the domestic realm of the Donaldsons’ towards the emancipatory circumference of the hotel – can also induce moral ruptures in social structures, leading to full-blown deviance. It is the hotel that enables Richard’s deviation discursively and narratively. This becomes evident in Arthur’s assertion that Richard must, by definition, be a hotel resident for their flirtation to make any sense at all:

“Stopping back in the ‘otel, I suppose?”

“No. Donaldson’s. You saw me there yesterday.”

“Oh, Donaldson’s, that’s it. You was the old granfa’ at the upstairs window.”

“Old granfa’ indeed. . . . I’ll granfa’ you...” (1987, 102)

The fact that Arthur happens to be a milkman hypersexualises the scene, accentuating the intensity of its blatant homoerotica. In the classical world so dear to Forster, milk was also identified with the masculine element. It is often associated with the consistency and qualities of semen. Milk is defined by Aristotle as a sensual element fundamentally related to sexual procreation. In *History of Animals*, Aristotle correlates milk with sperm (1984, 826). Given the fact that milk also happens to be an organic fluid associated with coitus and reproduction, Forster most certainly contemplates its sexual politics here while also, perhaps, evoking the legacy of Greek Love. The ensuing libido-ridden

sex scene is daring and life-affirming. In his recollection of Arthur's "thrusting thrashing strength," Richard finds that "there was plenty to praise" (1987, 103). Feeling Arthur's "heavy body on him," Richard appears to be "genuinely admiring and gratified" (1987, 104). Pleasure is finally attained: "Nice boy, nice shirt, nice everything" (1987, 103).

Richard and Arthur's love making within the heterotopic buffer zone of the neutral green belt surrounding the hotel is also marked for its heterochronic dimensions: "[P]resently the sensation for which he had planned so cleverly was over. It was part of the past. It had fallen like a flower upon similar flowers.... It was over there too, part of a different past" (1987, 103). The originally hinted homoerotic fulfilment is finally achieved when the protagonists' conventional space and time become radically disrupted and they both surrender to a heterotopic and heterochronic remaking of their conventional *topos* and *chronos*. The dense chronotopic quality of the passage seems to evoke a distant, classical perhaps, past where (and when) homosexuality was naturalised and accepted. This is also implicated in Foucault's assertion that a strange heterochrony seems to be woven in any heterotopia—coming to resemble a "space ... which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs" (Foucault 1986, 23). Following the short heterotopic and heterochronic interlude that accommodates their mutual desire, Arthur's alarm violently transports them to the limitations of present place (and time): "We could get seven years for this, couldn't we?" (1987, 104). However, as it turns out, Arthur's prison time will only amount to a total of six months. This exaggeration is interesting in that it makes the existing climate of fear and panic more palpable. In 1927, homosexuals were stigmatized and, at times, completely ruined due to the criminalisation of sex between men across Britain. Written three decades prior to the report of the Wolfenden Committee decriminalizing private homosexual activity between consenting adults over the age of 21 (Waites 2005, 88), "Arthur Snatchfold" evokes the atmosphere of homophobic blackmail and punitive laws.

The connection between queer desire and hotel aesthetics and politics is made most explicit in the second part of "Arthur Snatchfold," which entirely shifts the focus of attention to the hotel. Since domesticity cannot accommodate queer desire, it is the hotel that functions as the supreme localiser of the liberal mores of modernity in the parochial milieu. Some weeks after Richard and Arthur's sexual encounter, Richard and Trevor Donaldson sit opposite each other at a glossy London club. Following the exchange of pleasantries and Trevor's dialectic mon-

ologue – a rant on the lethargic countryside as a place of ennui – Richard comes to term with the repercussions of his frivolity set against the backdrop of the hotel:

"Of course our village is particularly unfortunate, owing to that deplorable hotel. It has such a bad influence. We had an extraordinary case before us on the Bench recently, connected with it."

"That hotel did look too flash – it would attract the wrong crowd."  
(1987, 106–107)

It comes as little surprise that Richard also surrenders to the discourses comfortably demonizing the hotel as a hangout for "the wrong crowd," in other words, the root of all social evil (1987, 107). Designated as the ultimate corruptor in Trevor's naïve moralistic sermons on propriety and social order, the hotel is purported to have the capacity to compromise the integrity of the assumingly immaculate locals, who are portrayed in distinctly Wilderian terms in Trevor's puritan pastoral. Trying to negotiate the distance between convention and non-conformity, sexual orthodoxy and homosexuality, as well as reality and fantasy in this case, Richard insists on wanting to clarify Trevor's "reference to that 'extraordinary case' connected with the local hotel" (1987, 107). Perfectly aware of the fact that hotel spaces offer a, hitherto untried, gender freedom and allow for the flourishing of sexual difference through the array of disruptive identities that they shelter, Trevor finally erupts:

"I knew such things existed, of course, but I assumed in my innocence they were confined to Piccadilly. However, it has all been traced back to the hotel, the proprietress has had a thorough fright, and I don't think there will be any trouble in the future. Indecency between males."

"Oh, good Lord!" said Sir Richard coolly. "Black or white?"

"White, please, it's an awful nuisance..." (1987, 107)

The racist, homophobic admonitions and the functioning of power through panoptic practices and a condition of permanent visibility disclose a consistent disciplinary programme that the lax hotel shelter threatens. Having finally realised the degree of his own susceptibility to Trevor's inadvertent coercion and homophobic blackmail by means of patronising and catechism, Richard

seemingly endorses the scathing remarks in the safety of his bourgeois cockney club. The pre-Wolfenden Britain and the consistent criminalisation of homosexuality are beautifully evoked in the passage whereby the homosexual intercourse that Richard and Arthur enjoy is comfortably misidentified as a “hotel case” (1987, 108):

“How did the hotel case end?” he asked.

“We committed him for trial.”

“Oh! As bad as that?”

“Well, we thought so. Actually a gang of about half a dozen were involved, but we only caught one of them. His mother, if you please, is president of the Women’s Institute, and hasn’t had the decency to resign! ... This man made an awfully bad impression on the Bench and we didn’t feel that six months, which is the maximum we are allowed to impose, was adequate to the offence.” (1987, 108–109)

When Trevor identifies the crime scene as “the little wood ... which stretches up to the hotel,” Richard begins to come to terms with the sad reality of Arthur’s apprehension (1987, 109). Upon hearing that the convicted homosexual was ironically “betrayed by the shirt he was so proud of” he becomes more alarmed finally managing to identify the colourful signifier of Arthur’s queerness (1987, 109). Trevor’s references to the watchful “local bobby,” a “policeman who keeps his eyes open,” and the officer’s repulsive visual acuity while “keeping a watch” on the “wearer” of the flamboyant, flashy shirt, showcase the relentless literal and metaphorical surveillance over queer communities (1987, 108–109). The passage simultaneously combines voyeurism, panopticism, and homophobic blackmail. It points to the ethically challenging issues of surveillance and the moral extensions of a surveillant’s power that have a distinctly Foucauldian resonance. The visual problematics explored in this passage are further sustained through references to the policeman being “genuinely startled” or “scarcely” able to “believe his eyes,” enthralled as he is by the spectacle he beholds (1987, 109).

Richard soon realises his own susceptibility to homophobic blackmail as he perfectly fits the description of the “old man in pyjamas and a mackintosh” who escapes arrest having taken advantage of the policeman’s “stupid error of judgement” (1987, 109). On the surreal grounds of having “abundant evidence



of a medical character,” Arthur is apprehended while Richard escapes (1987, 109). The ensuing scene transports all action within the adjacent hotel itself:

[O]ur policeman then went on to the hotel, but it was far too late by that time, some of the guests were breakfasting, others had left, he couldn’t go round cross-questioning everyone, and no one corresponded to the description of the person whom he saw being hauled up out of the fern. (1987, 110)

Unsettling the private-public binary, the hotel distracts the policeman and the police cannot restore order within the hotel grounds. Rather, the hotel is demonised for the alleged complicity of its residents in the violation of accepted moral standards. Despite having raided the hotel, the police officer is farcically disempowered by the polyvalence and indefinability of the space he accesses. Anti-gay legislation is challenged in the open-minded hotel lobby that showcases the (relocated) novel, cosmopolitan ethos of the lax metropolis. Caroline Field Levander and Matthew Pratt Guterl point to the potential of hotels for all sorts of transgressions by virtue of being dynamic, liminal spaces where anything can literally happen:

The hotel room is thus a production site – one of many – for the modern sexual self. And hotels work, generally, to create and confirm contemporary notions of sex and sexuality, and to make possible, at the same time, a planned, if carefully delimited, escape from the normal rules, especially, but not only, for men. There are, then, no “misdeeds” in a hotel room; no one really behaves badly there, and this tends to be the case because of the fluidity and seeming infinite flexibility that ... is literally built into the hotel’s architectural and social logic. (2015, 49)

Criticism on hotel literature also directs attention to the ambivalent intersection of surveillance or disciplinary control with the emancipatory aura of modernist hotels as one example of the aporetic discourses that modernist hotels generate. In discussing the policing of Oscar Wilde’s hotel life, Barbara Black maintains that this could be roughly summarised as “a journey from hotel to prison back to hotel again” (2019, 160). The unfortunate sequence is, of course,

immortalised in John Betjeman's 1937 poem "The Arrest of Oscar Wilde at the Cadogan Hotel," which engages with the most notorious attempt at policing the interior areas of the (queer) hotel on account of its transgressive potential (1971, 18–19). Wilde was apprehended by police in hotel room 118 on April 6, 1895, while contemplating fleeing to continental Europe. A decade earlier, Joseph Roth's 1928 feuilleton "The All-Powerful Police" recounts the processes through which a hotel resident can notice the interwar susceptibility of the hotel premises to fascist imperatives that were gaining ground in Italy and continental Europe in general. Roth finds the attempts at policing by hotel proprietors and staff regrettable. The passport rituals at hotel receptions whereby visitors are granted entry to the inaccessible interior curtail freedom of movement and serve to enforce a totalitarian police state (2015, 81). Roth laments the fact that his Rome hotel porter has seemingly undergone a paradoxical transformation demanding the surrender of passports and threatening to summon the police (2015, 81–82).

Also written in 1928, Forster's "Arthur Snatchfold" seems to offer a contrasting, differential point of view. The British hotel, unlike its continental counterparts, is less susceptible to the repercussions of the interwar tension and the rise of fascist ideologies. The inchoate, rudimentary attempts at policing homosexuality in a hotel in "Arthur Snatchfold" are rendered completely futile. The policeman's overall reluctance points to this. By reinforcing the suspicion of police officers that the British hotel must be necessarily connected with the indecent act of queer sex, Arthur conceals Richard's identity. Despite having been assured that "he would be let off" if he helped the locals "make the major arrest" (1987, 111), the village boy acts self-sacrificially and goes to Assizes alone, sparing Richard. His haphazard police interrogation again demonises the hotel and Arthur Snatchfold's cries appear to further fuel the widespread suspicion and prejudice surrounding the common identification of hotels with the sheltering of homosexuality and a rich repertoire of morally challenging acts:

"But all he could say was what we knew already – that it was someone from the hotel."

"Oh, he said that, did he?" From the hotel."

"Said it again and again. Scarcely said anything else, indeed almost went into a sort of fit. There he stood with his head thrown back and his eyes shut, barking at us, 'Th'otel. Keep to th'otel. I tell you he come from th'otel.'" (1987, 111)

Thus, the hotel challenges the frequent glorification of the proper rituals of hospitality through its ambivalent function as an anteroom, the antechamber for fully-fledged deviance, a space where sexual unorthodoxy can be first achieved – paradoxically in an exclusively imaginary sort of way in this specific story – within the emancipatory hotel place. It is in this elsewhere and within or around the *laissez-faire* aura of a hotel that the criminal offence and moral crime of gross indecency committed should ideally take place for its perpetrators to escape unscathed.

Forster’s coming-of-age piece of queer fiction *Maurice* (published posthumously in 1971), also underscores the necessity of a physical hotel space for queer homoeroticism to flourish. Having first lost themselves within “a strange hotel,” the book’s closeted homosexual lovers manage to finally escape (2005, 203). It is in the Bloomsbury hotel scene<sup>1</sup> that Maurice and Alec are finally divested of their closeted public selves and reconcile with their private queer desire. In his “Textual Notes,” Philip Gardner dates Forster’s writing of the hotel chapter in *Maurice* to January 1952, based on Forster’s correspondence with Christopher Isherwood and Forster’s expressed ambivalence about it (see Forster 1999, 294). Functioning as a counter-site, this liminal space accommodates the protagonists’ transgression and is juxtaposed with the poisonous intersection of the ideal of domesticity with blatant homophobia. The puritan ethos inhabiting the “stuffy little boxes” of the desolate suburbia attests to this (2005, 212). Wayne Koestenbaum’s discussion of the role of the hotel as homosexual shelter seems to perfectly describe Forster’s unnamed Bloomsbury “casual refuge” in *Maurice* (2005, 203), as well as Oscar Wilde’s “notorious” sexual life in various hotels: “A hotel summons a psychic state – a mood of apartness-as-refuge” (Koestenbaum 2007, 81). To this end, in his discussion of hotel homosexuality, Koestenbaum suggests that queer hotels “extend welcome to those ..., who haunt margins” (2007, 97).

Indeed, in this “strange” hotel, which is part of the malleable, adaptable heart of London, Forster’s protagonists become anonymous hotel guests. Likewise, the hotel becomes an urban buffer zone which accommodates the new-fangled emotions of their illicit love and halts their incessant mobility. In its daring and subversive treatment of the hotel, Forster’s work seems to foreshadow the prevalence of queer or gay-friendly hotels in contemporary urban cultures. Blissfully

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1 I would like to thank Prof. Claire Monk for her rich insights on the dating of the hotel chapter from *Maurice*.

immersed in light, they are simultaneously sheltered from the rain and vagaries of the weather and, most importantly, from conventional domesticity and reproductive, generational family time as they resort to the heterotopic universe of the hotel; the par excellence space of modernist mobility. The trance-like quality of the passage attests to the function of hotels as queer shelters:

Light drifted in upon them from the outside world where it was still raining. A strange hotel, a casual refuge protected them from their enemies a little longer.... This was 'oliday, London with Maurice, all troubles over, and he wanted to drowse and waste time, and tease and make love." (2005, 203)

In *Moving through Modernity*, Andrew Thacker brings forth the peculiar spatial dimensions of modernist literature and its incessant mobilities across fluid, ephemeral places and spaces (2003, 1–12). The respective lived and imagined hotel erotica in *Maurice* and "Arthur Snatchfold" seem, by the same token, to be born out of the tension arising from the modernist urge to spatialise. The "gendered experience of particular spaces" observed by Thacker in his discussion of Jean Rhys also seems to apply here (2003, 204). Similarly, Sir Richard Conway's literal and metaphorical heterotopic transport from the propriety and stale domesticity of his cockney suburbia and from the grey, monochromatic household of the Donaldsons' to the hedonistic, multihued vicinity of the liberating hotel grounds and, in an illusory sort of way, within the hotel space itself suggests that he can only meaningfully exist heterotopically. Being a perennially out-of-place queer man, he feels perfectly at home within counter-sites that take him away from the constraints of the legacy of Victorian domesticity such as the green belt surrounding the hotel and the hotel itself. Away from the hotel Richard feels homeless, grey, and spectral. Right next to the hotel he becomes youthful and colourful again. The inherent irony in Richard's assertion then begins to make sense: "That hotel did look too flash" (1987, 107). The flamboyant glimmer of the "flash" hotel ironically attracts "the wrong crowd" (1987, 107). The ambivalent entwinement of the material, the physical with the abstract or metaphorical suggests that the flashiness of the hotel functions as a sensory invitation that points to the existence of a demarcated zone for homosexual activity.

In the immediate vicinity of the hotel and, in an illusory sort of way, within the hotel, Richard and Arthur are ready for the final transgression, their com-

plete severance from the sexless, uneventful life that the Donaldsons and their provincial domesticity embody. Subverting Trevor’s naïve, moronic conceit in believing that queer activities and identities “were confined to Piccadilly,” the provincial hotel modernizes the Arcadia and its false claims to “innocence” (1987, 107). Next to or inside the counter-site, the “other space” that they aspire to inhabit, all etiquette and decorum are forever challenged.

The provincial British hotel described here ignites queer desire and its nature is, by definition, more dynamic and disruptive than the one suggested in Foucault’s discussion of the deflowering of honeymooners. While the heterotopic potential of literary hotels has been traced before (Mattern 2018), this has not been the case with “Arthur Snatchfold.” The hotel sequence becomes the climactic point in the story’s arrangement of “other” spaces of modernist mobility also marked for their heterotopic potential. These spaces include the train that takes Richard all the way from the metropolitan heart of London to Trevor Donaldson’s garden of temptation and back, as well as the cars that transport the entourage of respectable “business allies” to the nearby golf course to indulge in sports and discuss their “common interest in aluminium” (1987, 97), a blatantly masculine element and sure material extension of their old, complacent, heterosexual virility. In his book chapter “Through Modernity: Forster’s Flux” (2003, 46–79), Thacker affiliates the heterotopic mode with Forster’s oeuvre when resorting to the imagery of the motorcar in *Howards End* (1910): “Perhaps the motorcar in the novel is another heterotopia: a real site but one which will not stay put, a ‘placeless place’ that constantly unsettles an acceptable spatial ordering of modernity” (2003, 29).

While facilitating his peregrinations, the vehicles and machinery of modernity do not amount to much in Richard’s case. His homosexual fulfillment is, for the most part, hotel-sponsored. This is also suggested in the modernist phantasmagoria evoked in Richard’s trance-like, chimerical thoughts in a passage where, starting with the hotel, all the insignia of modernism parade. Hotels, cars, cinemas, the framework of automobile modernity, the signifiers of incessant mobility, and the promise of elsewhere, accommodate his sense of being a, forever out of place, bisexual or homosexual man daydreaming in colour or technicolour:

He would have liked to meet the vision again, and spend the whole of Sunday with it, giving it a slap-up lunch at the hotel, hiring a car, which they would drive alternately, treating it to the pictures

in the neighbouring town, and returning with it, after one drink too much, through dusky lanes. (1987, 99)

Having been demonized as a place where “the ‘mores’ ... tend to break down” (Hayner 1928, 784), the “deplorable hotel” (Forster 1987, 106) at the heart of the story functions like a corrosive agent violating moral boundaries. Through its daring heights and subversive appeal, Forster’s hotel scene seems to foreshadow the importance of queer hotels in postmodernity, for the heroes seem to resort to hotels where anything can happen given the absence of any significant social or normative control as suggested in Norman Hayner’s “Hotel Life and Personality”:

*Personality patterns in the hotel environment.* – Although a certain formal etiquette—a kind of mechanical correctness – tends to develop in the better class hotels, the “mores,” that part of our tradition that is thought to involve the general welfare, tend to break down in the hotel environment. Among the heavy offenders for stealing hotel property are listed “men and women who in their own communities command respect, but who, on going to a hotel, take a “moral holiday.” (Hayner 1928, 784)

From the pleasure of sexual consummation to the story’s bitter outcome, “Arthur Snatchfold” posits the hotel as a heterotopia of crisis and/or deviation, a place where anything can happen, a place of infinite possibility. Through the assumption that the protagonists are free to go “wild in the hotel,” Forster seems to emphatically assert that they happen to be, “contra public moral outrage,” in “the right place” (Levander and Guterl 2015, 49). Living in the vicinity of the hotel or dreaming of living within the heterotopic realm of its walls, Arthur and Richard can finally let their urges run wild. Within these same walls they can finally defy policing and homophobic control. When “Arthur Snatchfold” deceives the police officers falsely directing them to the hotel premises he seems to be perfectly aware of this: “Th’otel. Keep to th’otel. I tell you he come from th’otel” (Forster 1987, 111).

The essay is part of a research project entitled “Hotels and the Modern Subject: 1890–1940,” supported by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) under the “First Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects

to support Faculty members and Researchers and the procurement of high-cost research equipment grant” (Project Number: 1653). I would like to thank the editors for their helpful feedback.

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## “Where Is Your Home”?

### Spaces of Homoerotic Desire in E. M. Forster’s Fiction

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**Abstract:** The text analyses the spaces of homosexual desire described in E. M. Forster’s novel *Maurice* as well as in two of his short stories, “The Other Boat” and “Dr Woolacott.” In *Maurice* the title character constantly experiences the dual, or rather changeable, nature of places witnessing (and dis- or encouraging) his pursuits of desire. In “The Other Boat” the relationship between Lionel and Cocoanut unfolds within the heterotopic space of a ship, while “Dr Woolacott” is an example of a story set in a space which is very peculiar, liminal, as only somewhere between daydreams and nightmares is the protagonist able to meet his phantom lover. It is noticeable that the protagonists of the mentioned narratives exist simultaneously in the official, codified social spaces and in “the secret places.” The disruptive, forbidden type of desire portrayed in the discussed texts can exist only in the “othered” spaces, spaces which often determine the character’s identities and fates, influence their perception profoundly but, at the same time, rarely seem permanent or certain.

**Keywords:** space, home, homoerotic desire, liminality, heterotopia

Searching for domestic spaces, which would allow peace, intimacy and self-expression, was one of the fundamental topics of E. M. Forster’s literary works.<sup>1</sup> As noticed by Anne Hartree, Forster as a writer was focused on home as a concept which “knots together a complex of ideas about the self and its relations to the wider world” and can be defined as “a space at once personal, gendered and sexualized.” The scholar adds that the author of *Maurice* tried to “locate, or at least imagine, a space where the relationships his characters struggle to establish can plausibly ‘take root’” (Hartree 1996, 127). The two books by Forster, which I am going to refer to, were published posthumously because of their

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Hartree observes that E. M. Forster described searching for a “real home” as a “central narrative of his work,” while commenting on *A Room with a View* (Hartree 1996, 127).

controversial subject. They describe the process of searching for an impossible home, i.e. a space allowing homoerotic desire, which could not be openly expressed for fear of serious consequences. This disruptive type of desire and the potential spaces in which it could at least partially unfold are depicted, e.g., in *Maurice*, a novel written between 1913 and 1914 and published in 1971, and in two short stories from the volume *The Life to Come: And Other Stories* – “The Other Boat” and “Dr Woolacott.” The spaces presented in aforementioned literary texts are wild, dream-like, liminal, heterotypical and mostly temporary. Their nature corresponds with the character of the forbidden feelings, a scarcely manifested passion that “few English minds have admitted” (Forster 2015a, 91).

In *Maurice*, a peculiar Bildungsroman taking place at the beginning of the twentieth century, the eponymous protagonist could be characterised as an average member of English society. He does not belong to the gentry but instead comes from the middle-class, as his father, whom Maurice loses very early, was engaged in commerce. After living with his mother and sisters, the boy becomes a “mediocre member of a mediocre school” (Forster 2015a, 19). Before graduation, neither his personality nor his appearance seems unusual. He matures rather slowly and when Mr Ducie, one of his teachers, decides to talk to him in private in order to describe his future duties as a husband, he does not understand much from the lecture. Despite knowing “that the subject was serious and related to his own body,” “he could not himself relate to it; it fell to pieces as soon as Mr Ducie put it together, like an impossible sum. In vain he tried. His torpid brain would not awake. Puberty was there, but not intelligence ...” (Forster 2015a, 13). Being young and immature, Maurice “stood still in the darkness” and his school, in which the purity and innocence of boys were carefully protected, did not offer opportunities to change that state.

The protagonist’s life evolves after entering Cambridge. During his second year at the university, Maurice, always choosing intuition as his favourite decision-making tool, encounters some peculiar characters – among them Risley, “this queer fish,” a homosexual who “might help him,” although “how, he didn’t formulate” (Forster 2015a, 33). In fact, Risley does help him, as knowing this flamboyant young lord results in meeting Clive Durham, a young gentleman, an intellectual and a future squire. Clive, interested in philosophy, music and antique culture, is much subtler than the protagonist. According to Forster, he is characterised by “delicacy that did not mean frailty” (Forster 2015a, 250). He is also a deep thinker who opposes particular social norms, especially those

concerning religion and the forbidden types of love. For Maurice and Clive, the respectable and conservative Cambridge University becomes a place where their mutual attraction can flourish. Despite the University being a place where social life plays an immensely important role, the two young men are able to share numerous intimate moments. Moreover, for a brief while they behave almost as a couple, as, despite the reproachful attitude of lecturers towards homosexuality, “in the world of their friends this attracted no notice” (Forster 2015a, 45). As “public spaces are ... governed by unspoken understandings” (Browne, Lim, Brown 2007, 2), the young men are well aware of the unarticulated rules. However, despite the relative freedom, Clive from the very beginning forces the “platonic restraint” (Forster 2015a, 251). Despite being open to controversial theories and interested in intellectual rebellion, the man convinces Maurice that they should resign from any forms of physical closeness and rarely hesitates, even when the relationship between the young men in time becomes more intense. The peculiar moment when Clive and Maurice skip their lectures and go for a trip to the countryside during which they have their first (and last) kiss is, in fact, not “to be repeated.” Their kiss is rather an aberration than an accepted social convention, and nature, which might be interpreted as an alternative hiding space, becomes a reminder of the fate awaiting Clive as a squire. According to Hartree, “failure of the motor-cycle, symbol of modernity, technology and change and its final abandoning amongst quintessentially English dog-roses” (1996, 132) can be seen as a symbol of the upcoming parting of the couple. The green, pastoral and idyllic countryside might symbolise the traditional public space which Clive has to inhabit (Hartree 195, 132). As a consequence of his rebellious behaviour, Maurice is expelled and has to leave Cambridge, thus bringing to a close the temporary freedom and transparency enjoyed by the boys at the University.

After that, their situation becomes much more complicated and their relationship slightly strained. They exchange letters and confessions of love; however, the only possible place where they can meet is Durham’s family estate, Penge, located “in a remote part of England.” When Maurice finally manages to visit it, he notices that both the house and estate “were marked, not indeed with decay, but with the immobility that precedes it” (Forster 2015a, 86). The look of the estate can be seen as a prefiguration: “the gate posts, the road ... were in bad repair and the timber wasn’t kept properly, the windows stuck, the boards creak” (Forster 2015a, 89). However, as Clive surprises Maurice with a room, providing

them relative seclusion and intimacy, the protagonist's hopes return. Indeed, the time that follows is partially blissful. Despite the rigid family and the prospects of the future looming over Clive, the two men have "as much happiness as men under that star can expect" (Forster 2015a, 98). Nevertheless, Clive still wants their love to be "passionate but temperate" (Forster 2015a, 98) and constantly maintains his distance towards physical contact. Moreover, knowing that his social position is at stake, and that in order to preserve it, he cannot escape his fate, that is, becoming a local politician, getting married and starting a traditional family, he starts to doubt the relationship. His rising concerns, made stronger during his illness, transform into certainty after a lonely trip to Greece. Once he returns, Clive claims that now he is interested in women only. Thus, the decaying image of Penge can foreshadow the upcoming decay of the men's relationship, but also illustrate Clive's detachment from desires which he is unable to understand, express or accept.

The spaces in which the relationship between the protagonists unfolds influence their emotions strongly. In Cambridge, they feel free and careless. On the other hand, Penge, Clive's ancestral property, symbolising the type of life he is supposed to lead, after some time starts to fill them with anxiety and odd premonitions, often manifested by Clive's physical weakness and Maurice's violent emotions. Clive, who is unable to focus on sensuality or to forget about conventions, can be seen as an embodiment of the British culture, its repressiveness and denial of sensuality and sexuality. He is extremely self-conscious and his sexuality is a source of inconvenience.<sup>2</sup> In one of his essays, Forster described the graduates of British universities as those who "go forth into it [the world] with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts ... An undeveloped heart - not a cold one" (1996, 5). Paradoxically, intellectual development and maturing within the social system prevents Clive from acknowledging his instincts and desires. Although both Maurice and Clive often share social space, as they are both gentlemen, there are some differences between them. At first, slight class differences seem to help them in creating a love relationship, but later it becomes evident that shared fears and anxieties are important obstacles on the way to potential happiness. It also becomes ap-

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2 Even after marrying his wife, "She welcomed him on future nights. But it was always without a word .... He never saw her naked, nor she him. They ignored the reproductive and the digestive functions. ... His ideal of marriage was temperate and graceful, like all his ideals, and he found a fit helpmate in Anne, who had refinement herself and admired it in others" (Forster 2015a, 164).

parent that while Maurice fantasizes about living outside the class and cultural norms, Clive cannot imagine leaving the world of rules and risking his precious position. Meanwhile, Maurice, despite being often characterised as a snob and suburban tyrant focused on his status as well as particular duties, limitations and expectations related to it, finds accepting the reality much more challenging. When Clive decides to get married and finally feels “safe from intimacy” (Forster 2015a, 163), the protagonist feels allowed to visit Penge after a long break. It is noticeable that Maurice’s passions become incomprehensible to Durham, who loves his wife “tenderly” and finally feels well received by the “beautiful conventions” (Forster 2015a, 164). According to him, Maurice still wanders “beyond the barrier” of these conventions, with “the wrong words on his lips and the wrong desires in his heart,” condemning himself to loneliness and living with “arms full of air” (Forster 2015a, 164).

Nevertheless, when Maurice arrives to Penge, in “odd and bitter mood,” the way he perceives the estate becomes unequivocally negative: “The sense of dilapidation had increased. Through the pouring rain he had noticed gate posts crooked, trees stifling, and indoors some bright wedding gifts showed as patches on a threadbare garment” (Forster 2015a, 166). His impressions prove that he finds the place in which the last acts of his affair with Clive took place dull and deteriorating. The subsequent scenes confirm that, in Maurice’s eyes, both his relationship with the man, now involved in local politics, and the reality the latter lives in are barren. He finds most of the social activities futile and the company dreary. The hopelessly leaky roof, resulting in water dripping into basins and saucers is an image which might represent the futile efforts of both men not to lose their bond completely. For Maurice the type of contact offered by Durham cannot be sufficient. Disappointed with the suburban culture he grew up in, as well as with the world of gentry, Maurice again starts intuitively searching for other, unknown spaces. While contemplating nature, the protagonist thinks of darkness – “not the darkness of a house which coops up a man among furniture, but the darkness where he can be free!” (Forster 2015a, 190). He leans on the windowsill twice, and each time cries: “Come!” into the night and into the rain. After the second time, during which Maurice is “half-asleep,” and dreams of “love – nobility – big spaces where passion clasped peace, spaces no science could reach but they existed for ever, full of woods some of them” (Forster 2015a, 191), Alec Scudder, the gamekeeper previously noticed by the protagonist, appears. The circumstances in which this intimate encounter takes place

are meaningful; the night and early morning constitute a liminal time frame and the window in which the lovers meet is a liminal locality.<sup>3</sup> It is obvious that Alec's visit is about to change Maurice's life irrevocably. Just as Clive becomes an emblem of the strict, repressive and decaying traditional culture of the upper classes, the boy is an embodiment of the dreamt-of forests as well as desire in its simplest form, not disturbed by cultural norms and limitations.

Unfortunately, Maurice and Alec are not able to ignore their radically different social backgrounds. In spite of Maurice's initial efforts to forget about it, they both notice that the very presence of Alec in his room at night is scandalous, not only because of the possibility of "unmentionable" acts but also because of his status in the social hierarchy. Nonetheless, Maurice, although irritated and worried after the subsequent telegrams from Alec, whom he suspects of blackmail, yearns for the young man. While angry at himself and convinced that "he had gone outside his class and it served him right," he felt that "his body yearned for Alec despite him" (Forster 2015a, 206). Finally, looking for the "safety in darkness," he decides to believe that "the forests and the night were on his side" (Forster 2015a, 214) and that he has to abandon his family and job, leave behind not only the space of his family home, but also his social status. Then, he tries to tackle the serious and persistent issue related to the fact that Scudder, too, "was embedded in class" (Forster 2015a, 227) and, moreover, he had an opportunity for social advancement that came from his relocation to another continent.<sup>4</sup> However, the protagonist manages to persuade Alec to stay with him.<sup>5</sup>

Hartree notices that the places in which Maurice lives or which are visited by him at various stages of his life, such as the public school, Cambridge,

3 Liminality, a term coined by Arnold van Gennep, referred to the middle stage of a rite of passage and peculiar, ambiguous states accompanying it. Liminality was later described in a more complex way by Victor Turner and became a popular concept among scholars specialising in literary studies, as it helped to enhance the interpretations of transitory, in-between states and spaces. The state of "in-betweenness" often result in disrupting the order (e.g. the gender order) as well as dissolution of identities. Thus, liminal spaces are potentially dangerous; however, they also facilitate the creative process and allow subversion and change (Cole 1985, 9-10).

4 Despite his personal preferences, Alec understands the consequences of staying in England: "Indeed, he liked the woods and the fresh air and water, he liked them better than anything and he liked to protect and destroy life, but woods contain no "openings," and young men who want to get on must leave them. He was determined in a blind way to get on now" (Forster 2015a, 219).

5 He, e.g., introduces himself with Alec's surname during a conversation with Mr Ducie in the British Museum. According to Hartree it might be interpreted as "a subversive marriage enacted at the heart of the nation" (Hartree 1996, 135).

“the country house with its shooting and estate-village cricket match, suburbia, London and the British Museum ...” encode the “images of ‘dominant Englishness,’” which might prove that Forster tried to “reclaim these spaces” for queer desire as well as prove that the typical, “Oxbridge” type of masculinity represented by Maurice could also be related with homosexuality (Hartree 1996, 129). However, after acknowledging their bond, both the protagonist and his lover know that they have to “live outside class, without relations or money, they must work” (Forster 2015a, 239). This stage of transition might in their case become “fixed,” as in some situations the “suspended character of social life takes on a more permanent character” (Thomassen 2009, 15). As outcasts, their future will be based on crossing conceptual borders and inhabiting marginal spaces. When Alec resigns from his emigration plans, Maurice claims that England belongs “to them, her air and sky were theirs” (Forster 2015a, 239). However, even if happy in the greenwood,<sup>6</sup> in exile they have to leave everything behind, become liminal subjects, inhabiting metaphorical night, escaping any potential witnesses of their love. When Maurice says goodbye to Clive, who again symbolizes everything he wants to abandon, the latter notices that “his friend ... was essential night” (Forster 2015a, 242).

A ship to another continent, which in *Maurice* was “carrying away death” (Forster 2015a, 238), as Alec decided not to leave England, provides a peculiar space within which the events presented in a short story titled “The Other Boat” take place. A forbidden relationship which develops between two protagonists of this narrative could not happen on land, as the young men differ from each other profoundly: one of them is a British officer from the upper class, the other one a businessman using unfair commercial practises, whose identity is slightly unclear.

The story begins with a description of a few children playing on a ship heading to England. Young Lionel March and his siblings want another child to join them. Cocoanut Moraes, who is one of the subalterns, does not belong to “the Ruling Race” and whose status is unknown but it quickly becomes evident that

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6 Forster was determined to create a happy ending: “A happy ending was imperative. I shouldn’t have bothered to write otherwise. I was determined that in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows” (Forster 2015a, 250). However, the absolute wilderness, idealised by Maurice, was less and less accessible in the pre-war times described in the novel. Thus, Forster places his protagonists in an almost non-existent space. According to Krzysztof Fordoński, the author creates “a homosexual haven of his own making”; in the scholar’s view, if the lovers are ready to accept the “price,” their homosexuality “can exist here and now” (Fordoński 2010, 90; 106).

he is a strong-willed and imaginative boy. The unobvious mutual attraction developing between Cocoanut and Lionel is noticeable from the very beginning. Moraes blurs the border between reality and the creations of his imagination. And his imagination is impressive, allowing him to always be able to persuade other children to take part in his games. Although his racial identity should predestine him to be the white children's servant or subordinate, he acts as an unobvious leader. His behaviour is observed by the adults with hostility.

Ten years later the boys meet on board the ship *S.S. Normannia* when Lionel, as a young officer, travels from England to India. In a carefully composed, trivial letter to his mother he mentions accidentally meeting the boy who "got called Cocoanut because of his peculiar shaped head" and adds that "he has now turned into an equally weird youth, who has however managed to become influential in shipping circles" (Forster 2015b, 171). The young officer suggests that they do not spend much time together, claiming it would be unnatural and inappropriate as the other man has "more than a touch of the tar brush" (Forster 2015b, 171). Lionel, on the other hand, "was what any rising young officer ought to be – clean-cut, athletic, good-looking without being conspicuous ... success has not spoiled him, nor was he vain of his personal appearance" (Forster 2015b, 172).

Captain March behaves in a predictable way; he plays bridge, although he has "wretched luck" (Forster 2015b, 172) and spends time with other respectable passengers, who treat him as a young promising Englishman. However, there is a secret part of Lionel's life on the boat; he has an affair with Cocoanut, which becomes evident once he goes down to his cabin, shared with Moraes. On deck, he acts as a regular member of the upper class. However, down in his cabin, he is engaged in an affair which could easily ruin his life. Cocoanut awaits him: "A brightly coloured scarf lay across him and contrasted with his blackish-grayish skin, and an aromatic smell came off him, not at all unpleasant. In ten years he had developed into a personable adolescent, but still had the same funny-shaped head" (Forster 2015b, 173). Moraes is very emotional; he constantly expresses his feelings in an exaggerated way, often cries and watches Lionel adoringly. March, on the other hand, acts firmly in his company. His gestures are heavy and he behaves as a conqueror. Their relationship is shaped by strict rules: "They couldn't associate on deck with that touch of the tar brush, but it was a very different business down here" (Forster 2015b, 173). However, Lionel, seemingly stronger and better positioned in the ship's social



hierarchy, worries more about the potential dangers and constantly admonishes the other man. Cocoanut plays with their situation; he calls Lionel Lion of the Night, probably referring to the only time when the lovers can enjoy their moments of freedom. Although Lionel perceives himself as the winner of the chase, in reality he is strongly influenced by his complex lover, as Cocoanut exhibits strength which is not physical in character, strength which often gives him an advantage over Lionel. Thus, both men feel fulfilled and victorious, while in fact they become painfully entangled in a peculiar arrangement: "There they lay caught, both of them, and did not know it, while the ship carried them inexorably towards Bombay" (Forster 2015b, 174).

Lionel's fascination with Cocoa results from, among other things, the man's exotic "otherness." Growing up within a restrictive culture, he is confounded by Moraes' openness towards sensuality as well as his gender ambiguity. His lover embodies the Orient, which, according to Sara Ahmed, "is not an empty place; it is full, and it is full of what is "not Europe" or not Occidental, and which in its "not-ness" seems to point to another way of being in the world - to a world of romance, sexuality and sensuality" (2006, 90). The scholar claims that:

In a way, orientalism involves the transformation of "farness" as a spatial marker of distance into a property of people and places. "They" embody what is far away. Thus "farness" ... follows the line of a wish. ... the Orient is sexualized, although how it is sexualized involves the contingency of "the who" that encounters it... The Orient is not only full of signs of desire in how it is represented and „known" within the West ..., it is also desired by the West, as having things that "the West" itself is assumed to be lacking. (Ahmed 2006, 90)

Cocoanut playfully comments on his significant role in Lionel's life: "Lion, he don't know nothing at all. Monkey's got to come along to tell a Lion he's alive" (Forster 2015b, 180). He also skilfully introduces the other man to sensual pleasures. Lionel begins to discover elements of life previously unknown to him and for the first time reflects on his body and his identity:

Yes, this was the life, and one that he had never experienced in his austere apprenticeship: luxury, gaiety, kindness, unusualness, and

delicacy that did not exclude brutal pleasure. Hitherto he had been ashamed of being built like a brute: his preceptors had condemned carnality or had dismissed it as a waste of time. (Forster 2015b, 180)

As previously mentioned, the unusual relationship between the characters could not, most probably, take place anywhere else than on the ship, during a long journey. This peculiar setting provides the protagonists with the possibility of becoming “morally relaxed” (Forster 2015b, 180), overcome racial, class and sexual barriers, experiment with their identities.<sup>7</sup> While analysing Nordic folkloristic literature, Christer Westerdahl notices that ships and boats were always related to rituals connected to the dichotomy of land and sea. Westerdahl claims that boats often acquired “the quality of a liminal space” (2010, 277). Moreover, the scholar mentions that the space of the boat was often extremely dangerous, but ritual magic could help in avoiding the risks. This magical type of thinking seems to characterise Cocoanut, who “who said weird things sometimes” (Forster 2015b, 175), and had a habit of murmuring incomprehensible words in order to protect himself and his lover. Intuitive and careful, he was the one understanding that only in particular time and place they were able to reach the state of bliss, and that this state is only temporary. He tries to prolong the liminal moments, but to no avail:

They have never been so content with each other before and only one of them realized that nothing lasts, that they might be more happy or less happy in the future, but would never be exactly thus. He tried not to stir, not to breathe, not to live even, but life was too strong for him and he sighed. (Forster 2015b, 178)

The ship, which constitutes a space allowing Lionel and Cocoanut to develop their relationship, was also used as a significant example by Michel Foucault in one of his lectures. While discussing space as a general concept, the philosopher noticed that people live in sets, or rather clusters of relations which deline-

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7 The mischievous behaviour of Cocoanut, as well as Lionel’s confusion, can be interpreted in the context of the concept of threshold as a “space of play”: “The “space of play” becomes a threshold; therefore, a frontier for transformation, when the identities that take part in it are open and their boundaries are flexible, and, as long as the rules of the game are respected, dwelling the *Circle* has the magic potential of creating social and cultural transformation” (Muzzonigro, Boano 2013, 14/71).

ate and describe particular sites. According to him, there are two types of spaces which “have the curious property of being in relations with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect” (Foucault 1967, 3) The first type are utopias,<sup>8</sup> and the second – heterotopias. Foucault claims that they exist “probably in every culture, in every civilisation” (Foucault 1967, 3) and are

real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it might be possible to indicate their location in reality. (Foucault 1967, 4)

The philosopher distinguishes ships as the ultimate example of heterotopia, “heterotopia par excellence,” as “the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place” (Foucault 1967, 9), which travels from one port to another and visits the farthest colonies. However, the ship described in Forster’s short story is not precisely “the greatest reserve of the imagination,” so poetically depicted by Foucault. Despite the possibilities it creates, it is still a place governed by strict colonial rules, where the representatives of the repressive English culture wield power. While Cocoa constantly ignores or underestimates the hostile circumstances, Lionel is painfully aware of their potential consequences. Moraes, who is constantly playing with the notion of identity,<sup>9</sup> from time to time behaves in a child-like manner. This is noteworthy as, according to Foucault, children know the “other spaces” very well; they love games based on pretending and often create their own make-believe heterotopic spaces in order to play (Johnson 2016, 2). The imagination which from the early age distinguishes Cocoa from others, together with his shrewdness, allow him to use the heterotopian possi-

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8 Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces (Foucault 1967, 3).

9 “He had picked up his education, if that was the word for it, in London, and his financial beginnings in Amsterdam, one of the passports was Portuguese, the other Danish, and half the blood must be Asiatic, unless a drop was Negro” (Forster 2015b, 180).

bilities of the ship and craft a space in which the relationship can exist outside the colonial norms. However, his tendency to play games is not only child-like. While observing him playing games with Lionel, in business and on board, one has to notice that they are not innocent.

His lover's suspicious behaviour and actions, whose nature he is, at times, unable to understand, worry Lionel. Another reason of his anxiety is the fact that, although Cocoanut manages to arrange intimate space they can share at night unnoticingly,<sup>10</sup> he still faces the other temporary inhabitants of the ship daily and has to participate in their forms of entertainments. The sahibs and memsahibs are outwardly racist and Lionel, whose own "colour prejudices were tribal rather than personal, and only worked when an observer was present" (Forster 2015b, 174), suddenly finds taking part in these conversations difficult. Trapped in conventions and trying to conceal his transgressions, he is obliged to scoff at his cabin-mate, which results in a surprising feeling of being "in the wrong and almost a cad" (Forster 2015b, 175). Despite not being particularly reflective, Lionel notices, nonetheless, that each time when he analyses his "transgressions," his mother (whom he calls Mater) appears in his mind. Lionel's mother, "blind-eyed in the midst of the enormous web she had spun" might be seen as a figure epitomising the prudish British laws, rigid morality and imperialistic worldview. Although she does not accompany her son on the "other boat," her phantom presence is at times overwhelming. As Lionel maintains contact with his mother via letters, he feels obliged to partly confess to her and mentions meeting Cocoanut. Probably sensing the homoerotic impulse present between her child and Moraes even in childhood, she did not approve of their contact. Haunted by the echo of his mother's command from the past ("play properly"), Lionel exists in fear. He falls in love with Cocoanut but at the same time he distrusts him. As a result, the officer becomes overcome by conflicted emotions when the other man begins sophisticated emotional games. Suspecting his lover of blackmail, Lionel, hurt and shocked, leaves the space arranged by Moraes, who tries to "work with the stars" (Forster 2015b, 182), and confuses the young captain with his quizzical remarks. He then goes up and joins the other members of the British upper

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10 While discussing some of liminal spaces, Homi Bhabha notices that "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 1994, 5).

class sleeping on deck, i.e. “the folk to whom he belong” (Forster 2015b, 192). He reminds himself that “he had been born one of them, he had his work with them, he meant to marry into their caste. If he forfeited their companionship, he would become nobody and nothing” (Forster 2015b, 192). Afraid of losing his identity as a result of continuing his homoerotic interracial relationship, Lionel meditates on the powers shaping his life: society, the army and, finally, his mother and decides that without them he would “perish.” Thus, he decides to break up with Cocoa immediately. Moraes, expecting it, provokes him. Angry and confused, Lionel kills the man in a passionate, sadomasochistic act of love and then, despaired, jumps into the ocean. It is the last act of the “offence against decency” which could only take place within the space of the ship. The *Mater*, an epitome of the “Ruling Race” restrictiveness, allowed rules to be broken on another ship in the past, and was somehow overpowered by her future rival, the effeminate Coccoanut. However, as it is foreseen by Moraes in one of his vision, the *Mater*’s hold is strong and, even though Lionel, more or less consciously, rebels against her rule by fulfilling his desire towards Cocoa, he is not able to choose the space of the unknown and resign from his previous life. Nor is he able to continue it. Both lovers seem to see death as the only solution, following the moment of climax. Ultimately, the last gesture belongs to Coccoanut, whose body, after being thrown into the ocean, moves “contrary to the prevailing current” (Forster 2015b, 196), in a disorienting way, introducing disruption for the last time and perversely reminding after Edward Said that all geographies are “man-made” (1978, 5).

Another short story finishing with death is “Dr Woolacott.” Its protagonist is Clesant, a citizen of “that other place,” “the night-side of life” described by Susan Sontag (1978).<sup>11</sup> The main character is a young squire, chronically ill and frail, whose doctor, the eponymous Woolacott, recommends avoiding all forms of excitement. The very first thoughts of Clesant mentioned by the narrator are: “There is no reason why I should not live for years now that I have given up the violin” (Forster 2015b, 83), thus it is quickly emphasised that his current life revolves around resigning from passions. He can participate in reality only partially: “From where he lay, he could see a little of the garden and a little of the park, a little of the fields and of the river and hear a little of tennis; a little of everything

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11 According to Sontag, “illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick” (1978).

was what was good for him, and what Dr Woolacott had prescribed" (Forster 2015b, 83). Resigning from all types of desire can be seen as an enormous price for prolonging life; however, Clesant is ready to pay it.

While resting in the garden, the protagonist meets a young agricultural worker. Despite some initial vehemence, he starts conversing with the boy and describes his condition with a smile, introducing himself as a "chronic invalid" (Forster 2015b, 84). He also explains to the supposed farmworker that he can never be "intimate with people" (Forster 2015b, 84). Meeting the stranger puts him in a surprisingly good mood and influences his perception of the surroundings. Both the garden and, later, the gun room in which he spends the afternoon, seem more pleasant. The gun room, which in the past was dominated by hunting-related artefacts, trophies and weapons, is now adjusted to the needs of an ill person. Although numerous groups of people enter the space he occupies, Clesant is not interested in them; he barricades "himself in the circle of his thoughts" (Forster 2015b, 85). He is filled with "languorous yearning," thinks of his violin and the peculiar materiality of these dreams of music results in the stranger entering his consciousness. This same young boy appears in the room and the atmosphere changes. Clesant laughs and feels that "the whole room seemed to join in" (Forster 2015b, 86). The protagonist, fascinated with his guest, recognises desire in the "curious and pleasurable sensation" (Forster 2015b, 87) that has overcome him. While listening to the boy's story and experiencing his touch, the young squire notices that the room "began to fill with the golden haze" (Forster 2015b, 88). Seeing his own body, previously subjected only to medical practises, as an object of desire, shocks him. However, the radiance passes when the boy starts criticising Woolacott and claiming that "he never makes anyone well" (Forster 2015b, 90). Following the disagreement, the farm-worker heads to the door, but he is interrupted by "the normal life" (Forster 2015b, 93) of the household entering the gunroom. The boy, worried, insists that he must not be seen and hides in the cupboard. As a result of the emotional strain, Clesant becomes weak and delirious. When his servants check the cupboard he mentions, it is empty. The potential lover appears to be a phantom.

Lying in bed with fever, isolated from the normal life of the household and waiting for Woolacott's visit, the squire finds himself in the liminal state between consciousness and unconsciousness, a "dreamscape" in which he can again meet the ephemeral ghost, invisible to the others. In this peculiar liminal

“third space,” the “alien territory” (Bhabha 1994, 56), in this case dominated by the uncanny, he at first conducts a confusing monologue – or a dialogue – with his illness, cruelly reminding him of his state, and then becomes ready to receive his phantom guest, the deceased boy, an embodiment of death. When they talk, the household perishes and the whole earth disappears. The doctor is close but Clesant decides to embrace the boy and, thus, to embrace the excitement, passion and, in consequence, death. The illness, this threshold between health and death, which was supposed to be Clesant’s home for years, vanishes. Only in this state, in which he seems settled, is he able to meet the phantom lover. However, fulfilling his homoerotic desire is possible only after accepting death – death becomes the ultimate space allowing this fulfilment.

Each of the analysed literary texts is focused on the homoerotic type of desire, not accepted in the depicted world. Protagonists of the texts enter unobvious spaces in which they experience their craving and try to fulfil it. In *Maurice* the eponymous character constantly experiences the dual, or rather changeable, nature of places witnessing (and dis- or encouraging) his pursuits of desire. Although the ending of the novel is positive, its protagonists are left in a moment when they escape the structure of society, which becomes “temporarily suspended.” Accordingly to the cultural norms of their epoch, they had to avoid visibility while settling as a couple; thus, E.M. Forster claims that “Maurice and Alec still roam the greenwood” (Forster 2015a: 250). In “The Other Boat” the relationship between characters can only unfold within the heterotopian space of a ship, as the colonial reality prevents it from lasting on land. “Dr Woolacott,” on the other hand, is a story set in a space which is very peculiar, liminal, as only somewhere between daydreams and nightmares is the protagonist able to meet his phantom lover. It is noticeable that the protagonists of all these narratives exist simultaneously in the official, codified social spaces and in “the secret places.” The disruptive, forbidden type of desire portrayed in the discussed texts can exist only in “othered” spaces, spaces which often determine the characters’ identities and fates, influence their perception profoundly but, at the same time, rarely seem permanent or certain.

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“Áh youù sílly àss, góds lìve in woóds!”  
**Queer appropriations of Edwardian Classicism  
 in Forster’s short fiction and *Maurice***

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the interplay between classical tropes and queer identities in selected examples from Forster, in particular how his appropriation and interpretation of the scholarly classicism typical of his upbringing represents a point of divergence from the Wildean, Philhellenist hinterground of the previous century. The spectral schoolmaster figure, represented by e.g. Mr Bons in *The Celestial Omnibus* is often unseated – his tenure is over and he can no longer dictate the terms of classical engagement – but this paper argues that Forster goes further in his reappropriation of the classical ideal. Whilst the late nineteenth-century’s queer, classicised aestheticism may be understood as grounded in the urban elite – extrapolated into the twentieth by the Platonism of the Cambridge Apostles (see: Clive in *Maurice*) – Forster’s understanding of queer classicism is a more universalised quality and one evident anywhere in the *natural* world, should one wish to look. The figure of Pan is of particular relevance here, investigating Forster’s engagement with a mythological figure so in vogue during this period.

**Keywords:** E.M. Forster, classical reception, *Maurice*, queer studies, English literature

This paper considers selected examples from Forster’s short fiction and *Maurice*, identifying and exploring Forster’s usage of classical imagery to subvert expectation and explore queer identity. Spanning the Edwardian period, always somehow adjacent to rather than representative of Modernist fiction, Forster’s output nevertheless represents a key period both in terms of literary thought and socio-political attitudes; including those towards the teaching of Latin and Greek in Britain.

I will briefly outline the interlinking of the classical and the queer in the late nineteenth century, before exploring how these early twentieth-century examples from Forster might be understood as representing a point of divergence

from their ‘Uranian’, Philhellenist hinterground, and how this understanding might inform our own contemporary discourse when taking both queer and classical approaches to Forster’s work. This latter intertext between classical literature and Forster studies is increasingly beginning to be raised in Classical Reception circles, notably the work of David Scourfield (Scourfield 2016, 2017). I am especially indebted to Christopher Stray for his rigorous publication on the role of classical education in Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Stray 2018).

Links between nineteenth-century Britain’s prioritisation of classical study and the development of queer ideals are well established, tying into a flashpoint of British philhellenism which came a little later than that of mainland Europe. The scholarly and popular imagination indulged in what G.W. Clarke terms “The romantic separation of Greece from the stereotypes of the Renaissance (dominantly Roman) classical tradition [giving] rise to a vision of Hellas as a remote Theocritean Arcadia, primitive, unspoiled, pastoral” – something which married all too well with the “English philosophy of the Picturesque” (Clarke 1989, xi).

This movement’s eighteenth-century roots in particularly German philhellenism are most tellingly associated with Winckelmann, himself of course a strong proponent of the interplay between classical aesthetics and homoeroticism (see Gustafson, 2002; Harloe, 2013). Alongside the idyll of the unspoiled Arcadia we can also see what Daniel Orrells terms a ‘counter-discourse’ – with the homoerotic potential of the Hellenic offering a response to the “legal criminalization and medical pathologization of ... male-male desires” (Orrells 2011, 16). Whilst controversial Victorian sexologist Havelock Ellis did *not* understand the Greek (predominantly pederastic) model as relevant to modern homosexuality, his 1897 work *Sexual Inversion* does notably include an article from John Addington Symonds arguing to the contrary (ed. Crozier 2008). Symonds’ stance is illustrative of an elite, often queer-coded philhellenism, urban and urbane, and strongly implicated in university scholarship. Compulsory Greek at Oxbridge remained in favour throughout this period, and prominent works on Plato by the likes of Walter Pater and Benjamin Jowett were bringing ideas of Platonic love, as deep spiritual love between two males, to the fore. Wilde, and writers of the Decadent movement, transported this influence more widely, whilst interpolating a more sensual, practical application to the Platonic ideal (Riley, Blanchard, and Manny 2017).

It is not in and of itself surprising, therefore, that Forster – as product of a late Victorian/early Edwardian pedagogical system – makes frequent allusions

to antiquity in his work. Forster's trajectory from Tonbridge to Cambridge is typical of his social stratum in the period; nor is it surprising that an upper class, queer man utilises these classical tropes to intimate homosexual desire in his writings. For instance, one character asking another if he has read Plato's *Symposium* as a tacit way of reading his sexual preference – one of Maurice's early interactions while at Cambridge (Forster 1971, 42). I would argue, however, that what is happening in Forster's navigation of classicised queerness is not just a reflection of these pervasive themes but a direct confrontation of them. The earlier short stories and *Maurice* represent comparatively early responses to a post-Wilde world and might be seen as representative of a reassessment and refutation of the queer classicisms seeded during the previous century.

Many of the themes evident in *Maurice* and the early short stories represent a key turn in attitudes towards classical literature in this period, with Forster firmly contributing his own link to the chain of reception. To quote Forster himself:

A mirror [or a body of text] does not develop because a historical pageant passes in front of it. It only develops when it gets a fresh coat of quicksilver – in other words, when it acquires new sensitivity (Forster 1927, 27).

Whilst the mirror inherited after the long 19<sup>th</sup> century may have been one gilded by Ellis, Symonds, Pater, Jowett, and Wilde, these modes of scholarship are not necessarily reflected as we move into the 'Edwardian summer' and beyond. If the 19<sup>th</sup> century sought to (at best) define, (at worst) pathologise male homosexual desire, imposing more concrete gender binaries and the "canalization of sexuality between the banks of homo- and hetero-sexuality" (Orrells 2011, 24), this later period begins to interrogate – however tentatively – a greater degree of nuance. Could we, perhaps, identify elements of a prototype for conversations which are only now beginning to gain significant traction, both in terms of the plurality of queer experience and the disproportionate weighting which classical antiquity has traditionally enjoyed?

For Classics in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain was not, simply, a playground for queer thought, even among the elite who sought to identify themselves with it. This is particularly the case for products of the British public school system. The reified, colonialised, classical experience which Forster would have been born into is excellently outlined in Christopher Stray's ob-

servation that “In learning grammar by rote in the lower forms of public schools, boys (as they almost all were) were learning both to learn and to obey: the two faces of *disciplina*” (Stray 2018, 287). Classical subjects still comprised the mainstay of establishment attitudes – including those which defined masculinity, and the type of man which British educational institutions sought to produce. Latin and Greek both loomed large on the curriculum, and any dilution of this was often interpreted as a risk to the fabric of masculine scholarly identity itself. Christopher Wordsworth, head of Harrow School, was not alone in his impassioned criticism of the use of English seeping into the study of Classics: tellingly, he worries that this will invite “mental effeminacy”.<sup>1</sup>

It is this spectral schoolmaster figure which, on a surface level, many of Forster’s classical allusions seem to be unseating. His tenure is over, and he can no longer dictate the terms of classical engagement.<sup>2</sup> In *The Celestial Omnibus* (1908) the short story’s hero, a small boy whose discovery of a magic omnibus service offers him a true Arcadia, has invoked the frustrated disapproval of Mr Bons, the self-important president of his local Literary Society. On recounting the literary grandees he met on his adventure, including key figures from classical myth, the boy has (according to Mr Bons) failed to appreciate such elevated company – for instance mistaking Dante Alighieri as a simple bus driver called Dan. Yet when Mr Bons insists on accompanying the boy on his next visit, he – for all his literary society credentials – cannot engage with the beauty before him and ends up hurled earthwards – and finding a particularly undignified end behind Bermondsey gas works. Instead, it is the honest, earnest boy who is crowned with laurels and raised aloft on Achilles’ shield to sit alongside heroes – becoming part of the ekphrastic moment best known from Homer’s *Iliad*:

Achilles raised him aloft. He crouched on the wonderful shield,  
on heroes and burning cities, on **vineyards graven in gold**, on every  
dear passion, every joy, on the entire image of the Mountain  
that he had discovered, **encircled ... with an everlasting stream**.  
‘No, no,’ he protested, ‘I am not worthy. It is Mr Bons who must  
be up here’ (Forster 1908, 44–45).

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1 Cited in Stray 2018, 295

2 It is worth noting here, however, that schoolmasters qua schoolmasters are not inherently figures of scorn in Forster’s work – *The Longest Journey*’s Rickie (soon to be a teacher of Classics, no less) is a particularly notable exception.

ἐν δ' ἐτίθει σταφυλῆσι μέγα βριθουσαν ἀλωῆν καλὴν χρυσεῖην  
 There he also placed a vineyard laden with clusters of grapes, beau-  
 tiful and wrought in gold  
 (*Iliad* XVIII.561)

ἐν δ' ἐτίθει ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένοζ Ὠκεανοῖο  
 There he also placed the great might of the river Oceanus  
 (607)

In the *Iliad* this ekphrasis takes place over several hundred lines, depicting all of the wondrous vignettes apparent on the shield, but in this brief section Forster is clearly making a direct allusion to the section – most notably his mention of golden vineyard and details such as the “encircling, everlasting stream” which refers to Oceanus, and is listed at the end of the ekphrasis in the Homer (see above).

In *The Classical Annex* (1972), another establishment figure – this time a beleaguered museum curator – finds himself at odds with the aestheticised potential of the Hellenic and its irrepressible pull on a guileless young boy. As the story was not published during Forster’s lifetime, he is at liberty to illustrate this more facetiously, and in direct engagement with queer bodily experience. This time, he is destabilising nineteenth-century establishment classicism by grasping it right at its prudish core: the fig leaf, and all it represents. As the curator battles to replace a classical statue’s fig leaf which keeps falling off, the job becomes impossible as the artefacts in the annex develop their own agency and the offending statue becomes grotesquely priapic:

It might have been a dream but for an obscene change in the statue’s physique. He gazed from his asylum in horror. He glanced at the fig leaf, now all too small (Forster 1972, 105).

We’re seeing an inversion of the Galatea myth:<sup>3</sup> Pygmalion lusted after his own carved creation and sought to possess her wholly, whereas here the animated statue seduces the curator’s young son Denis (ironically a classical name – from Dionysus). Pygmalion pulls Galatea into his own world of the living,

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3 See Ovid *Metamorphoses* X.243ff.

whereas here the two figures then return to stone together and are immortalised in the act of penetration. (Forster very wryly has art historians interpret this position as a ‘wrestling scene’ between two brothers.)

This troubling of socio-sexual norms is perhaps a fitting link to what I understand to be the most significant trope in evidence here: one which unsettles not only the nineteenth-century public schoolmaster but the wholesale valorisation of Classical literacy – even within queer modes of engagement. This trope is the figure of the “Great God Pan,” whose symbolic association suddenly becomes rife in Edwardian literature as a whole – one only has to think of J.M. Barrie’s eponymous work, or the ‘Piper at the Gates of Dawn’ in Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* – though the incipient nineteenth-century text is of course Arthur Machen’s 1894 novella *The Great God Pan*. Jonathan Rose goes into detail on possible reasons behind the Edwardian “cult of Pan,” suggesting that

A combination of spiritual and sexual anxieties led ... them to a surrogate religion of sexuality. The principal deity of this religion was Pan, the premoral nature god to incarnate the Edwardian Id (Rose 1986, 89).

Somerset Maugham, writing in 1930, reflects back on this sudden literary vogue, noting that

In a hundred novels his cloven hoof left its imprint on the sward; poets saw him lurking in the twilight on London commons, and literary ladies in Surrey and New England, nymphs of an industrial age, mysteriously surrendered their virginity to his rough embrace. (Maugham 1920, 122)

Indeed Maugham, too, contributed to this list of caprine cameos<sup>4</sup> although Maugham’s own presentation of Pan was representative of other more socially-conservative writers of the period, with the horned god as a frightening, almost Satanic figure. Dubbed the “equivocal” god by Saki, whose own short story *The Music on the Hill* can be counted in this wider compendium, Pan as the disinterested face of classicism offers different things to different writers in the period.

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4 A comprehensive, though now rather dated list may be found in *Pan the Goat-God* (Merivale, 1969).

Forster's Pan is still an alarming figure, though often also a force for good – or at least redressing a world out of balance. He breaks up stale marriages, precipitates sexual awakenings, and calls into question deep-seated *mores* regarding gender, capitalism, and industrialisation. Much like the inconvenient physicality of a classical nude bringing his fig leaf smashing down, the figure of Pan is a force of nature, regularly intruding on the picnics, holidays, and social calls representative of superficial Edwardian respectability. It is here that we might uncover a deeper, more subversive address to that which saturates Forster's literary forebears: that illusory property we call "Classics."

In Forster's appropriately named *The Story of a Panic* (1904) Pan is expressed through Gennaro, the queer-coded Italian boy (doubly 'Other') who takes repressed public schoolboy Eustace into the woods and saves him from living inauthentically. Elsewhere, in *The Curate's Friend* (1907) Pan appears in person, romantically presented as a relic from the Roman occupation of Britain who flourished because "there is nothing particularly classical about a faun" (see quotation below). Here, too, Pan is a conduit for sexual awakening although here a heterosexual one: Emily, the Curate's intended, finds herself driven into another man's arms following the faun's divine intervention.

Whilst the late nineteenth century's queer, classicised aestheticism may be understood as grounded in the city and the university, what we're seeing here is a more universalised quality – evident anywhere in the natural world, should one wish to look. It is not only the Classics of the heteronormative which is beginning to discolour as we move further into the twentieth century. This may also be an extension of more generalised attitudes to identity and authenticity, in part a backlash against the pure aestheticism of Wilde's legacy – one where, to quote Wilde himself, "illusion is the first of all pleasures." Elizabeth Outka notes that

At the turn of the century, particularly in Britain, what began to arise was the ... desire to unite Wildean ideas of artifice and performance and continual self-fashioning with the contrary but appealing ideas of authenticity, stability, and continuity (Outka 2008, 3).

The wholesale valorisation of an imagined Greek ideal, at a significant temporal and geographic remove from the ancient Mediterranean, surely epitomises these notions of the artificial and performed. Forster's liminal identity – not quite a Modernist yet not entirely Edwardian – perhaps lends a degree of nuance



to his interpretation of this paradox. As may be noted in this passage taken from *The Curate’s Friend*, Forster understands the force of classical imagery and its allure in the British mentality as a kind of false nostalgia against rapid modernisation, whilst also employing a judicious layer of critique through which one might re-evaluate these assumptions:

It is uncertain how the Faun came to be in Wiltshire. Perhaps he came over with the Roman legionaries to live with his friends in camp ... they in the joy of their recall forgot to take him on board, and he wept in exile; but at last he found that our hills also understood his sorrows, and rejoiced when he was happy. Or, perhaps he came to be there because he had been there always. **There is nothing particularly classical about a faun; it is only that the Greeks and Italians have ever had the sharpest eyes**” (Forster 1907, 71)

In *Other Kingdom* (1909) the narrator is a Classics tutor employed in a household which implodes after the eldest son of the house, a thrusting young businessman and product of the post-industrial age, attempts to privatise and domesticate a patch of woodland as a misguided gift for his reluctant fiancée, Evelyn. In another classicised exploration of sexuality and gender (or, perhaps more accurately now, an exploration of the *classical* through sexual identity), Evelyn’s distress finds her invoking the primal wrath of the god Pan. Again, seeking to re-establish his pastoral supremacy, Pan rips up the carefully-manicured paths and arbors which have been imposed on his land, and Evelyn herself becomes one with the wood by turning into a beech tree, just like Daphne in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*:

She flung her arms up above her head, close together, so that she looked like a slender column. Then her body swayed and her delicate green dress quivered over it with the suggestion of countless leaves. (Forster 1909, 69)

mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro  
in frondem crines in ramos bracchia crescunt  
pes modo tam velox pigris radicibus haeret  
ora cacumen habet remanet nitor unus in illa

Thin bark closed around her soft breast  
 Her hair became leaves, her arms became branches  
 And her swift feet stuck to the ground as clinging roots  
 Her face was hidden with encircling leaves ...  
 (*Metamorphoses* I. 548–551)

Interestingly, much like the humble schoolboy who successfully rode the Celestial Omnibus, Evelyn is accorded the honour of a classical allusion, yet Forster is also at pains to emphasise that she is actually very bad at Latin. Evelyn “was very earnest over her classics. She wished she could have said what good they had done her” (Forster 1909, 48).

In fact, being bad at Latin (or Greek) seems almost a prerequisite for authentic classical (and interpersonal) engagement in Forster. When we meet *Maurice*’s eponymous protagonist in his schooldays, he is caught daydreaming in class and tries to redeem himself by responding “Sir – oh! Dative absolute?” (Forster 1971, 16), a Latin construction which does not exist. Later in life, this ambivalence deepens to antipathy and Maurice “hates the very word [Greece],” associating it with “morbidly and death” (100). This queer hero of a celebrated queer love story has, by his own admission, little interest in the ancients he is supposed to consider his sexual, as well as intellectual, forebears.

The daydream Maurice is enjoying, prior to his rude awakening by the schoolmaster, involves the face of a handsome young man. He ponders: “Was he a Greek god, such as illustrates the classical dictionary? More probable, but most probably he was just a man” (16). Sitting in his Victorian British public school, the air redolent with classicised potential, Maurice considers making a link between the queer and the classical and immediately dismisses it. He may be surrounded by the stuff, but it doesn’t work for him. Crucially, the narratorial voice later notes that Maurice’s “interest in the classics had been slight and obscene, and had vanished when he loved Clive” (99). Clive, who asks him on their first meeting at Cambridge if he had ever read the *Symposium*, goes on to provide Maurice with the “real” thing – and, this achieved, Maurice considers his relationship with Plato now redundant. The reference to a classical dictionary is additionally interesting, as we know from biographers that the young Forster enjoyed perusing different classical dictionaries not for communion with the queer Platonic ideal, but for the chance sighting of undraped male “dirties” – Forster’s euphemism for the penis (Stray, 2018).

Similarly, one might expect these woodcuts of classical nudes to be discarded once the “real thing” came along.

Orrells illustrates that it is Clive – whose Platonism in many ways echoes that of the Cambridge Apostles – who makes the required pilgrimage to Greece, while Maurice stubbornly remains at home (Orrells 2011). Clive returns from Greece both physically unwell and with his future wife in tow, whereas Maurice – unashamedly Greekless Maurice – flourishes, finding his true love Alec in an otherwise unremarkable English garden of which the Great God Pan might approve. As Robert Martin illustrates: “the novel opposes two kinds of homosexuality – one that is identified with Cambridge and Clive, and one that is identified with Alec and the open air” (Martin 1983, 35). There is a knowing paradox at play here: classicism is unseated, only to be reinstated in a very contemporary, localised setting. Late nights poring chastely over the *Symposium* are out, and passionate rendez-vous with Theocritean men of toil are in. Forster, discussing *Maurice* in a 1915 letter, states that he has “created something absolutely new, even to the Greeks” (Lago and Furbank, eds. 1983, 219).

As Forster would have it, this queer, classicised yet de-classicising potential is something that exists beyond *amo amas amat* and in the very fabric of the world around us. This is aptly conveyed in a quotation given to Evelyn, the young woman from *The Other Kingdom* who manages to elude the marital expectations placed on her by becoming one with nature and the Great God Pan. Prior to her ultimate union with her beloved woodland, she teases her husband-to-be by quoting Virgil’s *Eclogues* II line 60, sung in English with a playful (and utterly incongruous) superimposition of metre: “Áh you silly àss, góds live in woóds!”<sup>5</sup> In spite of her Cambridge-educated tutor’s ministrations, Evelyn is not taking her Classics seriously – she doesn’t need to. Gods of Classicisms past continue to live on in our woods, and we no longer require a public schoolmaster to help us see them.

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5 *Quem fugis a demens habitarunt di quoque*

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## “Old things belonging to the nation”: Forster, Antiquities and the Queer Museum

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**Abstract:** In an essay of 1920, “The Objects” (later republished as “For the Museum’s Sake”), Forster confronted the colonialist attitudes of the British Museum curator Wallis Budge (1857–1934) as expressed in his memoirs. This paper discusses Forster’s attitude toward national museums and their antiquities in this essay and in *Maurice*, and it suggests that Budge’s memoirs may have influenced the later, 1932, version of the novel. Forster’s nuanced and critical view of heritage has subsequently proved influential for a BM project on LGBTQ+ world history.

**Keywords:** Maurice, Merchant Ivory films, British Museum, LGBT history, queer museology

For James Ivory

### Forster and the British Museum

In May 1920, Forster published “The Objects” in *The Athenaeum*, a review of the memoirs of Sir E. A. Wallis Budge (1857–1934), Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum. When republished as an essay in *Abinger Harvest* (1936), its title, “For the Museum’s Sake,” foregrounded the role of the national museum. The review focussed on the history of one funerary papyrus in the collections, the famous “Papyrus of Ani” (British Museum EA 10470.1–37). Forster’s own engagement with ancient Egypt was largely Hellenistic. His affair with the Alexandrian tram conductor Mohamed el-Adl had modified his initially hostile reaction to that country (see e.g. Furbank 1978, II, 59–63; Aldrich 2003, 308–19; Forster 2004, 322–46), but he consistently rejected the “sumptuous and exotic” image of Egypt’s pharaonic past in favour of “the little muddles and messes of the modern street” (Spear and Aly 1988, 52, 53). What he termed “the Egypt of the Pharaohs, which still moves tourists and popular novelists, but which means nothing to the resident” (Spear and Aly 1988, 37) is written

out of his works, arguably due to ancient Egypt’s association with the occult, popular adventure yarns and British colonialism (see Parkinson 2020, 203–10). Budge himself is regarded by modern academics as a deeply problematic scholar and collector (e.g. Smith 2004), and his claim in the memoirs to have discovered the papyrus in an intact tomb (Budge 1920, 136–7) is now known to be highly fictionalised (Parkinson 2020, 205–7, 314 n. 68). With striking perception, Forster described Budge’s account as a “yarn,” comparing him to a “Renaissance desperado,” but he also denounced the “vulgarity” of the “system,” with its competitive acquisition of “national possessions,” and “the dreariness and snobbery of the Museum business” that Budge embodied:

it is fine if you think the modern nation is, without qualification, fine; but if you have the least doubts of your colossus, a disgust will creep over you and you will wish that the elderly gentlemen [like Budge] were employed more honestly. After all what is the use of old objects? They breathe their dead words into too dead an ear. (1996, 283)

Forster also noted that the Egyptian “natives” who first found the papyrus turned to Budge “because he paid more ..., although they risked imprisonment and torture” (1996, 282). The fact that the Egyptian el-Adl had been imprisoned by the authorities in May 1919 (see Forster 2004, 340–1) suggests that Forster’s scorn for the Museum was informed by a queer personal perspective (Parkinson 2020, 209–10). His experiences with el-Adl also had an effect on the later versions of *Maurice* (see Gardner in Forster 1999, xxvii–xxix)

The review’s discussion of the papyrus resisted any occult interpretation of Egyptian culture, common at the time. For Forster, the papyrus with its spells was an expression of an entirely human history, and not a magical or spiritual gateway into the past, as in for example E. Nesbit’s *The Story of the Amulet* (1906), that was dedicated to Budge (see Paul 2015; Hoberman 2003): Forster’s Ani acquired it because “his memory was but human; so, buying a strip of papyrus eighty feet long, he had it inscribed with all he would have to say” in the underworld (1996, 281). The same pragmatic attitude to ancient objects is found in the earlier essay “Malconia Shops” (*The Independent Review*, November 1903, republished in Forster 1996, 163–5), where the essayist’s analysis of the fourth century bce Cista Ficoroni (Museo nazionale etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome 24787

[K] is dismissed by its ancient owner with “I bought the thing because it was pretty” (1996, 165). One notable exception, however, to this attitude is the Demeter of Cnidos (British Museum GR 1859,1226.26), another nineteenth-century acquisition which “we hold in the British Museum now” (1996, 167), according to the essay “Cnidus” in *The Independent Review*, March 1904 (reprinted in Forster 1996, 166–70), and which the essayist considers to be “alive,” uniquely so among the ancient gods. In a contemporaneous notebook journal, he commented that she was “made of flesh like ourselves, though of noble texture” (15 June 1904: 2011, I, 127). The goddess’ location in the Museum is mocked, “with the electric light fizzling above her,” where “she is dusted twice a week” (1996, 167–8; see Radford 2007, 172–223). Later, in 1930–1933, he described a local museum’s classical gallery in similar terms as “stuffy, badly lit, and not too clean” (“The Classical Annex”: 1972, 147). Nevertheless, the statue of Demeter still inspires, and although the goddess is exiled from Cnidos, she “must know that she has come among people who love her” (1996, 168). Similarly, in *The Longest Journey* of 1907, the statue evokes a state of being where “the past not a torn photograph, but Demeter the goddess rejoicing in the spring” (1984, 255); significantly, its symbolic role there is more effectively enabled as a free-hanging photograph, perpetually moving, grey and shimmering in Wiltshire, away from the Museum’s galleries. For Ansell, it and the other classical statues inside the Museum are “powers he could not cope with” (1984, 182): “the comfort of books deserted him among those marble goddesses and gods” making him able to “only think of the vanished incense and deserted temples beside an unfurrowed sea” (1984, 181–2; see Hoberman 2011, 120–3). Ansell says to his companions in the British Museum’s galleries “let us go ... I do not like carved stones,” and is told by Widdrington “you are too particular ... You are always expecting to meet living people. One never does. I am content with the Parthenon frieze” (1984, 182). In all these works, there is a preference for the living over the dead, and for everyday experiences over romantic views of the “sumptuous past” and over institutionalised culture.

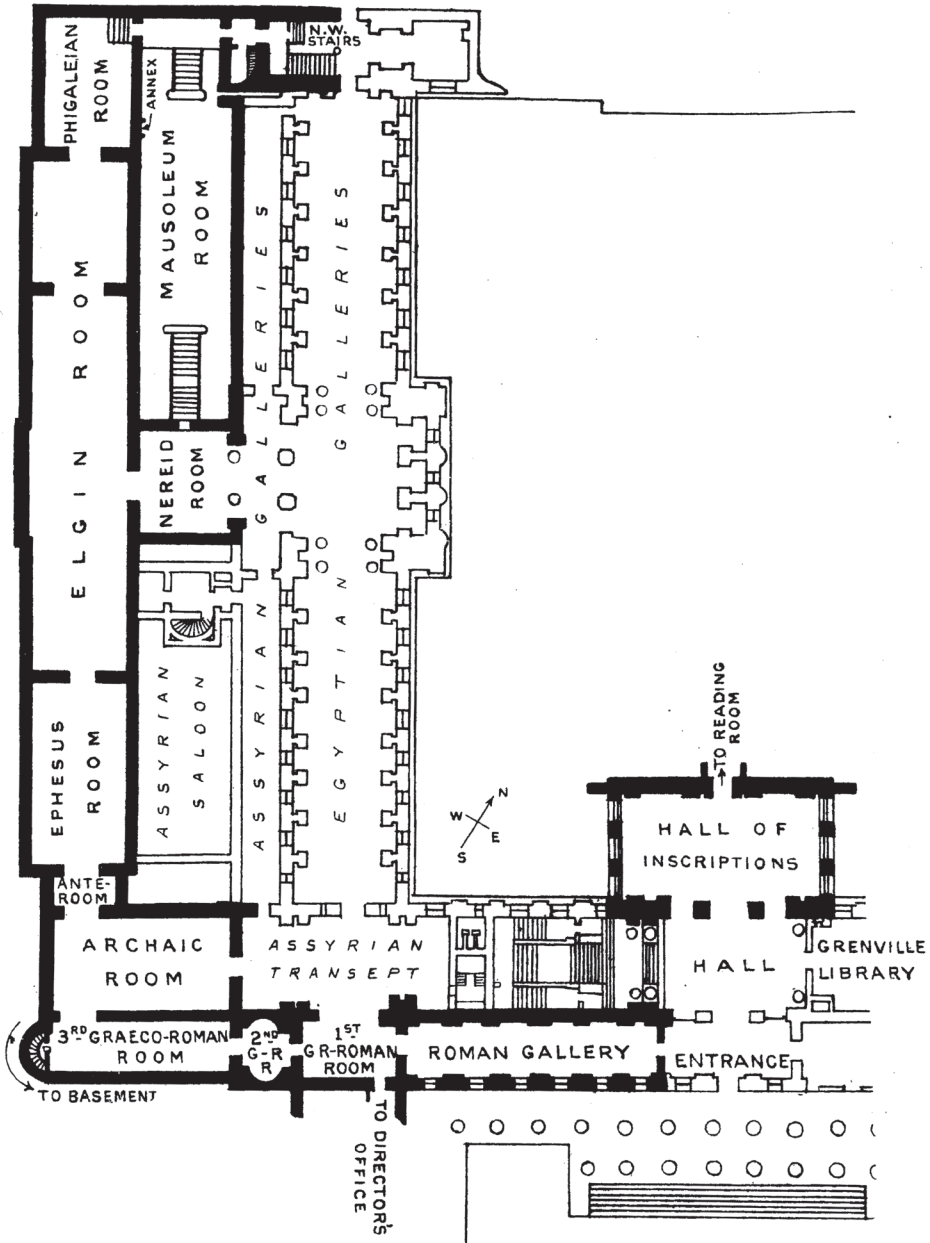
### **Maurice in the Museum**

In *Maurice*, the much-revised museum chapter closely parallels “The Objects” in both attitude and phrasing. In both the 1914 and 1932 versions, Maurice describes the institution to Alec as “old things belonging to the Nation” (1999, 282, 191). Both the review and the novel present the Museum as a “symbolic space



of nationalism” (Black 2000, 105), unlike in other, earlier writings; nowhere does Forster explicitly discuss repatriation and the possibility of returning the collections to their source communities (e.g. Parkinson 2020, 209). Maurice is said to choose the British Museum as a place to meet Alec “because they were unlikely to be disturbed there by anyone whom he knew. Poor B. M., solemn and chaste!” (1999, 279, 188). The choice is made “mischievously,” and it implies that the space is a bastion of normative chastity and a “class-encoded repository of knowledge” and culture (Black 2000, 121); its forecourt is patrolled by “police” (1999, 281, 190). The Museum was an urban space for the educated classes (Black 2000, 120), and it is described as a rain-battered building like Clive’s Penge, and as very alien to Alec, the “son of the woods” (1999, 281, 190). The choice of location also stages an opposition between the living possibility of same-sex love and the attitudes exemplified by the “dead ears” of museum curators. Elsewhere in the novel, the Dean perceives “in a dead bloodless way” (1999, 63), Greece is seen as “dead” by the normalised Clive (1999, 97, 102), and suburban life is “dead” (1999, 115). For Booth, the setting “dramatizes the contrast between wholeness and love on the one hand, and mutability, fragmentation and death on the other” (2020, 225).

The visit is described with characteristic “geolocal precision” (Das 2021, 147). Initially, the building is described as a potentially positive meeting place for the lovers: it looks as if it is “miraculously illuminated by spirits of the dead,” due to “some of the lights ... turned on inside” (1999, 281, 190), a feature of the galleries that was also featured and mocked in “Cnidus” (1996, 167). In both versions, Maurice and Alec meet in “the Portico,” enter and pause in “the corridor of Roman emperors” (1999, 281–2, 190–1), which was a long room immediately to the right of the entrance hall with a “gallery of Roman busts” (British Museum 1912, 108–11, now Room 5). They keep “wandering from room to room as if in search of something” (1999, 193; similarly in 1914, 284); these rooms are imagined as classical galleries since they “peer at a goddess or a vase” (1999, 285, 193), before encountering Ducie after “twenty minutes” or “nearly twenty minutes” (1999, 284, 193) in what is clearly the Elgin Room, displaying the Parthenon marbles from Athens. From the layout of the galleries at the start of the twentieth century, they apparently reverse the route taken by Ansell as he left the Museum in *The Longest Journey*, when he moved from the Elgin Room, through the Ephesus Room, and past “the Cnidian Demeter” (1984, 182), whose location is described in “Cnidus” as “that little recess of hers between the Ephesian



DEPARTMENT OF GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES, BRITISH MUSEUM.

PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR.

Fig. 1 The galleries of the British Museum in the early twentieth century  
(British Museum 1912, viii).

Room and the Archaic Room” (1996, 167; see British Museum 1912, 14–15; fig. 1). The “goddess” mentioned in *Maurice* could even be the Demeter, but if so, the narrator does not implicate this inspirational statue in this negative description of the institution. The “something” that the lovers seek in the galleries can be understood as both an understanding of themselves and also a sexual history, such as is evoked by Maurice’s earlier talk with Lasker Jones about “the Theban band” and the Greenwood of “that Robin Hood business,” which is described as being “more than meets the eye” (1999, 276–7, 183). However, the potential of the past remains unfulfilled in this location, just as the liveliness of a roman statue was petrified by the intervention of the Christian heteronormative curator in “The Classical Annexe” (1972, 148–50). Similarly, the review of Budge remarks that “as far as museums breed anything it is a glib familiarity with labels” (1996, 283), as opposed to any potential for reviewing established history, such as was evoked earlier in the novel by Clive’s playfully asking “Maurice, shall we re-write history?” (1999, 237, 75).

The space is oppressive, “enormous and overheated,” and the lovers leave the Museum, re-enacting Ansell’s departure, passing “the library, supposed catholic” (1999, 195), that was presented more positively in *The Longest Journey* (1984, 177). The earlier version of *Maurice* is explicit in criticising the library for “allow[ing] no books on their subject to enter its readers’ hands. Here too they were outlaws” (1999, 288). The choice of the word “catholic” may echo an article by E. S. P. Haynes in *The English Review* of 1913, which denounced the public catalogue’s suppression of books such as Edward Carpenter’s *The Intermediate Sex*: “the claims of the catholic church to monopolise sexual instruction do not justify the British Museum in suppressing knowledge” (1913, 134; see e.g. Cross 1991, 209–10; Houston 2015; Booth 2021, 227 n. 81). Such censorship was also applied to the galleries, and a similar “secretum” existed for sexually charged objects in the collection (e.g. Gaimster 2000; Parkinson 2013, 86–7), but it is unclear if Forster was aware that this.

### Those Greek things

Earlier, in chapter 21, Maurice had rejected classical Greece as “well enough for those whose hearts were empty, but no substitute for life,” and it is connected with “morbidity and death” (1999, 92). In the novel as a whole, Forster rejected Hellenism as a model for modern same-sex love (e.g. Black 2000, 122–3;

Fordoński 2020, 166–7; Booth 2020), and this is embodied in the lovers’ conversation with Mr Ducie in the Elgin Room. This location is not named but is indicated by a mention of Maurice looking at a “model of the Acropolis” (1999, 285–6, 193). This model featured in contemporaneous guidebooks among “aids to the study of the Parthenon” in the Elgin Room (British Museum 1912, 20) and is visible at the south end of the Room in an archival photograph from a First World War Photograph Album in the Museum’s Central Archives (Jenkins 1992, 228 fig. 89; BM Image 01613609275). In the 1914 version, Maurice is looking specifically at the model’s “Theatre of Dionysus” (1999, 286), which is where Clive had written his letter to Maurice asserting his normalcy (1999, 239, 97; Booth 2020, 225); this echo reinforced the association of the institutional display of the sculptures with normativity. The school master Ducie is one of the authority figures that Maurice must overcome (e.g. Fordoński 2020, 168, 154–5), and he is described in terms similar to the “elderly gentlemen” of the Museum in the review (1996, 283): a “gentleman,” with “strong spectacles,” who might be taken for an “old fool” (1999, 287, 193–4). He regards the Museum space as an educational tool for social normativity, as a place to inculcate ideas for the “less fortunate,” a “stimulating place – it raised questions even in the minds of boys” (1999, 287, 194). This is a standard attitude of the period (e.g. Black 2000, 100–10), but the earlier narrative of Maurice’s youth suggests to the reader that such “questions” could be more sexually transgressive than Ducie envisages (an echo more clearly implied in the 1914 version: 1999, 287). Similar questionings are envisaged in “The Classical Annexe,” where a pious councilor says of a Roman statue’s nakedness “you never know where young people may not pick up dirty thoughts” (1972, 149; Ingleheart 2015, 156 n. 49).

The narrator contrasts “the heroes” of the Museum’s sculptures with the living Alec (1999, 287, 194), and in 1914 these figures were specified as being “of the Parthenon frieze” (1999, 287). There, Alec was also said to be in the “next room” to Ducie (1999, 287), probably referring to the architecturally distinct northern division of the Elgin Room which also contained parts of the frieze, as is seen in archival photographs.<sup>1</sup> Alec is a man who sneezes as a reaction to being inside the Museum (1999, 191; Booth 2020, 226–7), and who is stated after the muse-

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1 These include a 1923 photograph by Donald Macbeth (British Museum P&D 1960,0222.14) and one in the First World War Photograph Album, in the Museum’s Central Archive (Image 01613609272). This northern division was an extension to the main Elgin Room; for the history of the Elgin displays see Jenkins 1992, 90–101, 221–5.

um scene to behave “not as a hero, but as a comrade” (1999, 290, 196), “not a hero or a god but a man embedded in society like himself” (1999, 300, 204). These contrasts echo Maurice’s childhood imagining of an ideal friend as perhaps “a Greek god,” but most probably as “just a man” (1999, 228, 12). Unlike Alec, the Greek figures are “perfect but bloodless” (1999, 287, 194), and the lifeless classical world, so central to English education and imperial rule, provides a backdrop for Maurice’s crucial meeting with his living lover. The Museum allows a climactic criticism of “institutionalised culture” (Black 2000, 121), and a rejection of idealised perfection in favour of the “bewilderment” of humanity (1999, 287, 194), which draws on Forster’s own “hopeless” reaction to “those Greek things in the B.M.” as expressed in his notebook journal in 1904 (13 March: Forster 2011, I, 121; quoted in Furbank 1978, I, 110). In the 1914 version, Maurice dismisses the museum artefacts as “these old carvings” surrounded by “all \ these custodians/ and self-righteous beasts <who don’t understand us>,” and he urges Alec to “come away” out of the building (1999, 288), having realised that he loves him (1999, 286). The negative use of these antiquities as normative is especially striking given the role that classical sculptures in museums had for the formation of LGBTQ identities at the period (e.g. Cook 2003, 33–34, 86), but the comparisons nevertheless draw on the homoerotic beauty of the sculptures, associating Alec with this in the reader’s mind, even while implying that he surpasses them in his living complexity.

The lovers leave the building, “seeking darkness and rain” (1999, 195 [only in 1932]), and in the 1914 version they reach an understanding significantly *outside* the Museum in a “deserted square” (1999, 289; Booth 2020, 228). In the later version, this has a “railing which encircled some trees” (1999, 195), suggesting that it is a substitute for the mythical alternative world of the Greenwood; it is probably the nearby Bedford Square, which still has a green oval space enclosed by railings.

### Eastern antiquities

In the revisions of 1932, Forster moved the realisation that Maurice loves Alec earlier and placed it inside the building. The classical galleries are still portrayed in a negative manner: as Maurice declares his realisation of love, “the rows of old statues tottered” (1999, 195), suggesting that even the Parthenon’s pediment sculptures have become – like the “custodians,” Budge and Ducie – upholders

of the heteronormative hegemony (compare Hoberman 2011, 120, who reads differently). However, Forster added a scene of affectionate dialogue in front of two “winged Assyrian bull”s, which is the characters’ only significant interaction with museum objects (1999, 192–3). This replaced a dialogue in the earlier version which took place in the classical galleries: the phrase “we’ve looked about long enough at these headless horsemen” (1999, 284) locates it beside the Parthenon frieze, some of whose riders have damaged heads. Forster’s reading of Budge’s 1920 memoirs after writing the first draft of the novel may have heightened his awareness of these bulls, since Budge curated the Assyrian antiquities and mentioned these sculptures in his memoirs (1920, 75).

In the 1932 version, the lovers move from the “corridor” to view the bulls. There are several pairs of human-headed winged animals (*lamassu*) in the Museum’s collection, but Forster’s are the largest pair, which are bulls from Khorsabad (BM Middle East 1850,1228.3–4). These stood, as noted by Budge’s successor H. R. Hall, “in the Assyrian Transept, [and] herald to the visitor the treasures of Assyrian and Egyptian antiquity he is about to see” (1928, 9; see Jenkins 1992, 165–6, fig. 65–6). The Assyrian Transept was a gallery (Room 6) at the west end of the “corridor.” The bulls evoke “naïf wonder” in Alec because they are “big,” and have five legs (1999, 192–3). Their appeal to the working-class Alec is socially precise: as noted by Stephanie Moser (2006) and Shawn Malley (2012), Budge’s Department contained antiquities that were considered accessible to people who were not classically educated (unlike, for example, Ansell who gravitates to the classical galleries). The animals suggest physicality and rustic masculinity, reinforcing Alec’s claims to virility, and they impress in terms of *human* workmanship and skill, rather than idealised heroism. The statues’ fifth legs are frequently noted in contemporaneous guidebooks (e.g. British Museum 1886, 10; Hall 1928, 12), suggesting that the fifth limb is not necessarily a euphemistically sign of “phallic lust,” as assumed by modern critics (Bristow 2020, 46; also Black 2000, 123). More significantly, this feature is shared by both statues, making the “pair” of bulls a parallel to Maurice and Alec as a pair of distinctive outcasts: the lovers are described as “standing each by his monster” (1999, 193). One can compare Forster’s use of lameness as a coded reference to sexuality in *The Longest Journey* (e.g. Heine in Forster 1984, xviii–xxvi). These two artefacts thus provide the lovers with a sense of recognition. As Hartree notes, “the bulls confirm Maurice’s most radical insight – that there are no norms in nature only diversity and uniqueness” (1996, 135). The bulls are markedly un-Hellenic, and

this contrast is expressed in contemporary guidebooks where they “guard the broad way leading from the clarity of Greece and Rome to the mystery of the Orient” (Hall 1928, 12). Forster’s awareness of this distinction is clear in *Abinger Harvest*, where the review of Budge is placed in the section devoted to “the east” as opposed to “the past,” unlike “Cnidus” or “Malconia Shops” (1996, vi–vii). In 1932, the Museum is not an exclusively classical space.

### Love in the Museum

Forster’s final choice of the interior of the national Museum as a backdrop for the climactic realisation and expression of love may be due to simple contrast. Perhaps museum culture in all its hypocrisy and vulgarity evokes through its very absence an awareness of what they are seeking, just as Ducie as an embodiment of normativity is said to supply “a shock from without” that is necessary for the realisation of love (1999, 193; 1932 only: see 285). A similarly negative moment of evocation occurs in “Cnidus,” where the essayist said “the imagination became creative, taking wings because there was nothing to bid it rise, flying impertinently against all archaeology and sense, uttering bird-like cries of ‘Greek! Greek!’ as it flew, declaring that it heard voices because all was so silent and saw faces because it was too dark to see” (1996, 166–7). The Museum “represents the regulated life” (Black 2000, 122) that has no space for such things. As the review of Budge states, modern nationalism has deprived people of a genuine link with the past: “our age is industrial, its interest in the past is mainly faked.” Any engagement with antiquity has been reduced to “a glib familiarity with labels” (1996, 283), a term that can evoke categorisations of class and sexuality. Forster’s question in the review, “what is the use of old objects?” recalls the attitudes of Ducie in the 1914 version who spoke “of the *uses* of the British Museum” in educating visitors (1999, 287), but his own ironic question challenges the reader to resist the normative and nationalistic attitudes of curators such as Budge. The potential of the ancient past to inspire is felt by Maurice, and he still associates “the Theban band” with the Greenwood (1999, 276, 183) even after this rejection of Hellenism, and an engagement with objects has a positive role in the lovers’ movement towards mutual understanding.

For Forster himself, museum objects were not merely “relics” (1999, 287, 194) but could themselves inspire humanistic re-imaginings of their dead owner’s lives, as with Ani and Malconia. Elsewhere, a museum setting could itself have

a positive role for him: in his notebook journal entry for 13 March 1904, he wrote of a “neo-Attic” statue in “the B.M.”:

that wonderful boy with the broken arm ... simply radiates light:  
I never saw anything like it. Right across the Assyrian transept  
he throbs like something under the sea. He couldn't have done  
it in Greece. (2011, I, 121)<sup>2</sup>

Like the Cnidian Demeter, the museum setting does not negate the appeal of this statue, and here the contrast of the setting almost enhances the statue. The ability of museum antiquities to retain their life despite their setting is also imagined in “The Classical Annex,” where a roman statue engages in same-sex sexual activity despite its museum location and has a deeply transformative effect on one gallery visitor (1972, 150).

In the 1932 version of *Maurice*, classical antiquities are associated with English normativity, while Maurice and Alec benefit from the oriental antiquities. The lovers' visit is narrated with less explicit mention of Greek antiquities than in 1914, as noted above: in the later version, for example, the “heroes” are only implicitly Greek (1999, 194–287). This may be simply part of a less specifically detailed presentation of the museum spaces, including the custodians and the library (see above), but it also resonates with Forster's claim in a letter of 6 March 1915 that with *Maurice* he had “created something absolutely new, even to the Greeks” (1985, 222). The Assyrian antiquities, in contrast, inspire an affectionate moment of self-recognition, and this suggests that “old objects” from “the East” have a potential to speak to the living. This turn to the East in the novel may reflect Forster's own source of love, as well as his increased awareness of the Museum's curatorial involvement there. His overall ambivalence towards the Museum as a space is perhaps seen in the novel's treatment of its light: from outside, it suggests a “tomb” which with its ridiculous electric lighting is “miraculously illuminated by spirits of the dead” (1999, 281, 190). While this proves false in literal terms, the image recalls Maurice's grandfather's belief that the spirits of the dead enter the sun where there is “the light within”: “no electric light can

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2 The description suggests that the image is not a relief on a column from Ephesus (British Museum GR 1872,0803.9) as proposed by Herz (1979, 18), but a statue of Apollo from Cyrene (British Museum GR 1861,0725.1). For the location of this statue close to the Assyrian Transept see British Museum 1912, 107; Jenkins 1992, 130, fig. 48.



compare with it” (1999, 242, 118). Although Forster is critical of the institution, the museum scene in the 1932 novel remains a moment of self-realisation for the lovers, and it is often regarded as the novel’s “climax” (Black 2000, 119). Forster’s attitude to the national collection is critical but is also nuanced, and can thus be considered as a characteristically “queer way of being that resist all verities and that is aware of its own implication in the very values that it seeks to explode” (Martin and Piggford 1997, 6). The scene has been described as in effect “queering the museum” (Hoberman 2011, 119–23).

The scene’s emotional power has had consequences for modern museology since the publication of *Maurice* in 1971. In 1986, Merchant Ivory Productions filmed the novel on location in the Museum. The shooting script included the dialogue about “old things belonging to the nation,” in the British Museum scene, specifying the location for this as “Day. Interior. British Museum” (Hesketh-Harvey and Ivory [1986], 22 [scene 146]; on the screenplays see Speidel 2014: 303–5). This exchange was presumably part of a scene of Maurice and Alec walking through the Egyptian sculpture gallery (Room 4); this scene was shot but was later cut in editing due to the film’s length (Ivory, pers. comm. 12.9.2012).<sup>3</sup> The dialogue between Maurice and Alec about the bulls was shot in front of the Khorsabad bulls, which were then no longer displayed in the Assyrian Transept but in a gallery close to the Parthenon Duveen gallery (Room 10c, built in 1938: Jenkins 1992, 226–8). Merchant Ivory did not film the conversation with Ducie in the Parthenon displays: they had already used the Duveen gallery for another same-sex couple in *The Bostonians* of 1984 (Ivory, pers. comm. 3.3.2013). Instead, the conversation was staged in a gallery of Assyrian reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh, that is immediately adjacent to the Assyrian bulls (Room 10b). In the film, the living lovers stand against a backdrop of these ancient reliefs, recalling the novel’s contrast between Alec and the heroic sculptures. The film’s use of such historical settings has been described as subversively evoking “the presence of another heritage” (Landy 2007, 248), just as the novel’s presentation of the Museum evoked an alternative view of culture. Subsequently the Museum’s bulls have themselves become a site for fan culture thanks to the film (Monk 2016, 229–31).

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3 This scene is not included in the released ‘Deleted scenes’, but there is footage by the BBC of Merchant Ivory filming it; a clip of this was included in the documentary “A Very British Romance with Lucy Worsley” in 2015 (BBC 4, episode 3).

The scene has had further consequences. Both novel and film were integral to the development of a LGBTQ history project by the British Museum from 2007 onwards (e.g. Parkinson 2013b, 2016a–b), and this project has been part of a museological turn towards LGBTQ histories in heritage institutions (e.g. Sandell 2017). For the project, James Ivory generously provided a range of photographs, and an image of filming in the Egyptian sculpture gallery was used to illustrate the Museum’s role as a setting for stories of same-sex love (Parkinson 2013a, 123). A British Museum temporary exhibition celebrating the anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in England (11 May–15 October 2017) included a panel about “Desire in the Museum” with a photograph of the lovers beside an Assyrian bull by Jon Gardey (fig. 2). In such a way, the scene enabled

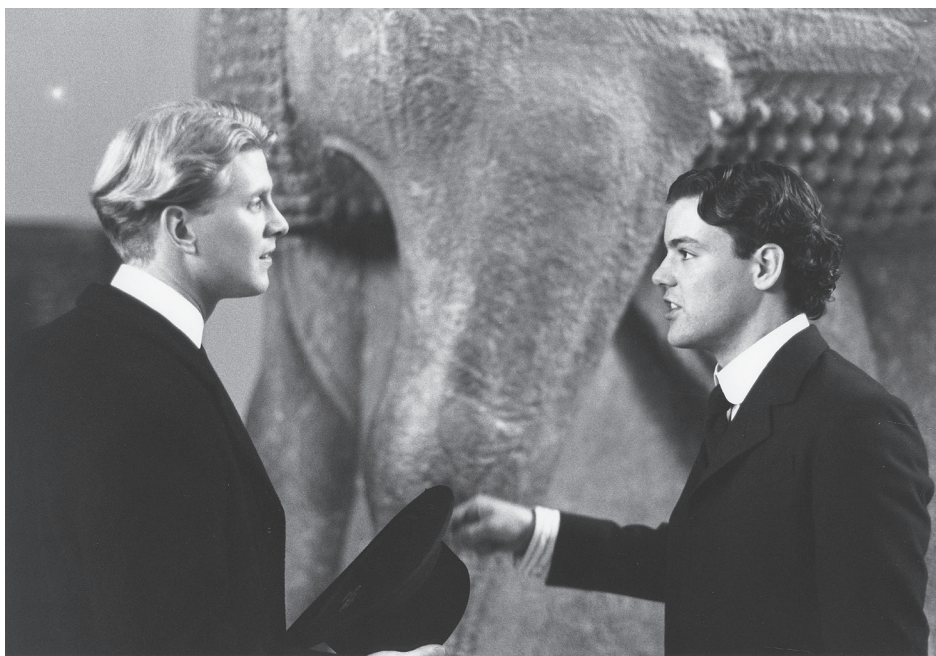


Fig. 2 Maurice (James Wilby) and Alec (Rupert Graves) in the British Museum in 1986. © Merchant Ivory Productions; photograph by Jon Gardey.

the Museum to thematise its own role in LGBTQ history, and a trail through the galleries in effect addressed Forster’s description of Maurice and Alec searching “for something” (British Museum 2017, n.d.); this trail is now a permanent feature at the Museum (Frost 2018a–b; Google Arts and Culture n.d.). In the fol-

lowing years, a subsequent touring partnership exhibition “Desire, Love, Identity: Exploring LGBTQ Histories” showcased a copy of the film’s shooting script at several venues, including the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (25 September–2 December 2018), where there was a program of events with James Ivory (Ashmolean 2018; Ivory 2018). At a later venue in Bolton (14 March–26 May 2019), the script was displayed together with local material relating to the Bolton Whitman Fellowship and Edward Carpenter’s life at nearby Millthorpe, Derbyshire (for which see e.g. Gardner in Forster 1999, x–xii).

In such a way, Forster’s characteristically nuanced mode of engagement with the “old objects” has enabled the modern Museum to change its presentation of what he termed the “great unrecorded history” of happy same-sex desire (letter of 25 August 1917: Forster 1985, 269). This history of “the happiness of 1000s of others whose names I shall never hear” was something that his time spent with el-Adl had allowed him to glimpse in Egypt, and the positive presence of oriental antiquities in the later draft of *Maurice* may reflect this time. His simultaneously critical and empathetic description of the visit to the British Museum by Maurice and Alec has proved an effective agent in allowing these histories to be displayed as integral parts of world heritage. His fiction, “insisting that the inner life can pay” (Auden 1991, 195), continues to have a transformative effect on institutionalised public culture as well as on individual readers.

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# Towards Forsterian Mobilities through Public Transport as Public Space

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**Abstract:** Writings of place experience contribute to mobility studies by casting light on individual perspectives and the shaping of memory by art. E.M. Forster had consistent but varied interest in public transport (PT) settings, especially those of trains but also trams and buses. Forster studies benefit from exploring his treatment of PT while asking if there are mobilities that are specifically Forsterian. Literary studies of mobilities develop here within the context of an interdisciplinary project concerned with the kinds of public space found on and around PT. In grasping the mobilities of an individual writer, biographical evidence is both indispensable and problematic. Forsterian mobilities repeat and modify those of earlier English literary authors, as when a journey in *Howards End* echoes one in W.M. Thackeray's *Pendennis*. Equally, PT networks such as the tramway of Alexandria were for Forster markers of modernity. Most importantly for Forsterian mobilities, PT travel facilitates personal boundary-crossing.

**Keywords:** Forster, E.M.; public transport; mobilities; literary urban studies; individuality

## Introduction\*

This article investigates some of the diverse public transport (hereafter PT) representations in E. M. Forster's varied fiction and non-fictional writings, written over a seventy-year period. Isolating representations of PT from other mental and physical acts of movement means cutting off Forster's walks from his bus or taxi rides. In dialogue with this century's interdisciplinary humanities and social

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\* Work on this article was supported by the project Public Transport as Public Space in European cities: Narrating, Experiencing, Contesting (PUTSPACE). The project has financing from the HERA Joint Research Programme ([www.heranet.info](http://www.heranet.info)) which is co-funded by AKA, BMBF via DLRPT, ETAg, and the European Commission through Horizon 2020.



sciences research into mobilities, the article therefore seeks, as groundwork for a study of PT in Forster, to identify and understand specifically Forsterian mobilities: the sorts of move characteristic of Forster and his writings. By engaging with the current mobilities paradigm in the social sciences and humanities, studies of Forsterian mobilities would link individuals' conscious awareness of personal movement and boundary-crossing, including the shaping of that into art, and matters that are beyond individual comprehension such as the interaction of very large numbers of bodies, human and other, in a transport network.

Humanities scholars working on mobilities often focus on a single transport mode or its settings. Benjamin Bateman (2015), for instance, extracts from Forster's work representations of experience in railway stations and carriages. Others concentrate on the horse-drawn cab, the tram, the bus, the car and the ocean liner (Gavin 2015; Lowe 2015; Shelley 2015; Stobbs Wright 2015; Wagner 2015). For Bateman, "brief escapes, aleatory pleasures, and passing surges of emotion" characterise the Forsterian railway journey (Bateman 2015, 196). Forster related to PT and the encounters it generates as an individual and as a creative artist, but the manifestation *in* his writings of these technologies and the spaces associated with them is also revealing of his era.

In this essay, after surveying the theoretical landscape, including the notion of PT as public space, I turn to applications in literary studies of the new mobilities paradigm. Individuality is an unsolved problem within research into mobilities. The mobilities paradigm, after all, has often aligned itself with "posthuman" positions including the non-representational theory developed in cultural geography to trace non-conscious bodily movements (Anderson 2019; McCormack 2012; Merriman and Pearce 2017). Three brief case studies of Forsterian mobilities follow. The first concentrates on fiction and non-fiction which Forster wrote during his twenties, examining Edwardian representations of cross-class random encounters between people on trains and trams. The second connects Forster and a notable literary predecessor, William Makepeace Thackeray, via a key late-twentieth-century work of criticism on Forsterian mobilities, by Frederic Jameson. Thirdly and finally, I glance at Forster's 1923 essay collection *Pharos and Pharillon*, in which the tramway is a core aspect of modernity in presenting Alexandria to a (largely) English audience. The research develops earlier examinations of Forster, space and place (Finch 2011; Finch 2016, 153–72), but the analyses presented here are entirely new. In the article, these investigations develop in conjunction with a current multidisciplinary research project: "Public Trans-

port as Public Space in European Cities: Narrating, Experiencing, Contesting” (PUTSPACE; Tuvikene et al. 2021). The objective shared by the interdisciplinary team on this project is to humanise transport research by exploring the different kinds of public space that exist, actually and potentially, around PT modes such as buses, trams and metro systems.

### **Biography, Distance and Mobility in Forsterian Transport Representations**

During Forster’s lifetime the materialities of PT, and notably those of train travel, structured daily life in England in England, the British Empire and beyond. Among the geographical settings of all his novels and stories written before World War One is a specific spatial zone: one extending around London and encompassing suburbanising countryside and older urban settlements themselves expanding steadily. The limits of the area are positioned a couple of hours’ train journey from the metropolis. Industry, institutional building, motorized road transport and speculative construction of houses appear in this body of writing as emerging features of a broader London hinterland containing the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge, towns like Tonbridge in Kent, counties like Hertfordshire and Surrey and, on the perimeter, the cathedral city of Salisbury. This particular complex of imaginative place is both conceptual and occupies a place in real-world cartographies, as when the voice of an ironized authorial narrator in *Howards End* invites readers to look northwards from England’s South Coast (see Finch 2016, 153–72). This place zone, a broader South of England, underpins and structures Forster’s fictions of his native country in complex and multiple ways, operating through their own cartographies (Finch 2011, 66–69). The southern English zone, with its own internal complexity, exists in a dialectic – often implicit – with the overseas places on which it depends for income, those in a peripheral position both financially and governmentally, places such as Egypt and India.

As well as being a location for encounters, and therefore meaningful, PT has distinctive qualities as a type of space for Forster, a fact that emerges when biographical evidence is put alongside that found in his writing (both fiction and non-fiction). Forster met the love of his life, Mohammed el Adl, on an Alexandria tram where the latter worked as a conductor (Watt 1983). Biographers and commentators from P.N. Furbank (1978) onwards have informed readers of apparently mundane events like this but have not so far grasped the importance

to Forster's mental and sexual development of encounters in PT space – and therefore of that space's own qualities both for him and for others. As argued in transport geography and the sociology of mobilities, distance is temporal and spatial but also social; it calls for analysis in itself, rather than just use as a tool in spatial analysis, and it has political dimensions, not least in our times related to sustainability and to conceptualizations of time (Banister 2010; Handel 2018). Following the pioneering work of Wolfgang Schivelbusch, research into the identities and experiences fostered by the coming of the railway has often emphasized the mechanization involved in the timetable, or acts of spectating in which the world beyond the window is reframed as a landscape (Schivelbusch [1977]; Revill 2011). The train in Forster, this article claims, has a socially in-between character. It provides in its carriages a zone of social connection, just as its rails connected settlements that lay many miles apart.

Trains' varied mobilities punctuate Forster's fiction and non-fiction. The train was Forster's main mode of connection between London and the part-suburban, part-rural county of Surrey, his main home throughout the period 1904–1945 (Finch 2011, 177–231; Gardner 2014). In the former, it is during a train journey that Maurice Hall is sexually propositioned by a man and then faces a personal crisis that leads him to recognise his true identity as a homosexual (Forster 1971, 131; Finch 2011, 114–15). The train of *Maurice* is thus a stage not just for in-betweenness and ambivalence but fuller transformations at least in self-perception. In Forster's non-fiction, meanwhile, people who entered the countryside of southern England from its towns, most often by train, become figures for social change driven by expanding conditions of urbanity. Forster called a 1940s memoir of his relations with a house at Abinger Hammer "West Hackhurst: A Surrey Ramble" (see Finch 2012; Gardner 2014). Ramblers were people who came from urban centres to the countryside, sometimes with the explicit aim of opening up land in private ownership for public use (Matless 2016). This made them key figures in politicised mobility clashes of the earlier twentieth century in Britain. Forster's essay "My Wood," first published in a left-wing newspaper in 1926, satirised rural property-owners' attitudes towards day-trippers to the countryside who leave "paper," "tins" and other evidence of themselves behind (Forster 1996: 23; see Finch 2011: 206–07). For Forster, identifying himself (via the title of the 1940s memoir) as a Rambler meant identifying with town-dwellers rather than playing the part of a genteel countryman, and the same choice of identification runs through many of the case studies here.

### Public Transport as Public Space: Politicizing Mobilities; Provincializing the Metropolis

As well as being a noteworthy writer of the age of modernism in British literature, Forster lived through the era in transport history during which vast numbers of people used the PT networks of cities and took trains between them. Private car ownership in Britain only grew to become a mass phenomenon from the 1950s onwards, by which time Forster was already an old man. London's PT networks during Forster's lifetime were not universal resources for movement, equally accessible for all, but were highly stratified in social and spatial terms. The Underground railway (London's metro system) and trains to parts of the commuter belt surrounding London including rural Surrey were middle-class forms of transport, broadly speaking. Other modes such as the tramways of the city had a distinctly working-class image. Fare levels helped generate these differences.

Train, tram and bus travel figures multiple times in Forster's earlier writings, from the death of Rickie Elliot in *The Longest Journey* to the story "The Celestial Omnibus." There are also numerous mentions of PT in the letters and journals. Unsurprisingly, social class perceptions are often central in these, as they had been in earlier writing of the horse bus and stagecoach eras by the likes of Dickens, Thackeray and Trollope. The nineteenth-century horse omnibus of London, historical geographer Richard Dennis (2021) has pointed out, separated people as much as it brought them together. It put travellers into close physical proximity to one another, side by side on the omnibus, but also divided them from those outside it, both from the rich in private carriages and the poor going everywhere on foot. Forster, like Thackeray and the other earlier novelists in the English comic moralist tradition, uses PT experience to reveal character. An example occurs when Charlotte Bartlett's personal muddle appears to readers through her mistakenly alighting at the wrong station of two at Dorking, Surrey, in *A Room with a View* (Forster 1978, 120; Finch 2011, 201). In all of these cases, the publicness of public space is at stake, and transport in vehicles shared with others is a key site for negotiations which are both social and individual.

PT brings multiple types of public space into being (Tuvikene et al. 2021). Public space is itself a term with its own history, and it is inherently two-sided, indicating both an ideal in urban society and many actual physical areas people can enter to encounter one another, including not just squares but railway

station platforms and the interiors of buses (Tuvikene et al. 2021, 2). Research methodologies originating in the humanities bring a “more-than-technological” perspective to fields of study which have long been dominated by approaches originating in engineering, finance and public policy (Tuvikene et al. 2021, 4–9). To think of PT not just as something with a function but as a public space in which people meet and identities are formed is to humanise it. Such a perspective aids the insight that “mobility experiences and systems of mobility are important means of grasping how cities are organized and understood but they should be understood together with the political economy of how PT is made” (Tuvikene et al. 2021, 9).

In effect, this is a political economy critique of the new mobilities paradigm, yet one which equally aims to trace actual mobilities with precision. In its wake, what could Forsterian PT as public space mean? Research into transport mobilities may focus on European cities but will fail analytically if it exaggerates their importance in world histories of mobility. Concepts such as public space need to have their “epistemologies” and history in European thought and urban history “provincialized” (Tuvikene et al. 2021, 18). Such thoughts apply here in that Forster was a European writer trained in the classical tradition whose power was to express how boundaries are crossed, whether geographical or those of social and sexual identities. An understanding of Forsterian mobilities needs to consider his already-mentioned range of writing on non-European, or borderline European, urban sites which were also, in the case of Alexandria and Indian cities, on imperial peripheries.

### **Mobility Studies, Individuality and the Individual Writer**

In 2015, Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries could say that studies of transport in literature were “rare,” the importance of the topic to the meanings of fiction “often overlooked” (Gavin and Humphries 2021, 1). Projects like PUTSPACE meet the need for more research into literary representations of transport settings and experiences. Equally, the meaning of transport has changed in humanities approaches which put transport into dialogue with other concepts, themselves questionable and debated, and through being set into networks or patterns of traceable movement such as loops (Bissell 2013).

Forsterian mobilities are not just those characteristic of a given human individual but of an individual who was self-consciously a literary artist. Literary

scholars' chief contribution to the new mobilities paradigm so far has been to insist that willed, remembered and narrated movements matter. They go alongside – and to an extent question – the emphasis in actor-network theory and other branches of research positioned as posthuman (on which much of the social science mobilities work depends) on the unwilled, on bodies and the unconscious or semi-conscious mobilities as part of large groups of lifeforms in ecosystems. Literary accounts of mobility are essential materials for social scientists because they retain long-range narratives of experience that are hard to access through other categories of source such as interviews. In the words of Lynne Pearce, “the connection between the urban subject’s apprehension of the material present and his or her personal past” emerges particularly strongly in literary texts such as novels (Pearce 2020, 207). Academic literary scholarship has traditionally been highly subjectivist, whether in its New Critical, postmodernist or ideological forms; posthuman approaches represent a challenge to it. Yet literary texts also provide powerful, perhaps uniquely powerful, evidence of how humans experience mobilities in environments like public space.

An important recent contribution to this new sub-discipline is the 2019 volume *Mobilities, Literature, Culture* edited by Pearce with Marian Aguiar and Charlotte Mathieson. This finds room for work on individual writers alongside studies of particular mobilised spaces (such as the buses of apartheid-era South Africa), accounts of how bodily practices such as running and cycling feel, sites experienced in transit such as the motel and the self-driving car, and genres such as the road movie (Aguiar, Mathieson and Pearce 2019). The book builds on earlier work such as that of Pearce with Peter Merriman in which “a broadened understanding of ‘kinaesthetics,’ through which scholars can examine how movement is enacted, felt, perceived, expressed, metered, choreographed, appreciated and desired” is offered as a guiding principle when humanities scholars work on mobilities (Merriman and Pearce 2017, abstract). Types of literary text including children’s fiction and regional novels develop their own characteristic patterns relating material bodily mobilities and networks to longer-term and intellectualized aspects of human self-consciousness including memory (Murray and Overall 2017; Pearce 2020).

Like Bateman, Nour Dakkak (2019) uses a reading of *Howards End* to juxtapose the varied mobilities of the established railways and the emergent motor car in the modernity of early twentieth-century Britain. Her reading develops the classic account of Forster’s characteristic elusiveness and covert meanings as expressed in what seems a report on the railway journey north from London

which Fredric Jameson offers in his 1990 essay “Modernism and Imperialism” (Jameson 2007). But, unlike Bateman, Dakkak builds her argument around embodiment, a central concept in the posthuman turn away from subject-focused philosophies (Dakkak 2019, 117–18; MacCormack 2012). It is important in literary studies for embodiment in a given moment to be juxtaposed with what Pearce calls “dis-embodiment,” as people feel and remember the impacts of different times and places on themselves, a phenomenon uniquely mediated in literature.

Yet the focus on mobilities that are specifically “Forsterian” means looking at what was individual about Forster as an individual and a creative artist more, perhaps, than seeking in his writings representative qualities of a narrowly defined age of “modernism.” For example the space of PT in Forster’s writings, both fictional and non-fictional, is often the site for glimpses of a desired other who exists across class or ethnic boundary lines. Maurice Hall meets the norms defined in his particular suburb via his fellow commuters from “Sunnington” (a fictional suburb resembling Weybridge in Surrey, where Forster lived from 1904 to 1925) to London on the 8:36 train every weekday morning (Forster 1971, 83; Finch 2011, 114). Coming back from London one day, Maurice meets the stranger who propositions him when the two are alone in the compartment together. Through the consequences of this encounter he is eventually able to meet his own true self. Similarly, qualities of individuality are implicit in earlier studies of mobility as mediated in literary texts. Elsa Court, for instance, reviews the cultural geography of the US motel space, then turns to the particularity of Vladimir Nabokov’s response to this potent location of automobility: “it was his position as a foreigner in America that made him singularly perceptive of the idiosyncrasies of its innocuous everyday culture” (Court 2019, 67). Like Nabokov in America, Forster was always an outsider in Britain. Although it was his native country and he was a privileged intellectual, he spent his life as a gay man living under a regime which criminalised homosexuality; this is an inseparable part of his mobilities’ individuality. The individuality of PT space in Forster is twofold. Forsterian PT space is both a location for encounters, and therefore somewhere charged with meaning through what happens there, and has its own qualities as an in-between, partially public, space. The next section explores this duality by reading one incident in Forster’s second novel, *The Longest Journey*, and connecting that to a non-fictional incident of December 1905 as reported in the writer’s journal.

### Cross-Class Random Encounters around Trams and Trains circa 1905

The sixth chapter of the novel's first section, "Cambridge," is the one in which protagonist Rickie Elliott turns away from his intellectual friend Stewart Ansell, from the university city of Cambridge and from "imagination" (Forster 1984: 59). The latter is symbolised by "a fragment of a little story he had tried to write last term," which has a setting in Sicily recalling Forster's own early stories. Most of the chapter is dedicated to Rickie and Ansell's arrival in Cambridge at the beginning of term. A tram accident brings Rickie into contact with a member of a different social class from his own, his bed-maker ("bedder") or servant at college, Mrs Aberdeen. Unlike their contemporaries Tilliard and Hornblower, Rickie and Ansell do not hail hansom cabs (private-hire horse-drawn carriages) when a PT accident happens: "the wheels fell off the station tram" (Forster 1984, 55).

"Let's get out and walk," muttered Ansell. But Rickie was succouring a distressed female – Mrs Aberdeen. "Oh, Mrs Aberdeen, I never saw you; I am so glad to see you – I am so very glad." Mrs Aberdeen was cold. She did not like being spoken to outside the college, and was also distrait about her basket. Hitherto no genteel eye had ever seen inside it, but in the collision its little calico veil fell off, and there was revealed – nothing. The basket was empty [...]. All the same, she was distrait, and "We shall meet later, sir, I dessy," was all the greeting Rickie got from her. (Forster 1984, 55–56)

The tram thus links social classes but not in any easy or idealistic way. Rickie and Ansell board a second PT vehicle, identified as "the slow stuffy tram that plies ever twenty minutes between the unknown and the market-place" (Forster 1984, 57). This spatial identifier, "the unknown," indicates how the lives of Mrs Aberdeen and other ordinary Cambridge citizens remain, in Rickie's phrase, "hidden" off-stage in this spatial "unknown" which has a Cambridge toponym for him, the name of the working-class suburb Barnwell (Forster 1984, 56).

The chapter narrates Rickie's shift from personal relations with Ansell towards a conventional and socially acceptable marriage to Agnes. His friendship with Ansell is not just a potential love relationship between a single-sex couple but also a cross-class friendship, albeit one of a much more subdued and even barely visible kind, since it is between two Cambridge undergraduates, than other such



relationships in Forster's writing and imaginative biography. The "lame shepherd" Forster met then sought again at Figsbury Ring outside Salisbury in 1903 was a symbol of the sort of man he wanted to connect with (Forster [1903–09]: 129). The love between Maurice Hall and Alec Scudder would be an example from the fiction; so would Forster and el Adl, as well as Forster and the police officer Bob Buckingham, from the life. Ansell's background is "plebeian" and Rickie tells Agnes Pembroke that he "isn't a gentleman." Later, readers hear from the narrating authorial voice that Ansell's father is "a provincial draper of moderate prosperity," prosperous enough to support his son's studies of philosophy (Forster 1984, 30, 7, 29). The apparently low-interest, everyday (and even to be avoided as socially infra dig, as by Tilliard and Hornblower) environment of the urban or inter-city PT vehicle is thus part of Forster's artistic structure as a vital contributor to the possibility of such relations. Broadly, the mundane aspects of urban modernity are to be welcomed, Forster claims, in that they bring people together in ways that earlier hierarchies denied or disabled.

The passage in which Rickie meets Mrs Aberdeen plays down the possibility that social change might be fuelled by cross-class encounters that happen in the environments of PT. Rickie's remarks to Ansell after the brief conversation following the tram accident seem naïve forebears of Forster's later 'only connect' motto. Rickie speculates that "bedders are to blame for the present lamentable state of things, just as much as gentlefolk" and, somewhat presumptuously, asserts that Mrs Aberdeen "ought to want me to come [and visit her at home]. She ought to introduce me to her husband" (Forster 1984, 56). The tone is subtly different when we examine a comparable encounter on a train through Cambridgeshire in December 1905, which Forster recorded in his "Notebook Journal," with "a ganger's wife and child." Work on *The Longest Journey* "was well under way" during this month (Heine 1984, xxxiii). This encounter perhaps inspired the conversation following the tram accident in the novel. In support of such a claim is Forster's statement in his diary that the woman encountered "had the charm of Mrs Tabor" (Forster [1903–09], 141). Mrs Tabor was Forster's bedmaker at King's College, Cambridge (Gardner 2011: 219, f.n. 169) and her surname echoes in that of the novel's Mrs Aberdeen.

The train-carriage encounter happened at March, in the Fenlands of the Isle of Ely, on a longer-distance train (Forster was travelling from Hunstanton in Norfolk to Manchester). This was in other words not on urban PT exemplified by the city tram, but still not far from Cambridge. Forster reports opening a door for this woman and child so they can enter his compartment, then the wom-

an's conversation, which focuses on the fatal effects of poverty and inequality triggered, in this case, by a greedy landlord. The woman tells him that another child of hers died, "because the landlord had turned them out in the winter with a week's notice, and they hurried into a house 'where you could put plates under the door.'" She continues: "'The railway has made March and you may say spoiled it - at least for poor people,'" that is, because of rising rents (Forster [1903-09], 140). Forster's journal note has at least implications of political content, if nothing more direct than that: such conditions should not exist. Forster does not seem to have thought, as Rickie does, that working-class people like the ganger's wife are "to blame [...] just as much as gentlefolk." In the novel, this is to say, the political consequences of knowledge gained through cross-class encounters on PT recede in the ironic treatment of Rickie as naïve protagonist.

### Duplicities and Redoubling: Jameson, Forster, Thackeray

Late-twentieth-century Forster scholars including Frederic Jameson and others advanced political readings on a global scale that linked with locality. Jameson's account of *Howards End* in his 1990 "Modernism and Imperialism" merits reconsideration with the specific mobilities of a given transport type, the railway, in mind. Jameson reads *Howards End* via Mrs Munt's journey early on in the novel's plot to its titular house, Helen Schlegel having written to announce her engagement to Paul Wilcox. The passage, Jameson says, is revealing of "Forster's duplicities," concealed by its apparent "amiable simplicity" (Jameson 2007, 158). On this argument, the novel contains "pockets of philosophical complexity [...] hidden away" beneath its surface. We could redeploy Court's adjective for the motel in Nabokov and call the surface of *Howards End* "innocuous," in narrative terms (Court 2019, 67). The novel remains amenable to "everyday" and even avowedly right-wing readings, after all (e.g. North 2019). Such Forsterian "pockets," Jameson claims, are specifically meditations on the philosophy of space. Important to them is Forster's individual use of mobilised spatial settings such as the view that a railway carriage affords. Few would contest the truth of Court's assertion that outsiders have a particular way of seeing that is unavailable to those for whom the matter seen is not foreign. But outsiders can misinterpret as well as be perceptive. The challenge is that particular types of grouped identity (as a being embodied somehow, as gendered, via "race" or class perceptions) exist alongside both full subjective individuality and a biological commonality as a species member.

Jameson's moves, drawn from Freudian psychoanalytic technique, remain appealing because they tolerate doubleness, the simultaneous presence of radical others, in a literary text with its own unconscious. He reads *Howards End* in terms of "substitution": "of rivalry for exploitation, and of a First World set of characters for a Third World presence" (Jameson 2007, 156). In the age of imperialism, Forster's readers are presented with a thing called the English novel and instructed not to see empire in it, Jameson claims. Yet, like Court, Jameson obscures the question of whether mobilities can be characteristic of an individual. Both the novel overall and the scene of Mrs Munt's travel to Hertfordshire from London by train "under innumerable tunnels [...] to rescue Helen from this dreadful mess" in particular demonstrate to Jameson a critical desideratum (Forster 1975, 29). Namely, "recoordinating the concept of style with some new account of the experience of space, both together now marking the emergence of the modern as such" (Jameson 2007, 159). Style is conceived by Jameson as individual, unlike "the emergence of the modern," clearly a broader phenomenon.

A dimension largely unacknowledged by Jameson in "Modernism and Imperialism" is that of direct literary influence. Jameson and other writers on the railway mobilities of *Howards End* (e.g. Bateman 2015) do not mention the close resemblance between the opening plot gambit of *Howards End* and that of Thackeray's 1848–50 novel *Pendennis*. Having heard that his nephew Arthur Pendennis has suddenly become engaged to a partner considered shocking and unsuitable, the socially proper and narrow-minded (but caring) Major Pendennis, Arthur's uncle, travels by stagecoach to an unnamed south-western county of England identifiable with Devon to rescue the boy-man (Thackeray 1994, 1–6, 83–94). In both cases an uncle or aunt motivated by a fear of social shame rushes across the country using the longer-distance transport mode of the era in an ultimately successful effort to prevent a hasty marriage.

Both Thackeray and Forster build plotting around a depiction of the changing mobilities of their moment – stage coach to railway in Thackeray (the railway is being built in the rural area at the end of *Pendennis*); railway to motor-car in *Howards End*. Another doubling from those already grasped by Jameson, like home versus colonial (or the double life central to *Maurice*) is thus a doubling of Forster's tale with Thackeray's. This is at once a matter of two individualities, Forster's and Thackeray's, each marked by a personal style, and a representational quality characteristic of realism, concerned with

the era's characteristic transport modes and characters who can seem representative. Mrs Munt and Major Pendennis stand for characteristics of the English upper middle classes, and sub-categories within those classes, during specific historical phases. Forster offers readers with whom he shares a background in reading and English social class the witty gesture of alluding to *Pendennis* via the resemblance between the two quests. Later readers are much less likely to have read *Pendennis* than Forster's initial readers were. They are therefore less likely to get the joke, or to grasp what it highlights, namely that socially conservative forces and apparently disruptive transport technologies go hand in hand. The transport narrative of *Howards End* is additionally a repetition of that in *Pendennis* in another respect. This is that both share a position in industrial modernity, or Jameson's "modern as such," which has as a characteristic the repeated introduction of new modes of transport and the obsolescence of the existing ones, themselves quite recently novel.

The singleness of an individual's mobility thus comes into contact with a doubleness threatening to redouble again and again in Derridean fashion and so threaten any singleness of identity or individuality. Individual mobilities, indeed, are always shadowed by the disappearance of individuals into crowds. Next, we move in time and space from England in 1910 Egypt during and after the First World War, and from the novel to the essay form.

### ***Pharos and Pharillon: The Ramleh Tramway Equals Modernity***

Forster wrote of Alexandria for the Hogarth Press in 1923 via a binary: *Pharos and Pharillon*. The former was "the vast and heroic lighthouse" of Alexandria in antiquity, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. *Pharillon*, not famous before Forster, was a name, he claimed in the introduction to his book, derived from "an obscure [...] low rock" which "then slid into the Mediterranean." If *Pharos* stood for antiquity, *Pharillon* was a label he applied "to modern events and to personal impressions" (Forster 1923, 10). Here, then, is the pairing of antiquity and modernity which appears again and again in Forster's writing. The relationship between the two, as elsewhere in Forster, is that of a complex dialectic rather than a binary in which one excludes the other. *Pharos and Pharillon*, for all its concern with twentieth-century notions of modernity, is a book in a nineteenth-century English prose tradition which combines the literary essay-cum-memoir of Charles Lamb or Thomas De Quincey

with the Dickensian journalistic sketch. Yet there are breaths of the kind of internal, reflective perspective, as opposed to descriptions of externals, which Virginia Woolf, denigrating their predecessors, found Forster praiseworthy for in her essay "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown," for instance in the sketch "Between the Sun and the Moon" (Forster 1923, 82–85). And there is the Wordsworthian nature writing of "The Solitary Place" (Forster 1923, 86–90).

As indicated by *Pharos and Pharillon*, Forsterian mobilities are complex acts of boundary crossing but tend to involve binaries: ancient and modern; masculine and feminine; urban and rural; upper class and lower class. In this, they contrast with other patterns of literary mobility representations. For instance, a major tradition of London writing during the twentieth century is of multi-polar urban movement by bodies/subjects whose paths overlap. Woolf, Samuel Selvon and Michael Moorcock are examples of twentieth-century London writers in this tradition, all of them displaying a special interest in PT experiences.

*Pharos and Pharillon* is a storyteller's juxtaposition of the ancient (or pre-modern) city and the modern. As in numerous accounts, literary and sociological, modernity begins in the later eighteenth century here, but there is a glance forward to what seems its consummation or ultimate symbol:

Since the boat that had brought them was owned by a Christian, they were forbidden to enter the Western Harbour, and had to disembark not far from the place where, in more enlightened days, the Ramleh Tramway was to terminate. All was barbarism then, save for two great obelisks, one prone, one erect "Cleopatra's Needles," not yet transferred to New York and London respectively. (Forster 1923, 59)

Here, the tramway stands for "the comforts of the modern" that were absent as were "[t]he glories of the antique" when the English traveller Eliza Fay (whose writings Forster afterwards edited) arrived in Alexandria en route for India in 1779. It is not alone in thus standing for modernity, since Forster also points out "the hotels, the clubs, the drainage system, the exquisite Municipal buildings" as exemplifications of the twentieth century there. His view of the city is as somewhat exotic, but as a European periphery or in-between site connecting East and West, rather than as fully orientalist.

## Conclusion

Forsterian mobilities include the specific mobilities of industrial modernity but extend beyond that to what for humans are bodily universals – like walking. Forster’s interest in contemporary mobilities is a vital part of the idea he called “Pharillon” when discussing Alexandria, one combining “modern events and [...] personal impressions.” The latter, for him, existed in imaginative dialogue with old-established sorts of mobility, as exemplified by a *Commonplace Book* entry (see Finch 2011, 219):

I used to think a grass grown lane more real than a high road, but it is an economic anachronism, kept up by people [...] who have spare cash. Something in me still responds to it, and without indulging in that response I should be shallow, wretched, yet oh that I could hitch my wagon on to something less foolish. (Forster 1985, 36–37)

The mobilities here operate on paths connecting country houses along which their owners can walk to meet each other without entering the outside world of the “high road.” Forster’s response blends nostalgia with a satisfaction in the mundane details of the present and even the sweeping away of “anachronism.”

The liberation potential of PT mobilities is a recurrent topic in Forster’s writings, both fictional and non-fictional. It lurks in the encounters between the fictional Rickie and Mrs Aberdeen, and that between the non-fictional Forster and the ganger’s wife and her child who entered the train at March. It is more overtly present in the London-bound train in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* which enables Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbott to speak freely (Forster 1976, 73–78; Finch 2011, 250). And it is present on the real-life London bus where, as a passenger in March 1905, Forster witnessed the encounter between a bus-conductor and a “red-moustached loafer.” For the young writer this meeting exemplified the decency of working-class Englishmen (Forster [1903–09], 133; Finch 2011, 249–50). Existing research into literary mobilities has indicated how writers (such as Anna Sewell in her young adult novel *Black Beauty*) work through the “accuracy” of their transport representations towards “empathy” with humans’ and animals’ experience of urban modernity (Gavin 2015, 102, 114). Valuable as such approaches are, Forsterian mobilities can be grasped as something more than a key to the affective dimensions of a particular environment, rather as social acts including transgressive moves across class lines and across the lines

separating countries and cultures. In other words, studying Forsterian mobilities means refocusing Forster studies around social class, but doing so with particular attention to the construction and porosity of boundary lines.

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**Politics and Poetics of Mobility:  
Gender, Motion, and Stasis in E. M. Forster's  
*Where Angels Fear to Tread***

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**Abstract:** This article proposes an interdisciplinary reading of E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. It essentially argues that Forster's novel offers a precious opportunity to tap into the reciprocal exchange between Mobility Studies and narrative practices. By examining the dynamics of movement and stasis in the novel, it sustains a dual emphasis on the way motion defines the aesthetic orientations of the narrative, and the way (im)mobility undergirds discourses of power and control. The narrative, itself a vehicle for the circulation of ideas and cultural representations, engages a discussion about who has the right to move and who is forced to stay put, and how (im)mobility shapes social and gendered spaces. Forster's predilection for employing contrasts as a platform for his social critique advances mobility and immobility as major concerns in his novel. The article homes in on differential mobilities and discusses gendered motion and stasis.

**Keywords:** E. M. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, embodied mobility, material mobility, gendered mobility, (im)mobility (in)justice

Virginia Woolf's reading of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* brings to the fore E. M. Forster's acute awareness of his surroundings and his tour de force in capturing the spirit of the age, the zeitgeist of the Edwardian era. Woolf bears witness to Forster's keen eye for details and discerning narration of the quotidian and the mundane. She offers as evidence the writer's interpolation of the bicycle in his narrative: "In 1905 Lilia learned to bicycle, coasted down the High Street on Sunday evening, and fell off at the turn by the church. For this she was given a talking to by her brother-in-law which she remembered to her dying day" (Woolf 1966, 342). Woolf's reading of the bicycle episode stops at praising Forster's capacity to transform his narratives into cultural archives, claiming that "the social historian will find his books full of illuminating information" (342). While benefiting from Woolf's perceptive remark on the

socio-historical quality of Forster's novel, I carry on in this article where she had left. I propose rerouting the bicycle incident to the field of mobility studies and reading it as a sign of damaged mobility. My focus is not reduced to the various means of transportations in the novel; I am far more interested in an intersectional (im)mobility (in)justice wherein acts of movement and stasis intersect gender, class, and culture.

The rationale behind this article is to look at Forster's *Where Angels Fear Tread* from the prism of mobility studies, a road relatively not well-trodden thus far. The interplay between mobility and immobility offers an innovative venue to appraise the novel and steer a path in its social and cultural conflicts. Indeed, Forster's attention to movement and stasis makes his fiction pertinent to recent debates in mobility studies. The two critical studies that explicitly position their arguments in mobility studies are Sarah Gibson's "A seat with a view: Tourism, (im)mobility and the cinematic- travel glance" (2006) and Nour Dakkak's "Mobility, Attentiveness and Sympathy in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*" (2019). Gibson's article is a quite pertinent critical intervention conjugating research in mobility and film studies. It focuses on the cinematic adaptation of *A Room with a View* and centers on social, embodied, and technological mobilities related to tourism. Dakkak's article, on the other hand, presses the borders of mobility studies to literary analysis and looks into the impact of modern mobilities on human care and neglect. The two articles partake in an interdisciplinary mode of analysis, a venture I try to pursue in my reading of Forster's debut novel.

Even though my work intersects those two articles in its concern with mobility, it departs from them in its attempt at reading *Where Angels Fear to Tread* from the perspective of the new mobility paradigm as conceptualized by Mimi Sheller and John Urry. It homes in on differential mobilities and the entangled inequalities related to movement and stasis in Forster's novel. I argue that the narrative, even in its aesthetic orientations, is entrenched in a politics of uneven distribution of (im)mobility based on gender and class. I propose three interrelated axes to examine this topic. The first is theoretical and seeks to explain the polyvalent usage of the term mobility, which can be approached both literally and metaphorically. The second is attentive to the aesthetics of mobility as well as its material side. It mainly argues that motion is central to the plot and is intricately intertwined with narrative strategies and devices. And the third axis examines the ethos of (im)mobility and deconstructs the power of discourses monitoring gendered motion and stasis.

## Of Mobility and Justice

The mobilities turn instigated by Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006) is an interdisciplinary venture, wherein spatial studies is absorbed into sociology. The rationale behind this fusion is to align mobility with spaces of mobility, for “mobility like place, space and territory, involves a politics of hierarchy, of inclusion and exclusion” (Cresswell 2011, 167). Such awareness of differential mobilities and asymmetrical regimes of movements and stasis is at the core of what Mimi Sheller calls “mobility justice,” which she defines as “an overreaching concept for thinking about how power and inequality inform the governance and control of movement, shaping the patterns of unequal mobility and immobility in the circulation of people, resources, and information” (Sheller 2018a, 36). Mobilities research is not only concerned with movement, but maintains a more comprehensive project of deconstructing the mobility apparatus, a complex system of discourses and practices which regulate (im)mobility.

Though it adopts the term “mobility” as a keyword, mobility studies is also attentive to immobility. The use of “(im)mobilities,” Sheller explains, “is meant to signal that mobility and immobility are always connected, relational, and co-dependent, such that we should always think of them, not as binary opposites but as dynamic constellations of multiple scales, simultaneous practices, and relational meanings” (Sheller 2018b, 20). Mobility and immobility are constitutive and deeply entangled. The mobility of some people can concretize only if other people or places, as a matter of fact, are immobile. The tourist-like travels of Philip, Caroline, and Harriet to an Italy they assume is stuck in the Middle Ages provide the most typical example in Forster’s narrative. The converse is equally true, as the immobility of some people happens at the expense of the mobility of others. This is the case of colonization and forced deportations. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Mrs. Herriton’s immobility is only secured with Lilia’s movement to Italy. There is no mutual hierarchy governing mobility and immobility. For example, mobility does not always imply a favorable state, while immobility does not in itself indicate a damaged condition. Both mobility and immobility can signal a desired state and/or a coerced situation.

The term “justice” is inextricably linked with its antonym “injustice,” much like the term “mobility,” which intrinsically refers to immobility. (Im)mobility injustice, therefore, is more attentive to the damage inflicted on someone in their capacity as (im)mobility agent. Mobility injustice, argues Sheller, first targets our bodies

and “the ways in which some bodies can move easily through space than others, due to restrictions on mobility relating to gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and physical abilities” (Sheller 2018b, 24). Put differently, mobility regimes sustain uneven modes of movement and stasis and corroborate the fact that all people are mobile, but some people are more mobile than others. Indeed, such differentiated mobility as conceptualized by Doreen Massey’s “power geometry” shows that some people “initiate flows and movement, others don’t; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it” (Massey 1994, 149). Material mobility is also an integral component of mobility systems. Similar to bodies, objects can either move or stay put. The same regulatory mechanisms directed at bodies control the circulation of goods and resources. One of the chief questions raised by mobility justice is: “who governs or controls mobility systems?” (Sheller 2018b, 22), a question at the heart of my reading of Forster’s novel.

The corporeal and the material, albeit fundamental aspects, are not the only elements of concern in mobilities research. The field comprises the ambulatory capacity of cultural representations and racial prejudices and stereotypes. Stephen Greenblatt’s conceptualization of mobility is attentive to the impact of movement on spaces and vice versa. The third point in his *Manifesto* stipulates that “mobility studies should identify and analyze the ‘contact zones’ where cultural goods are exchanged” (Greenblatt 2010, 251). The field is also receptive to a metaphorical understanding of mobility and stasis. Greenblatt proposes a useful figurative expansion of the word “movement,” which can encompass the motion between “center and periphery; faith and skepticism; order and chaos; exteriority and interiority” (Greenblatt 2010, 250). I propose in this article to press further this metaphorical use of mobility to the realm of narratology. In fact, my analysis of Forster’s novel aligns to Ian C. Davidson’s approach in his article “Mobilities of Form,” wherein he concentrates on “the ways that literary works provide representations of movement and mobility in their narratives and subject matter, and the ways that the form and genre of the work is influenced by mobility practices” (Davidson 2017, 548). The following section of this article centers on textual mobilities or the interplay between narration and motion.

### **A Narrative in Motion**

The plot of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is built on movement. Lilia, chaperoning Miss Abbott, leaves Sawston for a tour of Italy. There, she encounters Gino and marries him. Mrs. Herriton, her mother-in-law, dispatches her son Philip to bring

Lilia back to Sawston, but to no avail. Lilia dies after giving birth to a son, and Mrs. Herriton decides to transport the baby to Sawston. She sends both Philip and Harriet to Monteriano where they were preceded by Miss Abbot, who also wants to save the baby from what she deems an inferior culture. As Gino refuses to give up his son, Harriet kidnaps the infant who is inadvertently killed on the way to the station. The narrative, which starts with a train journey, ends on the railroad back to England. Nicholas Royle describes the novel as “a speedy narrative” (Royle 1999, 8). Indeed, the book reads fast not only because of its length, which makes it a novella rather than a novel, but because it is in perpetual motion. The only moments of real stasis in the narrative happen in Sawston, and they are rare. Otherwise, events are successive and follow a hasty rhythm. Narration in some parts of the text imitates the speed of a train and the fleeting views a traveler may catch from a window. The following description of Philips’ and Harriet’s trip to Verona provides a pertinent example:

They travelled for thirteen hours downhill, whilst the streams broadened and mountains shrank, and the vegetation changed, and the people ceased being ugly and drinking beer, and began instead to drink wine and to be beautiful. And the train which had picked them at sunrise out of a waste of glaciers and hotels was waltzing at sunset round the wall of Verona. (Forster 1976, 90)

In this expeditious narration, Forster reproduces the pace of the train and testifies to the influence of mobility technologies on his style. Motion, I argue in this part, defines the whole narrative aesthetically and thematically.

Journeys are not mere movements in space; they are incorporated into the techniques of narration. Lilia’s opening journey provides an excellent setting for the exposition as all the English characters assemble at Charing Cross to bid her goodbye. Forster finds a measured position to sketch the tensions in relationships that will develop later into conflicts. The ungovernable Lilia, the snobbish Mrs. Herriton, the pedantic Philip, and the frenzied Harriet, as well as the other characters, are presented to the reader in a speedy way tuning with the hastiness characterizing a departing train. As the narrative unfolds, each subsequent journey signals a new conflict and serves to increase tension. If Lilia’s journey is related to a social conflict between the affluent Herritons and the socially mobile daughter-in-law, Philips’ first journey to Italy shifts the focus to a cultural con-

flict between a civilized England and a less civilized Italy. The second journey, in which Caroline and Harriet participate, generates entangled social, cultural, and spatial conflicts. The death of Gino's baby, a climactic moment in the novel, also happens in motion, as the carriage transporting Philip and Harriet to the station accidentally collides with another one. Finally, the denouement, which shows a vexed Philip and a lovelorn Caroline, takes place on the move. The narrator's timely statement a few pages before the end of the novel: "The train was crawling up the last ascent towards the Campanile of Airolo and the little entrance of the tunnel" (Forster 1976, 157) announces the subsequent descending movement or falling action wherein the conflict is resolved. Mobility propels narration and functions as the motor of storytelling.

Trains and carriages are not mere means of transportations, either. They function as metaphors of spatial as well as emotional connection. Employing these modes of conveyance as a trope may be sustained by Michel de Certeau's use of "metaphorai," a name given to vehicles of mass transportation in Modern Athens: "to go to work or come home, one takes a metaphor - a bus or a train" (de Certeau 1988, 115). The movement of the trains in the novel has a metaphorical capacity of traversing and organizing emotions. E/motion in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is the equivalent of "Only connect" in *Howards End*. Both express the urgent need to bring together contrasting elements in people and base human relationships on love and care. Emotion in Forster's first novel, however, can be generated only by motion. Sawston, where the impassive Mrs. Herriton, the restrained Caroline, and the passive Philip live, is a place where emotions are regulated, and therefore nobody is likely to change as long as they keep immobile.

It is on a *metaphor*, a train, that Philip and Caroline manage to appreciate each other and get rid of their mutual pride and prejudice. The case of Philip and Caroline offers a relevant example of the rapport between locomotion and emotion. The close etymological proximity of motion and emotion, both derived from the Latin *movere*, which means "to move," indicates the constitutive relationship between mobility and feeling. Their first tempestuous mobile encounter takes place in a *legno* as Caroline is subjected to a severe interrogation on the way to the hotel. Three chapters later, we find them face to face traveling up to London. This trip by train sets their new relationship in motion. Philip, even though patronizing, discovers that "Miss Abbott, between Sawston and Charing Cross, revealed qualities which he had never guessed her to possess" (Forster 1976, 74).

Caroline, on her side, thinks that “the gulf between herself and Mr Herriton, which she had always known to be great, now seemed to her immeasurable” (78). The two characters need another journey in order to be completely changed, improved, and reconciled. Once again, the elucidation of this change takes place on the train. Similar to their trip up to London, this final journey intently concentrates on the internal emotions of the two characters as the narrator restrains from any description of the external view. As the train moves on, emotion builds up and culminates into a joint confession: “She said plainly, ‘That I love him.’ ... He heard himself remark: ‘Rather! I love him too!’” (158). Motion generates emotion in the novel, and emotion is triggered by motion. E/motion is, therefore, the fulcrum of the aesthetic and thematic orientations of the narrative.

Material mobility, or the circulation of objects, also plays a significant narratological role in the novel. These objects, symbolically charged, generate “a music-like effect which he [Forster] calls ‘rhythms’” (Fordoński 2004, 12). While objects like letters, telegrams, and postcards are used as literary devices, they emphasize the mobile thrust of the narrative and set up its tempo. Royle is attentive to their “performative” quality as “they not only say but do things: they announce an event, they demand, they seek to effect transactions, they order, they legislate, they promise, exploit and manipulate, they declare passion” (Royle 1999, 16). Similar to means of transportation, missives are crucial elements in the motion of the plot. The first letter in the novel, the one sent by Mrs. Theobald to Mrs. Herriton informing her that “Lilia is engaged to be married” (28), triggers all the subsequent movements. The symbolic significance of this letter resides in its mobility, a quality that represents a threat to Mrs. Herriton’s stationary and rigidly controlled domestic life, as I will explain in the following part.

The two other prominent and ambulant objects in the narrative are Baedeker and Harriet’s inlaid box. Both are ironically employed as cultural artifacts to complicate mobility. The inlaid box is an item that travels all over the narrative. It is first mentioned in the opening scene of the novel with Harriet screaming: “I’ve lent you my inlaid box” (20). Subsequently, it reappears, often with the narrator’s ironic reminder that Harriet has lent it, not given to Lilia, in chapters three, six, seven, and nine (Forster 1976, 50, 106, 114, 146). The inlaid box serves as a traveling metaphor of a packaged and frozen view of life. Being a part of Lilia’s luggage, the box “turns into a cultural container” (Lofgren 2016, 148), a carrier of English snobbery and bigotry. That the box is Harriet’s shows that Lilia’s mobility is restrained and contaminated with the Herritons’ social and cultural



prejudices. Indeed, her subsequent attempt at transplanting Sawston to the Italian soil transforms her into a simulacrum of Mrs. Herriton.

The travel guide also crosses the whole narrative and emphasizes Forster's awareness of embodied and material mobilities. Baedeker first appears in the opening chapter as an item tightly related to the first crisis of the novel. The news of Lilia's engagement with an Italian man results in Mrs. Herriton opening the travel guide "for the first time in her life" (Forster 1976, 29) and cull knowledge about Monteriano. Whereas she is incapable "to detect the hidden charms of Baedeker," her son "could never read 'The view from the Rocca (small gratuity) is finest at sunset' without a catching at the heart" (Forster 1976, 30-31). The narrator's ironic tone is unmistakable here and testifies to Forster's ambivalent attitude towards travel guides, one marked by fascination and annoyance (Schotter 2019, Buzard 1988). His declaration: "I have always respected guidebooks- particularly the early Baedekers and Murrays" (Forster 1961, xv) does not resonate with the treatment of this item in the novel. I am interested here in the symbolic function of the travel guide as an object connoting both mobility and immobility, hence Forster's faltering position. While guidebooks have fostered mobility, they also stand for a regimented motion. They "determine not only the route but also the reactions of their readers" (Buzard 1988, 156) and therefore restrict the free circulation of their users. Baedeker represents the material equivalent of Mrs. Herriton: both decide where people should tread. The assemblage of Baedeker's *Central Italy* and Harriet's inlaid box in the reception room, which "was sacred to the dead wife," associates the two items with death. The tomb-like room exhibits the guide book and the box, both supported on two tables and covered with dust (Forster 1976, 114). Ironically enough, these two items standing for mobility are reduced into symbols of immobility. The narrative is attentive to the questions of movement and stasis and records different and differential (im)mobilities.

### **Ethos of (Im)mobility**

Forster's description of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* as "a novel of contrasts" (qtd. in Stallybrass 1976, 8) between two geographies, England and Italy, sets the tone for a critical assessment attentive to oppositions and polarities in the narrative. Woolf's review of the writer's three first works is perceptive of the "balance of forces which plays so large a part in the structure of Mr. Forster's novels.

Sawston implies Italy; timidity, wilderness; convention, freedom; unreality, reality" (Woolf 1966, 343). Lauren M. E. Goodlad introduces another dimension to this set of contrasts, and instead of seeing balance, she discerns "multi-faceted crossings – between Northern and Southern, male and female, Protestant and catholic, heteronormative and queer, upper-class and déclassé" (Goodlad 2006, 308). I seek in this part to bring Goodlad's alert reading of border-crossing in the novel to the field of mobility studies. I propose, therefore, mobility and immobility as a new pair of opposites that has not received critical attention so far, and, subsequently, examine the borderline between movement and stasis.

Even though Forster never uses the term "mobile" or any of its derivatives in his novel, he constructs the narrative around two sets of values: mobility, which connotes freedom, and immobility, which refers to calcified ideas. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Mrs. Herriton embodies the ethos of immobility and serves as the custodian of the bounded and the static. Immobility as a desired state originated in a "Greek paradigm within which the ordered movement of almost everything gravitates towards rest. Movement was seen as a temporary interruption, a process by which things find their proper *place*" (Kotef 2012, 92). This vision of the blessings of stability and stationariness is best exemplified in the placid scene following the commotion of Lilia's departure:

Irma went to bed early, and was tucked up by her grandmother. Then the two ladies worked and played cards. Philip read a book. And so they all settled down to their quiet profitable existence, and continued it without interruption through the winter. (Forster 1976, 23)

This tableau of an ideal family captures the spirit of "homeostasis" (Womack 2000, 133) and achieves full meaning in Mrs. Herriton's grammar of domesticity, wherein gender roles are properly distributed. Indeed, the matriarch who doesn't believe in the "romance" of journeying "nor in anything else that may disturb domestic life" (Forster 1976, 23) seems in perfect tune with Blaise Pascal's credo that "the cause of all man's misfortune consists in this one thing, his inability to remain quietly in one room" (1908, 38). This domestic scene provides us with a view inside a room, the ultimate space of desired immobility.

Immobility for Mrs. Herriton encompasses the spatial, social, and cultural. It refers to stability, convention, and the status quo. A pertinent example showing the regulating power of immobility is offered in the gardening scene. This

symbolic episode illustrates how the ethos of stasis structures the space. The lovely weather encourages Mrs. Herriton “to do a little gardening” with Harriet in the kitchen garden and “sow some early vegetables”: “They sowed the duller vegetables first, and a pleasant feeling of righteous fatigue stole over them as they addressed themselves to the peas. Harriet stretched a string to guide the row straight, and Mrs. Herriton scratched a furrow with a pointed stick” (Forster 1976, 26–27). The garden, an organized and cultivated space, reflects Mrs. Herriton’s inflexible belief in discipline and control. Gardening is transformed into a geometric performance with mathematical exactitude, and the garden becomes a metaphor for rootedness. The potential of violence insinuated in Mrs. Herriton’s use of “a pointed stick” to scratch a furrow foreshadows the domineering matriarch’s brutal schemes to preserve the boundaries of her dominion. The final scene of the gardening episode depicts the antagonistic relationship between mobility and immobility, for “mobility often is perceived as a threat – a force by which traditions, rituals, expressions, beliefs are decentered, thinned out, decontextualized, lost” (Greenblatt 2010, 152). The sparrows, symbolizing total mobility, are interpolated as a threatening element to the Herriton’s steady existence. The birds end up taking all the peas which Mrs. Herriton forgets to cover with earth in her agitation upon receiving Mrs. Theobald’s letter, another trope of mobility as explained above. The chapter ends with the “countless fragments of the letter ... disfiguring the tidy ground” (Forster 1976, 32), demonstrating the capacity of mobility to upset and destabilize static values and beliefs.

Mrs. Herriton’s taming of the garden evinces her power to monitor the other characters’ mobilities. Portrayed as a *primum movens*, or the primary mover who moves without being moved, she displays a capacity of empowering or damaging the mobility of all the other characters. She is first confronted with the menacing quality of mobility when her deceased son Charles “had fallen in love with Lilia” and married her despite her schemes “to prevent the match.” Lilia’s social mobility endangers Mrs. Herriton’s power to maintain the boundaries of her social class, and she finds herself obliged to change her tactics and impose tight “supervision” on her daughter-in-law (Forster 1976, 23). Her new project of governance seeks to immobilize Lilia by disciplining her and improving her tastes. As a widow, Lilia regains her freedom of movement and “the struggle recommenced” (23) when she decides to live with her mother. Mrs. Herriton, however, ends up having the upper hand by persuading Lilia to live in Sawston with her daughter, securing, therefore, her power of surveillance. The mobile Lilia, who

“would not settle down in her place among Sawston matrons” (Forster 196, 24) is subjected to rigorous scrutiny and prevented from marrying again. Living under siege, she tries to impose her right to mobility by “[learning] to bicycle, for the purpose of waking the place up” (Forster 196, 24). The Herritons feel outraged, and Philip intervenes to curtail her mobility once for all. Lilia is wronged as a mobile agent and denied her right to free circulation.

Lilia’s journey to Italy is far away from being voluntary. I read it as a coercive act of deportation. Next to “surveillance, enclosure, ... imprisonment, and siege,” which are forms of controlling the freedom or the threat inherent in movement, “eviction” (Kotef 2015, 6) emerges as the chief mode of discipline and punishment. Lilia’s restlessness, her inability to conform to an immobile domestic model, a “docile body,” in Foucault’s phrasing (Foucault 1995, 136) is in accordance with the etymology of the term “mobility”:

The word first appeared in the C16 to describe gatherings of people appraised as dangerous. The L term *mobile vulgus* was abbreviated in the IC17 to “mob,” a “disorderly crowd” or “fickle multitude” whose anger could be dangerous to the aristocracy of church and state. *Vulgus*, meaning common, changed to “vulgar,” and “mobile” emerged to describe the capacity for movement or change. From this came the descriptive “mobile” or “movable,” and “mobility,” a term that described the opinions of crowds, and then the behavior of individuals, and finally, an attribute of things. (Bennett et al. 2005, 217)

Lilia, who is considered “vulgar” and in perpetual need of “the refining influences of her late husband’s family” (Forster 196, 22–23) lest her coarseness contaminates the whole household, is akin to a *mobile vulgus*. Because she endangers Mrs. Herriton’s institutionalized immobility, she must be evicted. The opening scene, in which Lilia is sent to Italy after the Herritons’ conspiracy, reenacts the Transportation Act passed by the English Parliament in 1718. This law authorized the exportation of convicts, paupers, and vagrants, as well as any person who didn’t conform to social and religious rules as “a means of solving troublesome social problems” (Gillespie 1923, 359). Indeed, Philips’ “idea of Italian travel” is acknowledged by Mrs. Herriton as a brilliant scheme to get rid of the disruptive Lilia, an idea “that saved us” (Forster 1976, 22), in her phrasing.

Lilia's deportation, masquerading as a touristic tour of Italy, reveals the entangled relationship between mobility and immobility. Indeed, her forced mobility is intended to immobilize her or to neutralize the threat in her movement. After marrying Gino, she finds herself fighting even more fiercely for her freedom of circulation. Walking in Monteriano, like bicycling in Sawston, is not accepted as a decent feminine activity. The two geographies display the same rigidity vis-à-vis women's mobility. In Italy, the ironic narrator informs us, "women ... have, of course, their house and their church ... to which they are escorted by the maid. Otherwise, they do not go out much, for it is not genteel to walk" (Forster 1976, 54). Mobility is distributed on a socioeconomic and gender basis. Only those who can afford a carriage are able to secure their right to free movement, meanwhile "life is very pleasant in Italy if you are a man" (54). In Sawston, Lilia's right to mobility is ruled out by a matriarch who ventriloquizes a patriarchal discourse; in Italy, the situation does not differ much except that now it is the husband's prerogative to curb his wife's access to free movement.

If Lilia is forced into spatial stasis, she ends up textually immobilized. Her eviction from the narrative does not differ much from her banishment from Sawston. Indeed, Forster disposes of her in two final laconic sentences in chapter four: "As for Lilia, someone said to her, 'it is a beautiful boy!' But she had died in giving birth to him" (Forster 1976, 69). Death, the ultimate state of immobility, represents a narratological strategy to get rid of a threatening character whose overwhelming presence in the first half of the book leads to the eclipse of the major character, Philip. In a letter to R. C. Trevelyan, Forster announces that "the object of the book is Philip's improvement" (Forster 1976, Appendix, 161). It is not accidental that the opening sentence of chapter five juxtaposes Lilia's death with Philip's birthday: "At the time of Lilia's death Philip Herriton was just twenty-four of age - indeed the news reached Sawston on his birthday" (Forster 1976, 70). Lilia's death heralds Philip's birth or revival as the book's protagonist and the ultimate mobile subject in the narrative.

Mobility in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is a prerequisite for improvement. Philip's emotional, spiritual, and cultural transformations are the result of two journeys to Italy. However, in order to be fully improved, he must display mobility agency. It may appear striking then to contend that Philip's mobility is not significantly different from Lilia's. And yet this is how Mrs. Herriton takes advantage of being a prime mover. Philip's seemingly free movement is a mere façade hiding his mother's governance over (im)mobility. Indeed, his first journey to It-

aly is decided and planned by Mrs. Herriton before he is informed of the situation. Harriet is sent to the bank to get money, a servant is ordered to “get down” his “gladstone from the attic” (Forster 1976, 31), and Philip is literally railroaded into going to Italy. The absence of a scene showing us the discussion between mother and son testifies once again to a speedy narrative, as the urgency of the situation calls for an elliptical style. The second journey is a replica of the first one. Mrs. Herriton dispatches Philip to Italy, this time with his sister, without taking his protestations into consideration: “And before Philip had stopped talking nonsense she had planned the whole thing and was looking out the trains” (Forster 16, 88). Philip, like Lilia, is wronged in his capacity as a mobile agent and forced into movement.

If Mrs. Herriton exploits Lilia’s vulgarity to control her actions, she takes advantage of her son’s malleability to manage his movements. Philip’s awareness of his status as a “puppet,” a movable doll, is most likely what is going to set his improvement into motion: “All his life he had been her puppet,” he muses, “She had let him worship Italy, and reform Sawston – just as she had let Harriet be Low Church. She had let him talk as much as he liked. But when she wanted a thing she always got it.” At this stage, however, he believes that “he could not rebel. To the end of his days he would probably go on doing what she wanted” (Forster 1976, 84). It is only at the end of his second forced journey to Italy that we can see clearly what Forster meant by his statement “I did really want the improvement to be a surprise” (Forster 1976, Appendix, 161). Indeed, the most surprising element is Philip’s declaration: “‘I can’t live at Sawston’ ...’ So that is my plan – London and work” (Forster 1976, 155). By the end of the narrative, Philip appropriates his right to movement and emerges as the ultimate mobile subject in the narrative, especially when juxtaposed with Miss Abbott.

Caroline Abbot presents an intriguing case of voluntary (im)mobility. While she embarks on a journey of education and discovery, she opts to resume her tranquil life in Sawston by the end of the narrative. Her two journeys to Italy, however, reveal a subject in full control of her movement. In the first one, she manages to convince the curate and her father to leave for one year; in the second she travels alone “all across Europe; no one knows it” (Forster 1976, 100) including her father. At this stage, Caroline proves to be superior to the passive Philip, whose mobility is manipulated by his mother. She is even given the active role of a “mobilizer,” a term referring, in Greenblatt’s terminology of mobility, to “agents, go-betweens, translators, or intermediaries” whose task

is “to facilitate contact” (Greenblatt 2010, 251). Caroline clearly serves as a mediator in the violent confrontation between Gino and Philip, persuading them to share the bottle of milk and thereby ironing out social and cultural conflicts. Yet, despite her capacity to move, both in the physical and emotional sense, she chooses to remain stationary by the end of the novel. This contradictory aspect is explained by Forster in his letter to Trevelyan: “He grows large enough to appreciate Miss Abbott, and in the final scene he exceeds her” (Forster 1976, Appendix: 161). Looking at the final scene from the prism of mobility, one way to comprehend the statement “he exceeds her” is to consider his decision to leave Sawston superior to her choice of remaining there. On the narratological level, however, I believe that Caroline’s final immobility does not differ from Lilia’s. Both are immobilized to vacate space for Philip, so that he emerges as the supreme male mobile subject.

## Conclusion

Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread* offers a propitious textual terrain to apply the new mobility paradigm on a literary narrative and, therefore, facilitates an interdisciplinary conversation between mobility studies and literary studies. Examining Forster’s debut novel from the lenses of this thriving field not only reroutes the focus on a text that deserves more scrutiny and appraisal, but it opens up new venues to study Forster’s oeuvre in general. The emphasis in this article is twofold: first the entangled relationship between the aesthetic elements in the text and the conceptualization of motion; and second the discourses and practices of power undergirding movement and stasis. Forster’s concern with contrasts brings attention to mobility and immobility, two elements that have hitherto gone under the radar. These two concepts, however, are complicated and approached as constitutive in the grammar of mobilities. While immobility is represented as the ultimate evil in the narrative, coerced mobility functions as the other facet of stasis.

This article is an attempt to examine the conjunction of (im)mobility and (in)justice in a text that advances mobility as a precondition for freedom and improvement. Mobility in the narrative is not only a physical movement in space, but also an act of crossing the borders of frozen institutions and cultural prejudices. The narrative presents two sets of confrontational characters: those who are immobile or unmoved and those who are mobile or mobilizers. The novel from this perspective becomes a site of conflicts, a nexus where ambulant so-

cial and cultural values compete, negotiate, withstand, and capitulate. Virginia Woolf employs a metaphor of construction and destruction, a dual act of building “the cage” and liberating “the prisoner”, to describe Forster’s proclivity for developing zones of confrontation. She ascribes this inclination to the writer’s belief “that a novel must take sides in the human conflict” (Woolf 1966, 344). Once again, Woolf’s reading is not conclusive if we look at the novel from the lenses of mobility studies. Indeed, the book, which is chiefly concerned with Philip’s improvement, fails to take sides against differential and uneven mobilities. The narrative engages in a distributive model of mobility justice wherein women are denied the right to movement. While Forster sets out to destroy the ethos of immobility, in its literal and metaphorical senses, he ends up corroborating a gendered pattern of movement and stasis.

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## **Shaping the Culture of Tolerance: A Study of Forster's Humanism in *Howard's End* and *A Passage to India***

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**Abstract:** This paper attempts a postcolonial reading of Forster's humanism and suggests that the concept of tolerance is central to his conception of humanism. Taking a cue from Edward Said's theorizations on humanism, the paper argues that Forster's humanism is centered upon the agency of human individuality, especially in his novels *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*. Forster sees tolerance as a "force" able to connect different races, classes, and nations. The paper, through an exploration of *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, emphasizes that Forster's novels articulate and shape the culture of tolerance, which entails the ability to use one's mind "rationally" "for the purposes of reflective understanding and genuine disclosure" and enables the "sense of community" crucial for the sustenance of civilizations and human race. The paper, thus, situates Forster's works in the larger philosophical setting of Said's humanistic beliefs and seeks to demonstrate that *Howards End* and *A Passage to India* may be viewed as a fictionalization of Edward Said's theories of humanism.

**Keywords:** E. M. Forster, Edward Said, humanism, culture, tolerance, postcolonial

### **Introduction**

Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism*, speaks of humanism as the ability "to use one's mind historically and rationally for the purposes of reflective understanding and genuine disclosure." Humanism, according to him, "is sustained by a sense of community with other interpreters and other societies and periods.... This is to say that every domain is linked to every other one..." (Said 1978, xviii). Said's theorizations seem to be premised on his belief that there exists an interconnectedness between cultures, nations, and societies, which sustains humanism, and which is centered, "upon the agency of human

individuality and subjective intuition, rather than on received ideas and approved authority" (Said 1978, xxiii).

Said's arguments provide an interesting framework for a postcolonial reading of Forster's humanism, which is centered upon the agency of human individuality and lays emphasis on the need to establish connection between races, cultures and nations. In other words, the similarity in the thoughts and beliefs of Forster and Said allow us to situate Forster's works, especially his novels, *Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924), in the larger philosophical setting of Said's humanistic beliefs. My paper seeks to demonstrate how Forster's novels, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, may be regarded as a fictionalization of Edward Said's theories of humanism. In his "Foreword" to Edward W. Said's book, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Akeel Bilgrami observes that "right at the outset" Said warns us of "the disasters that will follow...if we conduct our public lives as intellectuals with an indifference to the concerns and the sufferings of people in places remote from our Western, metropolitan sites of self-interest" (Said 2004, x). One can easily discern here a striking resemblance with Forster's views, especially those which he expressed in his essay titled "Tolerance." In his essay, Forster insists on connections between different races, nations, classes and interests for the purposes of rebuilding and, according to Forster, tolerance is the only force that would enable these connections. It is important to note in this context that the concept of tolerance is central to Forster's conception of humanism. He sees tolerance as a "force" enabling the connections between different races, classes, and nations. An exploration of *Howards End* and *A Passage to India* reveals how Forster's novels articulate and shape the culture of tolerance, which, I argue, entails, what Said refers to as the ability to use one's mind "rationally" "for the purposes of reflective understanding and genuine disclosure" (Said 1978, xviii) and enables the "sense of community" crucial for the sustenance of civilizations and human race.

### **Shaping the Culture of Tolerance**

E. M. Forster, the novelist, essayist, short story writer, and literary critic, was at the core of his heart, a humanist. Throughout his versatile career, and especially in his two major novels *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, Forster displayed a remarkable consistency in his emphasis on the need to connect between races, classes and nations. The concept of tolerance, as I mentioned at the outset,

is central to his beliefs and credo as a humanist. His essay "Tolerance" can be viewed as a footnote to his practice as a novelist especially in *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*. He begins his essay by asserting,

Surely the only sound foundation for a civilization is a sound state of mind. Architects, contractors, international commissioners, marketing boards, broadcasting corporations will never by themselves build a new world. They must be inspired by the proper spirit and there must be proper spirit in people for whom they are working. (Forster 1951, 44)

Then, by posing the question, "what though is the proper spirit," (44) Forster is able to pursue his thesis about tolerance as he contends,

In public affairs, in the rebuilding of civilizations, something much less dramatic and emotional is needed, namely, tolerance.... This is the only force which will enable different races and classes and interests to settle down together to the work of reconstruction. (Forster 1951, 44-45)

### **Forster's Humanism in *A Passage to India* and *Howard's End***

In *A Passage to India*, Forster scrutinizes the possibilities of reconstruction/rebuilding by applying his doctrine of tolerance in establishing connections between races and cultures. Paradoxically, the endeavour to reconcile and connect ends in failure, illustrated through the repeated negation that marks the end of *A Passage to India*:

"Why can't we be friends now?" said the other, holding him affectionately. "It's what I want. It's what you want." But the horses didn't want it--they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, "No, not yet," and the sky said, "No, not there." (Forster 2005, 306)

Forster makes it clear that the conversation between Aziz and Fielding can never reach a definitive conclusion as long as the racial binaries continue to exist or as long as the British colonialists continue to rule over India and regard themselves as racially superior. Paul Peppis is of the opinion that "Forster's English novels paradoxically resist the reconciliations they render. Death, disconnection, and failure are as common in them as marriage, connection, and success" (Peppis 2007, 59). Peppis' observations cannot be overruled, keeping in view the disenchantments and disappointments that take place in the novel. David Medalie's observations are also worth mentioning in this regard:

*A Passage to India* deals in many ways with the implications of failure, including the failure of the British Raj, of friendship, of attempts to achieve 'connection' in general; and it is also an exploration of its own failure, of the impossibility, as it were, of escaping the curse of the eclectic. (Medalie 2002, 128)

However, an analysis of the causes of this "failure" is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of Forster's humanism, its similarity with Said's theories and also his doctrine of tolerance. Forster, as is well known, laid immense emphasis on friendship and personal relations. In fact, the desire to see and explore India was awakened in Forster by his young Indian Muslim friend, Syed Ross Masood, to whom he dedicated his masterpiece, *A Passage to India*. Forster met Masood in 1906 as a Latin tutor and, in time, their bond intensified. Forster confesses that before he met Masood, India had been "a vague jumble of rajahs, sahibs, babus and elephants, and that he was not interested in such a jumble: who could be?" (Forster 1951, 299). His friendship with Masood aroused in him the curiosity to explore what was "a new horizon and a new civilization" (299) for him. However, when he came to India, he could not relate with his Indian experience. The land with its people, culture, traditions and customs seemed to elude his comprehension. His first reaction to the country, he notes down in the following words:

... the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely.... The streets are mean, the temples

ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest.... In the bazaars there is no painting and scarcely any carving. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving. (Forster 2005, 5)

Forster's friendship with Masood, as discussed earlier, had awakened in him a desire to see India but his visit to India seems to have disappointed him, as is evident from the detailed description of his first impressions of the city of Chandrapore, which, according to him, "presents nothing extraordinary." The deposits of rubbish, the mean streets, the filth in the alleys, the absence of paintings and carvings in the bazars and the mud moving inhabitants of the city, obviously, do not appeal to Forster. The narrative voice's disappointment with the new place finds its way into the description of the landscape, which gradually acquires sinister overtones as the novel reaches the "Cave" section, which Forster casts in a menacing and heavily symbolic landscape.

They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see and no eye to see it ... An entrance was necessary, so mankind made one. But elsewhere, deeper in the granite, are three certain chambers that have no entrances? Chambers never unsealed since the arrival of the gods ... Nothing is inside them...one of them mirrors its darkness in every direction infinitely. (Forster 2005, 116-117)

The Marabar Caves emerge as an ominous player in the novel, bringing chaos and disruption in a setting already beset with racial tension. The caves may be viewed as a representation of forces which destabilize and weaken the human attempts for connection and reconciliation. Hamza Karam Ally rightly says that "the caves, in their darkness and indifference, represent a stark delimitation" to the "notion" of "love" advocated by characters like Mrs. Moore (Ally 2019, 567). The territories Forster now seems to be charting are more overtly the mysterious spheres of the world. The Marabar caves, it is pertinent to note here, may also be viewed as a passage to normalcy, light and life. The mystical and religious take the place of the mysterious and uncanny with the description of Gokul Ashtmi

in the "Temple" section, which is located "some hundreds of miles westward of the Marabar Hills, and two years later in time" (Forster 2005, 269).

The three-part structure of the narrative with its gradual movement from establishing personal relations and friendship in the "Mosque" section, to chaos and disorder in the "Cave" section and eventually to peace and order in the "Temple" section, provides the context necessary for Forster to explore his deeply felt thesis about the possibilities of establishing connections between races and nations. In the second chapter of the novel, Forster introduces Aziz, the Muslim doctor who practices at the government hospital in Chandrapore. Aziz is shown in the company of his friends who are debating whether it was possible for an Indian and an Englishman to become friends. Friendships or personal relationships, it is imperative to note here, were of immense importance in Forster's life and it would not be an exaggeration to say that it was central to his credo and beliefs both as an artist and as a human being. In fact, in his much-celebrated essay "What I Believe" Forster declares: "if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I should have the guts to betray my country" (Forster 1951, 66).

Forster's question, "whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman" (Forster 2005, 8), posed at the outset of the novel, performs many functions. It enables Forster to forge a link between the two races, Indian and the English. It also becomes a means for Forster to acknowledge his debt and gratitude to his friend and, at the same time, his question seems to cast a shadow and create doubt over the possibility of friendship between the English and the Indians in a colonial setting. The conflation that Forster creates here is between his philosophy and ideals of humanism and the impossibility of achieving these ideals due to the empire's practices of domination and racial discrimination. The question, thus, reveals the fundamental contradiction in its postulation as the readers recognize the accompanying threat of its impossibility in a situation characterized by racial hatred and prejudices.

Forster uses the "Mosque" section to acquaint his readers with the principal characters of the novel, Cyril Fielding, the English Principal of the Government College, Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate of Chandrapore, Mrs. Moore, mother of Ronny Heaslop, Miss Adela Quested, Ronny's fiancée, Professor Narayan Godbole, Fielding's assistant at the College. Besides them, Forster introduces many other minor English characters, whose presence becomes necessary to show the existence of racial complexities and absence of social cohesion.

Forster presents Aziz as a person with a limited outlook and who is emotional, impulsive and excitable by temperament. The narrator describes him in the following words:

As for Miss Quested, she accepted everything Aziz said as true verbally. In her ignorance, she regarded him as "India," and never surmised that his outlook was limited and his method inaccurate, and that no one is India. He was now much excited, chattering away hard, and even saying damn when he got mixed up in his sentences. (Forster 2005, 65)

The text is replete with instances which demonstrate Aziz's haste in pronouncing judgments and taking decisions. He is quick to make friends with Fielding, Mrs. Moore and Miss Adela Quested, he is quick to criticize the Hindus and express his hatred of the members of the British Indian community. After the cave episode, he never tries to clear up the misunderstanding between him and Fielding, with whom he had nurtured a friendship in British India, and who had stood against his own community during Aziz's court trials. He refuses all communications with Fielding and he does not even read the letters sent by him. The narrator mentions in the "Temple" section:

Subsequent letters he destroyed unopened. It was the end of a foolish experiment. And though sometimes at the back of his mind he felt that Fielding had made sacrifices for him, it was now all confused with his genuine hatred of the English. (Forster 2005, 278-279).

Aziz lacks, what Said calls "reflective understanding" and "subjective intuition," and, thus, fails to establish a connection with the members of the other race or culture in matters of public or social significance. Cyril Fielding, on the other hand, with his sound and mature mind, provides Forster with the main aesthetic framework through which he proposes and shapes his ideals of humanism. "Fielding, a liberal humanist," to quote Mohammad Shaheen, "believes that tolerance, free will and education are the basis for any passage to cross-cultural contact (Shaheen 2004, 3). Fielding displays all the characteristics of a humanist, which are in accordance with Edward Said's ideals of humanism. He believes, to use Said's words, that:



the task of the humanist is not just to occupy a position or place, nor simply to belong somewhere but rather to be both insider and outsider to the circulating ideas and values that are at issue in our society or someone else's society or the society – of the other. (Said 2004, 76)

He tries to understand the world rationally and represents the type/force, which is, according to Forster, needed to “enable different races and classes and interests to settle down together to the work of reconstruction” (Forster 1951, 45). The following passage illustrates the narrator's view of Fielding:

The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence – a creed ill-suited to Chandrapore, but he had come out too late to lose it. He had no racial feeling – not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herdinstinct does not flourish. (Forster 2005, 57)

Elizabeth Langland rightly emphasizes that “all of Forster's characters – whether Maurice Hall or Margaret Schlegel or Fielding – aspire beyond themselves and genuinely yearn for some kind of integrative, transformative connection” (Langland 2007, 103). Fielding, undoubtedly, aspires beyond himself and genuinely yearns for connection, as is evident through his proposal to Aziz offered towards the end of the novel, “Why can't we be friends now?” (Forster 2005, 306). His appeal for friendship aims at eliminating the racial differences and divisions and furthering connections. But friendship, Forster makes it clear, is a two-way process and connection between individuals, races and nations can only be accomplished when both sides possess a sound mind and practice tolerance. Aziz, as the text illustrates, is hyper-sensitive, emotional and gets excited very easily. At a personal level, he likes or rather loves Fielding. But as Forster asserts in “Tolerance,” “Love is a great force in private life; it is indeed the greatest of all things: but love in public affairs does not work” (Forster 1951, 44). So, love is a strong force in personal relationships, but love alone is not enough in public affairs. The union of Fielding and Aziz, thus, requires the practice of tolerance on both sides, the presence of a rational mind and a proper spirit on both sides. Tolerance, the quality that Forster advocates passionately and

returns to frequently, through his essays, for establishing a connection between races, classes and nations, is found missing in Aziz, who, nonetheless, remains the most life-like character, possessing energy, vitality and spontaneity. He serves as the life force in the narrative/plot of *A Passage to India*. Forster has been much appreciated for his creation of Aziz's character. Philip Gardner observes that "Forster was also generally praised for his creation of Aziz, who struck both Leonard Woolf and the Birmingham Post as 'the most absolutely "real" Indian to be found in fiction'" (Gardner 1973, 22). His excitability and impulsiveness may be perceived as failings which real-life like people possess.

Miss Adela Quested, Ronny's intended fiancée, is yet another character shown to act by desire and impulse, especially at the beginning of the novel. She is unable to restrain her desires and wants to see the real India. Her desire to see India lands her in trouble when, during an expedition to the Marabar caves, Adela has a hallucination, and she accuses Aziz of sexual assault, which she withdraws during the court trials. Her accusation and Aziz's subsequent trial enhance the racial divide and creates chaos. But as she gains maturity and wisdom through her experiences and learns to discipline her desires and becomes tolerant, peace prevails, and order is regained. Ronny Heaslop represents the British in India. He possesses the imperialist mind, which believed that the British were not in India to "behave pleasantly." The text reveals: "How Ronny revelled in the drawbacks of his situation! How he did rub it in that he was not in India to behave pleasantly, and derived positive satisfaction therefrom!" (Forster 2005, 46).

Forster makes it abundantly clear that the members of the British-Indian community, except Fielding, Adela and Mrs. Moore, did not believe in establishing connection with the natives as they regarded them as inferior. Peter Childs notes,

What remains strong for most of *A Passage to India* is a belief in 'goodwill' as the best expression of religion and love in personal relations. The goodwill that is so important to Forster signals the difference between impressions and between people in the novel. (Childs 2007, 193)

In contrast to her son, Mrs. Moore believes that:

The English are out here to be pleasant...Because India is part of the earth. And God has put us on the earth in order to be pleasant

to each other. God ... is ... love ... God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding... The desire to behave pleasantly satisfies God ... The sincere if impotent desire wins His blessing ... Goodwill and more goodwill and more goodwill. (Forster 2005, 46-47)

Forster presents Mrs. Moore as an apostle of love and goodwill. She visits the mosque, develops intimacy with Aziz, an Indian Muslim, and despite her old age and ailing health, she accompanies Adela and Aziz to the cave expedition. But as Forster warns, "love in public affairs does not work" (Forster 1951, 44), and all her endeavours to establish friendship and connection with the Indians end in failure. The cave episode shatters her and, devastated and defeated in her purpose, she dies on her way to England.

It also needs to be noted that the only person who remains immune to all the contradictions conflict and failures is Professor Godbole. His "elusiveness and inscrutability" (Medalie 2002, 190) is in sharp contrast to Aziz's "quirkiness and impulsiveness" (Medalie 2002, 172). Professor Godbole's mysticism places him at the same level as Mrs. Moore and enables him to establish a connection with her, albeit in her absentia, which underscored in the text, by Forster's representation of the Gokul Ashtami celebration in the "Temple" section.

Professor Narayan Godbole stands in the presence of God. God is not born yet ... but He has also been born centuries ago, nor can He ever be born, because He is the Lord of the Universe, who transcends human processes.... He and Professor Godbole stood at opposite ends of the same strip of carpet... He was barefoot and in white... He and the six colleagues who supported him clashed their cymbals, hit small drums, droned upon a portable harmonium, and sang.... They loved all men, the whole universe.... Thus Godbole, though she was not important to him, remembered an old woman he had met in Chandrapore days ... it was in this heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. (Forster 2005, 269-272)

In his moments of ecstasy during the ceremony, Godbole, the good Hindu, remembers Mrs. Moore, an old British woman, and he is even able to love her in the same manner as he loves the whole universe. A connection is thus established between the two but this connection has elements of mysticism rather than reason, and thus remains confined to those mystical/mysterious spheres.

David Medalie notes in this connection:

The gradual eclipsing of rationalist virtues in *A Passage to India* is the result, in part, of the power that the novel grants to characters whose methods of cognition would frustrate any rationalist. There are characters who may be called 'prophetic' - 'prophecy' being Forster's catchall term for forms of inscrutability in fiction. They include Professor Godbole and Mrs Moore (particularly in her post-Marabar condition) ... Reason and the conscious will give way in them to oracular and cryptic pronouncements... In Forster's 'prophetic' characters the sheer elusiveness of identity is conveyed; what is more, there is a reconfiguration of the self - both ontologically and in its dealings with others. (Medalie 2002, 57)

In fact, several critics have been disturbed by "the air of mystery" (Gardner 1973, 22), which surrounds Mrs. Moore and conveys, what Medalie calls her "elusiveness of identity." However, to be very precise, this trait of Mrs. Moore's personality, which places her in an inscrutable frame, is a post-Marabar development and it does not, in any way, mar the beauty and memory of her early appearances in the novel. The "Mosque" section is replete with instances of her compassionate and kind attitude towards the others. Her first encounter with Aziz in the mosque remains the most memorable scene for the intensity and spontaneity of emotions expressed by both characters. An instantaneous bond is established between the two, which is revived, to a certain extent, when Aziz meets Ralph Moore, Mrs. Moore's son from her second marriage, in the "Temple" section. But both these relationships, it needs reiteration, are founded on a personal level and their basis is the sentiment of love. A similar sentiment finds expression in Aziz's bonding with Fielding. Aziz's spontaneity makes him connect with Fielding at a personal level, but his affection for Fielding could not be transformed into a "socially dynamic force" and, hence, it ends in failure. Forster acknowledges this fact in "What I Believe" that

"no device has been found by which ... private decencies can be transmitted to public affairs" (Forster 1951, 71). The bond that is established between Aziz and Mrs. Moore or Aziz and Fielding at the beginning of the novel emanates from their personal liking for each other. It has the elements of instinct and emotion rather than reason and rationality, which is why it fails to survive when transmitted to the public sphere. Love, affection and friendship, thus, emerge as forces which connect people in their private lives; however, for the civilizations, nations, cultures and races to connect, the practice of tolerance becomes necessary. In Forster's view, this is the only force that would enable "different races and classes and interests to settle down together to the work of reconstruction" (Forster 1951, 45).

David Medalie is of the opinion that "One of the recurring questions in Forster's fiction, most notably in *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, is whether love, especially as expressed in the 'personal relations' doctrine, may be converted into a socially dynamic force" (Medalie 2007, 40). In fact, Forster's abiding preoccupation with humanism takes different forms in different contexts in his novels but his concern remains the same: "Only Connect," which takes the form of an epigraph to *Howards End*, published in 1910. David Bradshaw says in this connection:

The epigraph to *Howards End*, 'Only connect . . .', is almost as well known as the novel itself. It most obviously refers to Margaret's efforts to unite the (supposed) spirituality and culture of the Schlegels with the grounded commercial nous of the Wilcoxes and it turns out to be an abbreviation of the novel's most heartfelt donee: 'Only connect!' (Bradshaw 2007, 169)

In *Howards End*, Forster emerges as a passionate champion of the values of humanism, which he advocates through Margaret Schlegel, the central female character. It is important to note that places and landscapes occupy a great significance in Forster's scheme of fictionalizing his beliefs and ideals. David Trotter in his essay, "Rethinking Connection: The Edwardian Novels" rightly asserts that "place constitutes a primary source of meaning and value in novels which oppose 'England' to the suburban sprawl produced by rapid social and industrial modernization" (Trotter 2021, 124). In fact, it is Forster's technique as a novelist to use place as a major fictional tool to impart "meaning and value"

to his novels. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that both *Howards End* and *A Passage to India* begin with physical description of the places where the novels are set. Helen's letter to Margaret describes Howard's End, the mythic English house, which becomes the center as well as the symbol of Forster's efforts to establish a connection between the different fragments of society: the materialism, pettiness and greed of the Wilcoxes, the culture, idealism and philanthropy of the Schlegels and the hardships and the struggle of the Basts. David Medalie notes in this connection:

In *Howards End*, Forster scrutinises the promise of an organic society (which is, of course, also a form of 'connection')." He does so by considering the pragmatic value of the New Liberal agenda within a society which he represents as increasingly fragmented and divisive. (Medalie 2007, 39)

Medalie quotes Hobhouse to explain the notion of "organic society" as perceived and formulated by the New Liberal theorists and strategists:

No one element of the social life stands separate from the rest, any more than one element of the animal body stands separate from the rest. In this sense the life of society is rightly held to be organic, and all considered public policy must be conceived in its bearing on the life of society as a whole. (Medalie 2002, 5)

Forster's exploration of the possibility of establishing an organic society begins with Helen's letter to Margaret. This directs us to the importance of letters, which have always served as an important means of establishing a connection between people, owing to their status and emblematic importance as carriers of messages and information. Helen's letter to Margaret, written at the opening of the novel, contains a graphic description of the place, Howards End, and also its inhabitants, the prosperous Wilcoxes: Henry Wilcox, his wife Ruth Wilcox and their sons Charles Wilcox and Paul Wilcox, and their daughter Evie Wilcox. The money making, business-minded, self-loving Wilcoxes represent, with the exception of Ruth Wilcox, the materialistic values of the society. Their egotism is in sharp contrast to the Schlegels, though it is Margaret Schlegel who vigorously supports and defends the humanist ideals. Given below is the

much discussed and oft-quoted passage from the text where Margaret, married to Henry Wilcox after Ruth Wilcox's death, vehemently condemns him for his egotism, ruthlessness and hypocrisy:

You shall see the connection if it kills you, Henry! You have had a mistress – I forgave you. My sister has a lover – you drive her from the house. Do you see the connection? Stupid, hypocritical, cruel – oh, contemptible! – a man who insults his wife when she's alive and cants with her memory when she's dead. A man who ruins a woman for his pleasure, and casts her off to ruin other men... These men are you. You can't recognise them, because you cannot connect ... All your life you have been spoiled.... No one has ever told what you are – muddled, criminally muddled. (Forster 2007, 326)

Margaret's outburst is in tune with Forster's vision of "connection and wholeness" seeking to "connect without bitterness until all men are brothers" (Forster 2007, 285). What is, however, a very surprising development is Margaret's intimacy with Henry Wilcox. But again, this directs us to Forster's deeply felt values of humanism, which, in an increasingly disintegrated society, were only feasible for men and women who possessed proper spirit or a sound state of mind. Margaret, by all means, possesses a rational mind, or what Said calls, "reflective understanding and genuine disclosure," and, hence, succeeds in actualizing Forster's ideals of humanism. Margaret's gradual intimacy with Henry Wilcox brings her closer to the "depths of his soul" (Forster 2007, 194) enhances her understanding and enables her to create a sense of community, kinship with the Wilcoxes. Randall Stevenson opines in this connection:

Margaret stresses that English life may be re-equilibrated through the interconnection of Wilcox values with her own ... By the end of the novel, with Margaret and Henry married and settled in rural retreat at Howards End, much of this connection seems achieved, fragmentation resisted, and the commercial and industrial forces threatening English life for the moment successfully contained. (Stevenson 2007, 210)

## Conclusion

Love, personal relationships and friendship lie at the heart of the novel. Margaret's bonding in friendship with Ruth Wilcox brings her closer to the Wilcoxes and makes Ruth Wilcox leave Howards End to Margaret. Margaret's marriage with Henry enhances their intimacy and their understanding of each other and ultimately enables her to inherit Howards End. Margaret's humanism, like Fielding's, is based upon the ideals and beliefs postulated by Said, that is, the "agency of human individuality and subjective intuition, rather than on received ideas and approved authority" (Said 1978, xxiii). However, while she succeeds, Fielding almost fails to achieve reconciliation, owing to, as discussed earlier, the immaturity and sentimentality of Aziz. *A Passage to India*, it is pertinent to note, was published after the First World War. The grim realities of the war, it seems, had dimmed Forster's optimism, but his humanistic impulses, his unwavering faith in his humanistic beliefs lead him to imagine the possibilities of establishing a connection between different races, nations and culture. "Not yet" limits the scope of total failure and leaves the readers hoping for a syncretic future where there will be no barriers of race, class and culture. *Howards End*, on the other hand, despite all oppositions and contradictions, concludes on a positive note. Both Henry Wilcox and Margaret Schlegel possess, what Said calls, "reflective understanding and genuine disclosure" (Said 1978, xviii), which are also aspects of tolerance, and this enables Margaret to establish connection between two opposite forces of the society.

To conclude, it can be said that both *Howards End* and *A Passage to India* may be read as the fictionalization of Said's theories of humanism. Both novels reflect Forster's constant preoccupation with the values of humanism as well as his awareness of the ambiguities involved in the achievement of these values and ideals in a "complex world, full of conflicting claims" (Forster 1951, 87). It is imperative to emphasize that Forster's humanistic beliefs continue to be very much useful and relevant in contemporary times. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his ideals have assumed the form of a continuum, and, therefore, it is no surprise that critics and scholars, like Said, keep on reiterating those beliefs through their writings. Gardner rightly asserts that, "his message of the importance of personal relationships and of the need to 'connect' has never gone unnoticed." Krzysztof Fordoński also observes that "his belief in the value of friendship ... is just as valid today as it was when he first presented his creed in



'What I Believe' in 1938" (Fordonski 2020, 30–31). Forster cherished these beliefs and ideals throughout his life, both as a writer and as an individual, and thus offered to the world as "little light ... that is shining" (Forster 1951, 66).

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## Speaking through “the Wearisome Machine”: E. M. Forster’s “The Machine Stops”

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**Abstract:** This article aims to explore how E. M. Forster’s ground-breaking story “The Machine Stops” manifests the notion of space, the air-ship, and the machine as a metonymic extension of capitalist modernity and Anthropocene. In doing so, within the framework of spatial criticism, it examines the concepts of universal commodification and cultural hegemonization, regarding the imposed lock-down of the machine that leads to immobility in Vashti and her son Kuno’s lives. The mapping of space in the shape of a hexagonal cell of a bee transgresses the boundaries between the self and the machine because the buttons decode the satisfaction of such characters as Vashti, who feel in a hurry all the time. However, the result is limbo mobility and mass destruction in a crisis, emerging from Kuno’s individual desire to find his way out of the economic expansion of the world space. The machine’s cognitive mapping for Vashti, which is incompatible with Kuno, delineates the maladaptation of machine life to cultural practices of survival.

**Keywords:** “The Machine Stops,” spatial modernisation, Anthropocene, lock-down, modernist culture

E. M. Forster’s story “The Machine Stops” (1909) defines the twentieth century as the heterotopic pace of modernist culture in which “mechanical progress has been completed” (Beer 2007, 38). The transforming Machine has taken over natural life, because going out to the surface of the earth would be dangerous, as one needs a respirator to breathe. Therefore, an underground life has emerged for Vashti and her son Kuno, who live in similar bee-cell-shaped rooms in opposite parts of the world that provide full comfort for the residents with music, light, and ventilation. Owing to “advanced thinkers, like Vashti” (Forster 1968, 17), who value Machine life more than old natural life, it is not surprising to see in the story the abolishment of respirators and the re-establishment of religion that

gives omnipotence to the Machine. The characters live in a lockdown situation that leads to immobility and physical weakening, and this forces them to be submissive to the Machine. Vashti sees no advantage to living on the surface of the earth, which is covered in dust and mud, and she is ashamed of her son when he refuses to submit to the rules of the Machine. The Machine annihilates the self's right to survive by suspending his/her vigilance and destroying his/her autonomy. As Vashti claims: "But no advantage. The surface of the earth is only dust and mud, no advantage. [...] no life remains on it, and you would need a respirator, or the cold of the outer air would kill you. One dies immediately in the outer air" (Forster 1968, 3). However, Kuno dismantles the discourse of the Machine as he states that there are people who live on the surface of the earth (18). The Machine stops and its inhabitants face the apocalyptic end.

This study aims at examining how the era of Anthropocene influences the relationship between the self and the space regarding modernity that prioritizes rationalisation of the global Machine in E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops." The Machine is designed as a facilitator for humanity with its fictional dystopic feature of an underground global construction. Due to the murderously cold air of the outside world, the characters in the story have to wear respirators to travel from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere, although they prefer to stay at home or rather in their moving armchairs that are all alike around the world. By referring to Foucault and Lefebvre's notions of space, the study seeks to find out whether it is possible for a generation that blindly believes in the rule of the Machine, promoting incarceration and sameness, to create something new to escape from its apocalyptic end. Is it possible to create, despite the commonness of the buttons that produce literature, and would it be possible to change society by reversing the hierarchies of power in a fictional space created by the Book of the committee of the Machine?

E. M Forster's "The Machine Stops" has been studied by many scholars, who brought new perspectives: Emelie Jonsson, for instance, reveals that the Machine life appears as "an inflexible system unable to cope with environmental conditions beyond its adaptive range" (2012, 174). Humanity's relationship to the environment is confusing in terms of its essence. The rural ideal and modernity contrast and are separated as the rural life (outside world) has no machinery to experience the environment (2012, 175). Jonsson compares the Machine Life to a "sinking ship," and "the evolution" (2012, 169) destroys that ship. Kuno's idea is that the ship never proceeds towards the goal of humanity. Vashti's in-

tellektualism is empty, as her lectures are maintained by the Machine for its survival because the Machine feeds itself with the privacy of humanity. Likewise, Dominic Head in “Forster and Short Story” argues that the Machine is “like an early internet” facilitating “the acquisition of a banalized general knowledge and the means of its transmission” (2007, 81–82). Alvin C. Kibel is critical of some points in the story that are incompatible with the teleological drive: “air [is] [...] manufactured below ground rather than drawn in from above; and all this is accomplished with immobility” (1998, 129) in “The Machine Stops.” There are also metaphorical extensions of psychic space as Paul March-Russell foregrounds “the tunnel,” which first appears in the story when the Machine starts to hum (Forster 1968, 5). The tunnel is also used to exit and enter the bee-cell-shaped rooms. March-Russel argues that the tunnel:

is associated with both literal production of being displayed in human company – metaphorically, reproduction: the tunnel was a kind of fallopian tube. The Machine creates a womb-like space for its inhabitants, a patriarchal attempt to appreciate female powers of human creativity that ends disastrously: the Machine unlike the female does not create but merely maintains. (March-Russel 2005, 68)

Vashti is frightened of the tunnel and its curves and these tunnels may also be interpreted as the embodiment of ecological imperialism that displaces individuals from nature and their families so that every inch of the space is for the advantage of the global Machine. Vashti uses the tunnel first to visit her son and then to escape from her prison’s apocalyptic end. The tunnel may also be interpreted as a space between home and homelessness in which the notion of security is subverted with the signification system of the Machine, which is doomed to stop in the end.

Apart from these critical approaches about E. M. Forster’s “The Machine Stops,” there still seems to be a gap in scholarly studies regarding spatial criticism. This study explores the space creation in the story taking into account Foucault’s and Lefebvre’s notions of space to shed light on the problematic relation between the self and his/her environment regarding the technological advancement emerging from the humanistic ideal “Man as the measure.” This ideal redesigns not only the environmental structure of the world but also the collective unconscious of the masses that are forced to live voluntarily in isolation without any physical contact

with anybody. Modernity, expressed in the story, destroys the lure of Nature, and the connection between self and space becomes problematic despite the ergonomic design of the Machine, originating from the natural spatiality of honeycombs that integrate the existence of people to a colony-like life.

### **The Machine and Its Post-apparatus:<sup>1</sup>**

The mending apparatus of the Machine, on the other hand, never mends anything as its committee only accepts the complaints and forwards them to other officials. Yet the Machine-enchanted people of the earth are scared of a personal element that would revolt against the Machine being a King. This fear brings out the collective unconscious of the Machine supporters that counter-act an imaginary person meddling with the Machine, whose mission is to nurture, clothe and shelter the people. Ultimately, the Machine stops, and the last things that Kuno and Vashti see are the dead nations and the “untainted” sky that stand in contrast to the so-called omnipotence of the Machine. Forster’s story is about the breaking down of the independent space and its unchanging status. The global Machine life in the story lacks “distinction” (Head 2007, 82). This life controls the globe that has been seen as “emptiness” (Wells 2014, 3) or a “stage” (Shakespeare *As You Like it* II. Vii. 1996, 622) in terms of Cartesian thinking. The space now is ready to be reconstituted with a modern “positive” function despite its “discontinuous irregular” (Kern 2016, 19) aspect of real and unreal virtual mirror images.

### **Universal Commodification and Cultural Hegemonization**

The story suggests that “[s]pace is not a void but filled with energies or forces” (Holub 1992, 70). For instance, Kuno’s immediate reaction to the Machine’s

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1 This term refers to institutional, administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures that Foucault calls “power/knowledge and askeses or techniques of self” (McWhorter *Edinburgh Dictionary of Philosophy* 2005 177). However, the way Forster handles the machine-oriented life triggers the subversion of the constructed hierarchies in the novel. The destruction of the originary with Machine life paves the way for a period like post-colonisation as people realize that their admiration for the machine becomes void. Thus, the dispositive or rather the power of the Machine can be termed as a post-apparatus in a Foucauldian sense as it lacks the originary of humanity. That brings out a rupture between the Western scientific thought and the non-scientific thought. My term refers to the Foucauldian “dispositifs” of Machine oriented life in the story, which triggers the idea that hierarchical systems or periods that refute originality for the sake of capitalism, such as refuting Nature as a healing power, are prone to destruction.

heterotopic virtual mirror image demonstrates that this energy of the body, as a space, has the power to reconstitute itself. His rebellious attitude affects the energies of Vashti who leaves her room and visits Kuno living on the other side of the world. In other words, Kuno’s wish to meet his mother face to face without the mirror image, showing both the real and the unreal paves Kuno and Vashti’s way to “encounter energies already in motion” (70). While travelling, Vashti observes the Himalayas, Caucasus, pink clouds, the brimming sun-like golden sea (Forster 1968, 8), although she utters that these authentic spaces in Nature never give her any ideas. Contrastingly, Kuno admits that the Machine does not “transmit nuances of expression” (Forster 1968, 3), which delimits the spatial realms of body as “representations of space, or ‘lived’ experience” in Lefebvre’s terms (Wegner 2002, 183). The Machine life starts with the origins of space as “inside and outside” and continues with different strategies of the “capitalist stage” (Wegner 2002, 199). Thus, it is essential to examine “The Machine Stops” now in the twenty-first century reconsidering the processes of lockdown and the notion of Anthropocene regarding Lefebvre’s term “spatial practices” that generalize “the concept of mental space” (Wegner 2002, 182).

Foucault’s investment of the body with respect to “power relations” would reinforce the idea that surveillance of the Machine life in the story has already reconstructed the global space with its airships travelling to the other side of the world. It is a power that reduces the communication to limited “ritualized spaces” (183) when the characters in the story prefer being thankful to the Machine instead of conceiving any ideas from the spatial realms of the natural world, including the mountain ranges, the sea and the beautiful limitless sky with stars, resembling human beings. Yet Vashti acknowledges Man as the measure despite turning her back to the natural space. That is to say, space and spatial differences of the Machine life reverses the identities; Vashti is faster than athletic Kuno and whenever they meet, she is always in a hurry and wants Kuno to act faster: “Kuno, how slow you are.” He smiled gravely. “I really believe you enjoy dawdling.” “I have called you before, mother, but you were always busy or isolated. I have something particular to say” (Forster 1968, 2). The intricacy of the mind-body relationship of Cartesian philosophy states that the human body is “an obstacle, surpassed by new technologies” because the physical body is “a prison compared with virtual bodies” (Zimmerman, Morgan 2019, 39). Kuno’s “embodied mind” rejects mind/body dualism because his athletic body both lives and encounters Vashti’s cognitive mapping that conceives modernity and Cartesian

thinking as absolute truth. Kuno's post-Cartesian thinking sees modernity as an illusion and seeks a more holistic view by his wish to reunite with Nature or rather the outside world. Thus, Kuno's ontological resistance to the Machine is the empirical reality that forces him to react to Vashti's illusionary utopian world, "I believe that you pray to it when you are unhappy. Men made it do not forget that. Great men, but men. The Machine is much, but it is not everything. I see something like you in this plate, but I do not see you" (1968, 2). The story, hence, foregrounds "an abstract space" in Lefebvre's terms that is fuelled with "the global trend in the history of capitalism" (Wegner 2002, 183). This global trend is constructed for the privileges of the Machine, and the pleasure principle of Man, which keeps him busy with buttons that produce music and literature.

The lack of communication between the son and the mother can be traced in the modernized cultural space of the underground life that sterilizes and isolates the individual. Their cultural awareness and their rights and duties are in a clash that forces Kuno to question the function of the Machine. In this respect, the definition of culture by Gramsci would shed light on the cultural hegemony of the Machine life: Culture is "the attainment of a higher awareness, through which we can come to understand our value and place within history, our proper function in life, our rights and duties" (Gramsci 1994, xvi). The cultural moral ideological consent of the population to the prevailing economic and political system in the story manifests how human beings show consent to the rules of the Machine in order not to lose their connection to one another in a virtual environment. The Machine encompasses the physical, psychic, social isolation of the individual; these isolations are needed for the omnipotence of the Machine as an old-fashioned sovereign technological apparatus that pumps up the motto of Vitruvian man: "Man is the measure" (Forster 1968, 12). The hegemonic cultural tendencies of the Machine and the consequences can be scrutinized in terms of space that has been abandoned so that people can lead an illusionary life.

The immobility in Vashti's life is forced upon her as she fears to disobey the rules of the Machine:

"Better." Then with irritation: "But why do you not come to me instead?"

"Because I cannot leave this place."

"Why?"



“Because, any moment, something tremendous may happen.” (Forster 1968, 6)

The negative verb “cannot leave” in Vashti’s speech manifests the imposed immobility in Vashti’s life that has been arrested through the Machine. She wants to escape from that space, which is limited and surrounded with the boundaries of technology. Nonetheless, she encounters “reaction mobility” (Xiang et al. 2020, 5) as an advanced individual after her son’s wish for a face-to-face meeting. Having isolated herself from risks, Vashti thinks that she is safe inside her beehived hexagonally shaped room as she experiences self-surveillance, which is a rupture with the empirical reality of the outside world. She succumbs to physical isolation to protect herself by fencing off the natural environment. When her son insists on calling her, she encounters this “reaction mobility” (Xiang et al. 2020, 5) despite the fear of being exposed to homelessness. The Machine has transformed the global space into an unworthy sameness; travelling seems useless, as Vashti submits to be dislocated from her natural environment that has been reduced to a standardized modification of the Machine. This life transgresses the uncanny of the natural life, transferring natural phenomena to predictable, reasonable rationalization of the advancement of the Machine that utilises “rapid intercourse” and sameness in all representations of space in the story:

Few travelled in these days, for, thanks to the advance of science, the earth was exactly alike all over. Rapid intercourse, from which the previous civilization had hoped so much, had ended by defeating itself. What was the good of going to Peking when it was just like Shrewsbury? Why return to Shrewsbury when it would all be like Peking? Men seldom moved their bodies; all unrest was concentrated in the soul. (Forster 1968, 6)

### **The Honeycomb-Shaped Rooms**

Exposing one to cold air for not obeying the rules transforms Kuno’s society into a heterotopia that alienates and disturbs the rebellious ones. The Machine has created an underground world on earth by disciplining and punishing those who try to come to the surface. Everything is not bad in this system of the Machine, or at least there is an illusionary tendency, especially among the advanced

people, that the Machine has been helpful to them. They thank the advances in science and keep their images<sup>2</sup> to themselves in their rooms, feeling safe under endless surveillance: living in a lockdown situation forces people to abide by their own rules by excluding others who would disturb their safety, such as the homeless people. Therefore, advanced people like Vashti prefer to keep their images to themselves in their comfortable honeycomb-shaped rooms. The ones who are either rebellious or weak are excluded from society with either Euthanasia or Homelessness (being exposed to the cold air of the outside) because they cannot keep up with the high standards of the Machine life. Another punishment is given to those who fail to succeed in their lectures as they may submit to Euthanasia if the committee of the Machine accepts it. This is self-punishment and wilful acceptance of the sovereignty of the Machine, or an escape from the regression of the technologically clear-cut distinction. That kind of distinction, unfortunately, lacks the sense of a holistic view. The Machine never embraces the natural space as a part of a human being's psychic health and well-being; it imprisons people to bee-cells. This is a heterotopia of illusion.

Foucault argues that the notion of space is one that imposes immobility or rather favours limbo mobility that restricts travel to the outside by arousing fear among the individuals. Thus, "The Machine Stops," is the overt critique of technological advancement which constitutes "space that is rigid and forbidden" and it is also "the space of metamorphosis: the other space—communicating, polymorphous, continuous, and irreversible" (Downing 2008, 60). The restrictions of the space increase the limbo situation of the individuals as they cannot move due to the fear that something terrible may happen. The space of bee-cell-shaped rooms is commodified only for virtual interaction; the outside world has been totally abandoned for the sake of the continuity of the Machine:

You know that we have lost the sense of space. We say "space is annihilated", but we have annihilated not space, but the sense thereof. We have lost a part of ourselves. I determined to recover it, and I began by walking up and down the platform of the railway outside my room. (Forster 1968, 11)

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2 Advanced people like Vashti prefer not to mingle with people who do not live underground by rebelling to the system so they keep their image to themselves by not mirroring the image of an outsider who would be considered as a threat to the existing system of hierarchies.

The progression of the Machine depends on the annihilation of space on the surface that has been damned as murderously cold. The term Anthropocene causes this problem, “stresses both the technologically mediated power, [...] its potentially lethal consequences for everyone” (Braidotti 2013, 6). Likewise, this technologically mediated power forces people to choose death as a consequence of their dissatisfaction with the Machine. Finding one’s own way out and a way of one’s own are seen as a threat. The Machine reacts to this situation by threatening Kuno with Homelessness. Kuno thinks he “could live in the outer air (Forster 1968, 16) with his preference to worship God rather than the Machine. Vashti calls her son’s choice “superstitious” (17). The mental space of the characters has been mapped cognitively with the utilities of the Machine that impressed its believers with “blue optic plates,” wormlike “mending apparatus,” lifts, the Book. Kuno compares the mending apparatus to a worm bringing out the unrealised possibility of the Machine’s “conditional situation” (Stockwell 2002, 95–96) through his speculation. Thus, he reverses the sacredness of the Machine so that he is ironically called “sinful” (Forster 1968, 19).

Being on the northern and the southern hemisphere and transgressing the sanctions pave the way for Vashti to encounter the apocalyptic end of the Machine. Being afraid of that tremendous thing, Vashti shows “reaction immobility” to avoid any risks and dangers caused by the Anthropocene, so she prefers to stay in her bee-cell-shaped room instead of having the committee members threaten her with “homelessness.” Kuno, on the other hand, has already been threatened by “homelessness” (10), meaning “death.” In such a situation, the victim is exposed to the air, which kills him” (10). Thus, the honeycomb-shaped rooms are the embodiment of heterotopia for Vashti and Kuno because the rooms metaphorically other their inhabitants to constitute a psychic space of colonisation by distancing them from the ecosystem. The Machine has the mission to adapt human beings to underground life to gain the most sufficient energy for the continuum of its dynasty.

### Traces of Posthumanism and Eugenics

The story delineates the subversion of Authoritarian Eugenics as the Machine imposes discrimination on its rivals by calling them “feeble-minded” to differentiate race, class, and gender positionings in the society (“Eugenics” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). This is done not to favour an athletic race; on the

contrary, being athletic is ironically seen as a disadvantage, which belittles physical strength to promote the power of the Machine. Athletic Kuno asks to be a father, but he is turned down by the Machine, which prefers the white-faced “swaddled lump of flesh” (Forster 1968, 1) of people always sitting in their rooms. The Machine regulates the peoples’ lives bio-politically. This way of life imposed on rebellious Kuno resembles authoritative eugenics, which involves “bans on marriage between particular groups, forced sterilization, and then internment in concentration camps for individuals belonging to groups deemed inferior” (“Eugenics” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). Blurring the boundaries between technological advancement and cultural expectations, the story subverts the distinction between weak and strong by belittling Kuno’s physical strength. It is obvious that the phrase “man is the measure” is void because it is made so through repetition. However, the different ones remain a residue for the population, so the Machine either punishes them with homelessness or the people ask for Euthanasia or failure in their performances.

The categorization of Man implemented by the Machine brings out the reversal of Cartesian thought. The body as a space that introduces power is no longer fashionable in the story because:

[b]y these days it was a demerit to be muscular. Each infant was examined at birth, and all who promised undue strength were destroyed. Humanitarians may protest, but it would have been no true kindness to let an athlete live; he would never have been happy in that state of life to which the Machine had called him; he would have yearned for trees to climb, rivers to bathe in, meadows and hills against which he might measure his body. (Forster 1968, 11)

Provided that the relationship between Vashti and her children is constituted by the Machine, it not only demonstrates the Cartesian concept of the Machine as a Man-measured apparatus but also moves beyond to reveal a post-apparatus. This post-apparatus exceeds its limits to satisfy the needs of its creator as far as the jarring music, cold air, and the disappearance of the beds are concerned. As Lefebvre states “the Cartesian concept of ‘machine,’ embraces the possibility of unpredictable effects, and rejects all strict mechanism, all hard-and-fast and unilateral definition” (1991, 195). The connection of the Machine to humanity promotes a post-humanist perspective; however,

the holistic view that brings together technology and humanity is incompatible with the insatiable desire of Man to continue his lineage and travel to expand his hegemonic discourse. Homelessness, Euthanasia or getting permission to be a father, exclusion of athletic people or physically strong babies from society are means of reconstructing a hegemonic space that depends on sexualization, racialisation, classification of human beings. Ironically, the characters in the story, except for Kuno, think that the Machine provides them with everything they need to overcome the effects of the Anthropocene. The Book of the Machine demarcates new borders for the reduction of natural spaces into controlled reconstructions. With its regulations, the Book also fuels limbo mobility and self-surveillance for the continuum of the Machine. Forster’s story delineates the surveillance and the manipulation of the Machine life by the book of the Machine by referring to the use of body and space for global needs as raw materials: ““Parents, duties of,” said the book of the Machine,” cease at the moment of birth. P.422327483” (Forster 1968, 6).

### **Modernisation and Spatial Reconfigurations of the Machine**

“[T]he modernist desire for machine-living” (Childs 2008, 122) means submitting blindly to the spatiotemporal realms of Man-measured rules that distribute power to different parts of the world in the twentieth century. In that respect, Vashti in Forster’s story is the embodiment of “the New Woman” (Childs 2008, 220), who is capable of breeding and attending conferences as she has more than one child who live in different parts of the world: “True, but there was something special about Kuno – indeed there had been something special about all her children – and, after all, she must brave the journey if he desired it” (Forster 1968, 6). The constructed image of the successful “New Woman” is kept alive as long as the Machine survives. Ironically, the lockdown of Vashti and her adherence to this incarceration stand in direct contrast to her so-called emancipated position as an “advanced” (11) person.

Another advanced person in his lecture comments on a similar subject of freedom and “direct observation” foregrounding subjective thought instead of spatiotemporal realms that bring out “first-hand ideas” (Forster 1968, 17). With the Enlightenment, space is seen as a static constructor of a reified thing (Wegner 2002, 182), but there comes forth also a psychic space in which the unconscious unfolds as a return of the repressed in the story:

[T]here will come a generation that had got beyond facts, beyond impressions, a generation absolutely colourless, a generation *seraphically free from taint of personality*, which will see the French Revolution not as it happened, nor as they would like it to have happened, but as it would have happened, had it taken place in the days of the Machine. (emphasis added, Forster 1968, 17)

The applause after this lecture elucidates that the machine life is based on an object that causes desire: this thought is totally against individual, cultural differences, so it synthesizes the events in accordance with the rules imposed by the Machine. The lure of the Machine totalizes a discourse among the lecturers to constitute new restrictions that reduce the space they need to do their research. They celebrate the notion of being colourless instead of displaying plurality in a colourful way. The sameness of space never integrates the characters as they are forced to live in isolation in underground bee-cell-shaped rooms pressing on buttons to activate schemata.

Since people use respirators in the open air, it is certainly murderously cold, so the characters are locked-down in underground bee-cell-shaped rooms both in the northern and the southern hemisphere. This brings to mind the effects of the Anthropocene in the story. Against the backdrop of the restrictions imposed by the Machine, the room is furnished with the moving armchair and the buttons that facilitate the accommodation designed for the interest of the resident. The communication system, based on virtual integration that supports isolation, annihilates the coexistence between human beings but with an a-synchronic impact, increasing simultaneity for interaction with “pneumatic post” and “blue plate” (Forster 1968, 2), on which the characters can communicate. The blue plate is the embodiment of the mirror for Kuno and his mother that reveals the cross-binary of absence/presence of the mother and the son in their rooms as they are communicating. The absence of nuances of expressions during communication masques the intimate feelings. Or rather the Machine manipulates the senses, so that social spaces are reduced to bee-cell-shaped rooms as heterotopic spaces. These produce displaced images of self-surveillance and punishment for docile bodies like Vashti. The relationship between Vashti and her children indicates obstructed coexistence despite the simultaneity of communication provided by the Machine.

The social space is limited to the room, a heterotopic space that “secretly undermine[s] language,” blocking the possibility of giving a name at once to

“this and that,” shattering and intertwining common names and, above all, destroying the very logic of syntax: not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things to hold together (Vidler 2014, 69). Vashti and Kuno’s conversation indicates that their words and meaning do not hold together:

“It is contrary to the spirit of the age,” she asserted. “Do you mean by that, contrary to the Machine?” “In a sense, but —” His image in the blue plate faded. “Kuno!” He had isolated himself. For a moment Vashti felt lonely. (Forster 1968, 3)

The absence of Kuno defers the transmission of meaning through the blue plate, as the words do not hold together to create meaning when he isolates himself suddenly during their conversation. This causes estrangement for Vashti. The blue plate and the room are also heterotopic in the sense that they prevent Vashti and Kuno from going to the surface of the world. They are restricted like prisoners, retired people, ill people in hospitals who are considered to be deviating from the norms of society.

The epoch of the Machine in Forster’s story constitutes an epistemic category inclusive for those who seek an artificial holistic view of life rather than a teleological drive, emerging from nature and aiming at keeping the balance of nature and culture that sustains an ontic resistance to repression. Only when the Machine shelters people from the coldness of the outside world do human beings adhere to the technology: Vashti escapes from her prison and her alienated body, experiencing the apocalypse of the Machine life, seeing the dead bodies exposed to the natural air and light, sensing the spatio-temporal rhythms of “the whispers [...] and the little whimpering groans” of pain. “They were dying by hundreds out in the dark” (Forster 1968, 22).

To conclude, the fragmentation of the honeycomb-shaped rooms as the metaphoric extension of the stopping of the Machine demonstrates a space of “what has no place” (Lefebvre 1991, 163) within the creation of Nature. That is also the end of the colony created by the Man who always fears something tremendous may happen. The absence of the essence for spiritual connection is hidden in Kuno’s susceptible corporeity that has been uncoded by the Machine. The underground distant lives of the population are scattered all around the globe. This provides surveillance for the governmentality of the world but obstructs mutual

understanding, the essence of spiritual creation, the loss of a traditional culture that has been transmitted through verbal space from generation to generation due to the Anthropocene.

Kuno and Vashti have previously lost their originary language by speaking through the illusionary blue plate that never transmitted the nuances of expression. “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold” (Yeats 1979, *The Second Coming* I iii) because “the Machine stops” (Forster 1968, 23), but Kuno is still content as he can speak face to face with his mother. Kuno’s last words emphasize the body as a space that reconstitutes power; the power once promoted incarceration and sameness with the Machine. As Kuno tries to reconstruct the agency between himself and Nature, he utters his last words: “Quicker,” he gasped, “I am dying – but we touch, we talk, not through the Machine” (Forster 1968, 25). One can sense that, for Kuno, it is possible to create, despite the commonness of the buttons that produce literature, and it is possible to try once again for a new verbal space that connects by counteracting to the epistemic and ontic violence of the Machine that reverses the hierarchies of power. “The wearisome Machine” eradicates both the liveliness of earth and a generation who believes in its advancement. Forster is once more critical of imposed hierarchies that obstruct any kind of connection between the people in “The Machine Stops.”

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## Forster and Adaptation: Across Time, Media and Methodologies

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**Abstract:** This essay advances the conversation around the subject of Forster and adaptation – or Forsterian adaptation – by appraising the current state of Forster/ian adaptations scholarship and proposing conceptual and methodological tools for advancing the study of this field. As a cross-disciplinary scholar of film, adaptation, literature, popular and critical reception, and digitally enabled participatory culture, I write with the more specific goal of heightening and extending transdisciplinary awareness of the materials available to be studied, the available methodologies, and their merits and limitations, while identifying issues and challenges for the development of a Forster/ian Adaptation Studies.

Structurally, the essay proceeds by identifying ten ‘themes’ – or important considerations – for the study of Forster/ian adaptation. The ten themes look substantially beyond ‘page-to-screen’ adaptation studies to demonstrate the roles and impacts of institutions, institutional practices, personal relations, the successive ‘new’ media of the past century and their advancing technologies and practices, commercial forces, and Forster’s literary estate (as the rights-holders and royalties beneficiaries for his works); while also calling for a closer, evidence-based, attention to film and media adaptation and production processes and their adaptational consequences; and foregrounding the importance of the visual and unscripted – performed, embodied, intangible and even accidental – elements and determinants of audio-visual adaptation.

Temporally, the essay conceptualises the field by proposing that there have been three phases of Forster/ian adaptation. Phase 1 (1942–1973) comprises those adaptations of Forster’s stories and novels written and produced (broadly) during his lifetime, always for non-cinematic media. Phase 2 comprises the 1984–1992 era of the Forster feature-films cycle, instigated by a (widely disregarded) institutional shift which brought a step-change in the nature of Forster adaptation: for the first time, the development of *new* adaptations of Forster’s novels, going back to the source, became the norm. Phase 3 comprises everything that comes after the 1984–1992 Forster feature films, plus certain earlier adaptations which fall outside the ‘classic adaptation’ category. This third

(and current) phase is characterised by its heterogeneity: adaptation to a range of media, across a range of forms and aesthetic approaches, by creators with varied interests, but, I propose, spanning four main areas Sci-Fi Forster, Queer Forster, The Revisionist or Condensing Forster Adaptation, and twenty-first-century Forsterian Bio-Drama, Bio-Fiction and 'Literary' Paratexts.

**Keywords:** E. M. Forster, Adaptation Studies, Transmedia Adaptation, Trans-temporal, Reception Studies, Popular Reception, Participatory Culture, Film, Radio, Television, Theatre, Digital Media, Digital Theatre, Production Studies, Literary Estates, Media Rights, Cultural Value, Institutions, Literary Paratexts, Unofficial Sequels, Fan Fiction, Publishing Industry, James Ivory, Merchant Ivory Productions, Visual Adaptation, Film Performance, *Photogénie*, LGBTQ+, Queer Forster

## Introduction

This essay seeks to advance the conversation around the subject of Forster and adaptation – or Forsterian adaptation – both in an exploratory sense, to stimulate further discussion, and more concretely by proposing conceptual and methodological tools for advancing the study of this field. Approaching this task as a cross-disciplinary scholar, I particularly want to heighten transdisciplinary awareness of the materials available to be studied, the available methodologies, and their merits and limitations, while identifying issues and challenges for the development of a Forster/ian Adaptation Studies. My perspective draws on my background as a scholar of British film, the 1984–1992 “Forster films” cycle, wider Forster adaptations, and the wider oeuvre and practices of the Merchant Ivory Productions partnership (producers, adapters and makers of three of the five “Forster films”). Methodologically, my work spans, applies and mixes adaptation studies, empirical textual and production histories, reception studies, and the study of digital participatory and fan cultures, with a particular interest in the life of *Maurice* across time and media and its place in post-millennium digital popular and fan culture (Monk 2011b, Monk 2016, Monk 2020).

Originally delivered as a keynote talk to the 2021 International E. M. Forster Society conference *E. M. Forster: Shaping the Space of Culture*, this essay is also written in dialogue with Krzysztof Fordoński’s recent and (by definition) ongo-

ing efforts to definitively list and survey the ever-open field of Forster/ian adaptations and transtexts (Fordoński 2020). Rather than adopting a survey or list approach, however, my contribution is concerned with broader, more reflexive and strategic, questions of Forster – and Forsterian – Adaptation *Studies*. How can we best conceptualise and study the field of adaptational and remediation responses to Forster’s works (and life) at the present 2020s moment: 143 years after Forster’s birth, just over five decades after his death, and a century after the birth of BBC Radio, where the first documented transmedia dramatisation of a Forster work, *The Celestial Omnibus*, was broadcast 80 years ago in 1942? And in a century when (on the one hand) digital technologies and transnational participatory internet culture, and (on the other) the corporate consolidation of English-language publishing as global big business – and of adaptation itself as (to quote Simone Murray 2012) an “industry” – have transformed commerce and culture, personal relations, and the conditions of creation and reception? In the face of this long timeline and these radical transformations, the history and field of Forster adaptations to other media remain only partially studied – both in terms of the adaptations and media, which have received the bulk of critical and scholarly attention (overwhelmingly, the Forster feature films “cycle” of 1984–1992), and the approaches applied.

In this essay, I bring my particular cross-disciplinary mix to bear on these issues with the aim of prompting reflection on the current state of Forster/ian adaptations scholarship and how we might develop it going forward. Structurally, I do this by means of identifying **ten “themes”** – or important considerations – for the study of Forster/ian adaptation. Temporally, I conceptualise and order the unruly field of Forster/ian *adaptations* by proposing a model: **the three phases of Forster adaptation**.

### **Delineating the field of Forster/ian adaptation**

This field most obviously encompasses – and is most conventionally identified with – the dramatised adaptations of Forster’s work to other media or artistic forms: audio (initially, radio), live performance (theatre, joined since the 1990s by opera and musical-theatre examples), audiovisual (the televisual and feature-film adaptations). However, Fordoński’s survey reaches beyond these to capture a broader, and proliferating, Forsterian transtextual field – of predominantly literary works – in which the relationship to Forster’s writings and/

or life is one of “inspiration,” “dialogue,” extension, forms of same-medium adaptation, or (occasionally, as in Di Canzio 2021) outright textual recycling. In Fordoński’s words, this less determinate transtextual field comprises works “inspired by Forster’s oeuvre or biography” or “which enter into a dialogue” with Forster (Fordoński 2000, 11). Given that such works have proliferated in the decades since Forster’s death – since the 1980s, and more extensively since 2000 – it should be noted that this “dialogue” is generally one-way.

What Fordoński’s list excludes are (for the most part) amateur Forsterian transtexts, and (more decisively) Forster fanworks. Enabled by the participatory internet, the latter especially have become visible since the mid-2000s, strongly inspired by the Merchant Ivory film adaptations and their actors – particularly *Maurice* (James Ivory, UK, 1987) – and deploying a range of forms and media (from written fanfiction, via analogue and digital art, to various genres of fanvid/fan video). For a fuller scholarly account of these productive fan practices; Forster’s and *Maurice*’s recontextualised reception within participatory culture (Jenkins et al. 2009); and *Maurice*’s transtextual enmeshment in transnational fan cultures, global British actor fandoms, and contemporary genres (from young-adult fiction to – more longstandingly, since the 1980s – Japanese *shōnen-ai* [boy love] and related genres), see Monk 2011b, Monk 2016 and Monk 2020. The list’s focus on documenting professional and industry-produced, industry-distributed, Forster/ian adaptations and paratexts is wholly understandable. However, the digital era’s transformed opportunities for user-generated content, spreadable media (Jenkins, Ford and Green 2013), self-publication and self-distribution significantly challenge the distinction between professional/commercial/industrial and DIY creative works, a shift which researchers need to be aware of. Below, I discuss two examples: filmmakers’ self-uploads of their work onto YouTube or other platforms; and the several *Maurice* sequels published as books and sold on Amazon.

Fordoński’s list includes a number of short films made since 1998, and posted by their makers on YouTube or Vimeo, whose industrial-versus-DIY status is not immediately self-evident. *Desire* (1999), written and directed by Jorge Torregrossa (AKA Jorge Torregrossa García), is a very effective US geographical translation of Forster’s posthumous queer short story *The Obelisk* (1939, published 1972), shot in Battery Park, Lower Manhattan. It is filmed and acted to a professional standard, but was made by the Spanish (not US-Hispanic) Torregrossa during his Masters in Directing at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. *The Obelisk* had first been adapted for the screen as early as 1977 for

BBC-TV's *Premiere* series of short dramas, itself a showcase for first-time directors – here, Giles Foster. The script was by Pauline Macaulay, an experienced adapter of Forster, who had also scripted BBC-TV's sole adaptations of Forster's novels during the 1970s: *Howards End* (1970) and *A Room with a View* (1973), both for the BBC's *Play of the Month* strand. The 1998 animated short film *Plug* (scripted by Meher Gourjian, directed by Gourjian and James Waese) is one of several digital, live-action or hybrid short film adaptations of Forster's *The Machine Stops* (1909) shared directly by their makers on YouTube. It could easily be taken for accomplished DIY work – but the Armenian-American Gourjian is, in fact, a Hollywood visual effects specialist, married to Pixar Animation Studios producer Katherine Sarafian.

Conversely, two of the three unofficial sequels to *Maurice* published in book form since 2005 and sold on Amazon (Carrier 2005, Spickett 2016) were, on examination, self-published by their authors with “vanity” publishers in the US and UK respectively. The third, John M. Bowers' *End of Story* (2010) – the most ambitious and sophisticated of the three, though far from Forsterian in tone – was published by a US small press (Sunstone, based in Santa Fe). In his acknowledgements, Bowers (in his professional life, an academic specialist in Medieval literature at the University of Nevada Las Vegas) thanks Forster's literary executors at King's College Cambridge for “hosting me to dinner” (2010, 227). However, his recourse to renaming his heroes “Martin” and “Alan” (the novel's conceit is that they are the real-life couple from whom Forster steals his inspiration for the fictional Maurice and Alec) suggests that the Forster estate's generosity stopped short of a formal endorsement, and Bowers' current online profile refers to *End of Story* as “his 9/11 novel” – an accurate description in that it reflects *End of Story*'s historical and geographical reach, intertwined storylines, and ending. The fact that these earlier efforts were joined, in summer 2021, by William Di Canzio's *Alec: A Novel*, the first “retelling” of Forster's *Maurice* to be sanctioned by the Forster estate – this time, commissioned from an American creative-writing tutor, backed by America's most prestigious literary publisher, and promotionally endorsed by Forster's 2010 biographer Wendy Moffat, who shares the same publisher (“Heartfelt, sexy ... I loved it!”) – prompts further questions – rather than providing answers – about the institutional determinants and cultural economics of literary “legitimacy.”

In the light of these and wider examples, I propose an approach which pushes beyond the notion of a relatively orderly Forsterian forcefield of transtextual “in-

fluence” and “dialogue” to emphasise instead the textual flux, instabilities and unknowns of both Forster’s works themselves and their best-known cross-media adaptations. Such an emphasis is notably – though not uniquely – pertinent to *Maurice*, a novel with a complex, palimpsestic, pre-publication history (textual, circulatory and dialogic), later echoed in the unusually circuitous adaptation and script-development journey (Speidel 2014) and gruelling production (Monk 2019) of James Ivory’s 1987 film. Back in 1986, the behind-the-scenes processes of Ivory’s *Maurice* were shaped by an unquestioned pressure (both external and self-imposed) to “improve” and “modernise” Forster’s supposedly inferior novel,<sup>1</sup> coupled with a challengingly tight timescale, a budget of only £1.5million, and a location shoot which spanned Cambridge, multiple London and suburban locations, six further English counties, and around 70 Edwardian-styled interior and exterior sets (Ivory 1986a).

*Maurice*’s production files held in the James Ivory Papers at the University of Oregon document many further difficulties, including that, by November 1986, *Maurice*’s 54-day shoot (which had started on October 6) was unable to meet its intended schedule (Ivory 1986a). The 1986 shoot wrapped on December 9, but with filming not complete, and had to be followed by a second shoot in May 1987: the source of several shots and scenes which would prove integral, even iconic, to the released film as a visual adaptation (Ivory 1987). During May 1987 yielded, for example, the close-up of Maurice (James Wilby)’s and Clive (Hugh Grant)’s clasped hands during their pivotal day of escape from Cambridge into the Fens, and close-ups of Maurice’s and Alec (Rupert Graves)’s rapt faces. In addition, following a process during which the scene order was – literally – reshuffled using a set of small filing cards devised by Ruth Praver Jhabvala (Ivory 1986b), the eventual released cut of Ivory’s *Maurice* removed the shooting script’s non-linear, flashback opening

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1 The external pressure to “improve” Forster’s *Maurice* for the screen came from Forster’s own literary executors at King’s, and was explicit. One of them, George Rylands, “never thought it was a good book ... I said ‘please [film] *Where Angels Fear to Tread* instead’”; but was “converted” and “persuaded” by Kit Hesketh Harvey and James Ivory’s first-draft screenplay – markedly different from the eventual film – that “it could be made into something better than the book, which [is] what we expect” (Rylands, quoted in Lelyveld 1986a). Hesketh Harvey’s own comments confirm both the tight adaptation timescale and his facetiousness towards the source: “We had eight weeks, from treatment to first day’s shooting, and many Forsterian knots to untie. Broadly, however, the brief was this: to restore *Maurice*’s candour and power of 1913 and to quell the titters of 1971” (Hesketh Harvey 1987, 30).



sequence – itself a remnant of earlier more extensive experiments with story order at the script-development stage (Speidel 2014) – to restore, and *almost* replicate, the linearity of Forster's novel. Ironically, in the face of this fraught and complex genesis, on its release Ivory's *Maurice* was routinely praised – or derided – by critics as the kind of “faithful” (or “too-faithful”) adaptation routinely expected of Merchant Ivory, but one which improved upon a supposedly inferior Forster novel. Even today, barely any reviews attend fully to the released film's significant adaptational changes and decisions: David Leavitt's tirade against Merchant and Ivory for casting James Wilby as a blond-haired Maurice, in his introduction to the Penguin Classics edition (Leavitt 2005, xiv), is a rare exception.

#### Considerations for Forster/ian Adaptation Studies: ten themes (1–4)

My consideration of the example of Ivory's 1987 *Maurice* and its unseen adaptation and production processes yields several insights for how we might aspire to approach and develop Forsterian Adaptation Studies. First, **Theme 1a: The need for evidence-based/archival methods** and, allied to this, the need to attend to the processes, conflicts, complications and (as I shall return to later) contingencies and accidents which shape an adaptation rather than merely the outcome. The case of Ivory's *Maurice* illustrates how much the once-standard textual-comparative approach to studying book-to-film adaptations – in which the materials studied are the published book and the released film – conceals, and how far it may mislead. Yet the book-to-film comparative approach remains widespread, despite the development of contemporary adaptation theory (from McFarlane 1996 onwards) on the one hand, and the advancement of the fields of screenwriting studies and empirical film-production studies on the other. One core complaint is that such textual-comparative work is “practiced in a theoretical vacuum” (Leitch 2003, 150), “without the support of any more general theoretical account of what actually happens, or what ought to happen, when a group of filmmakers set out to adapt a literary text” (Leitch 2003, 149). The adaptation scholar Thomas Leitch attributes this persistence to “the institutional matrix of adaptation study – the fact that movies are so often used in courses like ‘Shakespeare and Film’ as heuristic intertexts, the spoonful of sugar that helps the Bard's own text go down,” while “fundamental questions in adaptation theory [are left] unasked, let alone unanswered” (2003, 150).

As Leitch observes, “Everyone knows, for example, that movies are a collaborative medium, but is adaptation similarly collaborative[?]” (2003, 150). The answer is, of course, yes – but book-to-film textual comparison is both empirically *and* theoretically unequipped to reveal the complexities, tensions (and failures) of process and agency, or the collaborative, negotiated aspects of adaptation. For this, evidence-based methods which draw on (or, at minimum, take account of) empirical, primary sources – screenplays, wider materials in film/media production archives and publishing archives – are needed. Novel-to-film approaches do not usually even study the adapted screenplay, let alone its process and evolution, and typically stop far short of engaging with the wider dimensions of film (or media) production, or considering crucial determinants such as the attitudes, motivations and demands of rights-holders or the detail of film/media rights negotiations and agreements (pivotal for the adaptations produced – or approaches refused – since Forster’s death). While documentation of the latter tends to remain confidential and closely guarded, the published gleanings – when media reports quote the Forster estate or individual executors at King’s, and in the many (and consistent) testimonies of “Forster film” producers and directors about zamienić na the “rigours of their “examination” by these gatekeepers (producer Derek Granger, in Rees 1991)” – confirm the importance of the estate’s attitude (and its executors’ sometimes idiosyncratic judgements and tastes) as a force shaping Forster/ian adaptations. (For testimony from both sides, see Rees 1991 as well as Lelyveld 1986a and 1986b.)

**Theme 1b: the value of mixed methods.** Despite this limitation in textual approaches, however, not all page-to-screen scholarship is inadequately rigorous or untheorised. In relation to the Forster feature-film adaptations, there are some excellent models of close textual, visual and narratological analysis which we can valuably follow. I am particularly thinking of the late Forster scholar June Perry Levine’s analyses of Ivory’s and screenwriter Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s *A Room with a View* (1985) (which Levine judged a successful Forster adaptation, in contrast with her view of David Lean’s *A Passage to India* [1984]) and Ivory’s *Maurice* in terms of their expressly visual and cinematic adaptational strategies (Levine 1989, Levine 1996). Both essays combine close attention to the specifics of film technique and/or screenwriting and structural decisions with a sensitive depth knowledge of Forster. The former focuses on *A Room with a View*’s strategies for translating “the Forsterian voice” and “literary tone” to film (Levine 1989, 70); the latter on how *Maurice*’s cinematography (by the eclectic French

veteran Pierre Lhomme, whose roots lay in the *nouvelle vague*) works to convey the novel's (notably unmarked) slippages between character point of view and authorial commentary.

**Theme 2: Evidence-based methods (should) give us better Forster adaptations criticism.** Despite exceptions such as Levine's work, the myth of mechanistic "too-faithful" "heritage" adaptation nonetheless persists, repetitively, in many literary-critical responses to the Forster feature films – albeit often as a ritual, or residual, gesture. Thus Robert K. Martin and George Piggford, in their "Editors' Introduction" to *Queer Forster* (1997, 27), discharge this obligation in a 33-line footnote. Martin and Piggford make wholly valid critical points (about David Lean's oversimplified, de-eroticised *A Passage to India* [1984], and the – more peculiar – tone-deafness to same-sex desire of Charles Sturridge's otherwise "faithful" *Where Angels Fear to Tread* [1991]) alongside the routine warnings against "complicit ... aestheticism" and "nostalgia," but this is not always the case. One especially absurd example can be found in the McGraw-Hill textbook *Adaptation: Studying Film and Literature* (Desmond and Hawkes 2006). In a section titled "The failed adaptation," the authors dismiss the three Merchant Ivory Forster films – collectively – for their "wooden characters, conventional storytelling, a want of emotion, and a lack of verve," but then instantly backtrack to name two of the three (*A Room with a View* and *Howards End*, but not *Maurice*) as "exceptions" and "quite good" (Desmond and Hawkes 2006, 242). This homogenising myth of *excessive* – "wooden," "conventional," detrimental – fidelity can only really flourish where there remains a relative dearth of – or indifference to – evidence-based work which engages in detail with the adaptational evolution of screenplays and wider production processes. On the Screenwriting Studies side, the scholarship of Suzanne Speidel (2014) and Laura Fryer (2017, 2020) – parts of which, at the time of writing, remain yet to be published – has made important strides in relation to the Forster films; Ruth Praver Jhabvala's wider screenwriting *oeuvre* as adapter and self-adapter (Jhabvala remains the only person in history to have won both the Booker Prize and – twice – the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay); and Andrew Davies' 2007 television adaptation of *A Room with a View* (directed by Nicholas Renton for ITV, UK).

Both the existence and the bombastic revisionism of Davies' re/adaptation of *A Room with a View* – by a veteran television writer who (since his 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* for the BBC) has become widely regarded as the UK's classic adapta-

tions superstar, but is also robustly heterosexual – alert us to **Theme 3: It is useful to compare adaptations with other adaptations.** The intertextual relations *between* adaptations should not be overlooked and, as Thomas Leitch highlights, raise a deeper question:

Given the myriad differences, not only between literary and cinematic texts, but between successive cinematic adaptations of a given literary text ... what exactly is it that film adaptations adapt, or are supposed to adapt? (Leitch 2003, 150)

Comparison of different adaptations of the same “source” text (whether within one medium or across several) foregrounds, and can valuably clarify, the adaptational decisions that were made in each case and what could have been done differently. A comparison of Ivory’s 1987 film of *Maurice* with its later but less widely known English-language stage and radio adaptations (the former by Roger Parsley and Andrew Graham, first staged in 1998, in the UK; the latter by Philip Osment, produced in 2007 as a two-part BBC Radio 4 *Classic Serial*) – whether focused purely on the scripts, or taking account of the audio/visual and performative elements of adaptation – confirms that multiple “faithful” adaptations of Forster’s *Maurice* are possible. This comparison draws attention, for example, to how many of the novel’s episodes and characters the film omits (a point almost never discussed by critics); to the commutation effects of casting differences (Bertie Carvel’s 2007 radio Clive conveys earnest “simple manners” [Forster 1999, 24] which would lie beyond Hugh Grant’s emotional repertoire; Joseph Kloska’s 2007 radio Alec is raw and tearful at the hotel); and to the film’s mimetic visual influence on the staging of some scenes in virtually every production of Parsley and Graham’s play.

On the other hand, because Parsley and Graham’s adaptation – originally written for the educational SNAP Theatre Company, which specialised in taking “literary classics” to the stage for school-age audiences – was conceived for small-scale, small-cast (and even amateur) stagings, it omits two of the novel’s pivotal, and most cinematically memorable, scenes: Maurice and Clive’s absconsion to the Fens, and the cricket match. The retention of Clive’s beautiful speech from Chapter 13 of the novel (“Let’s get right outside it ever so far...” [Forster 1999, 60]) – absent from Ivory’s film – stands in for the former. Structurally, Parsley and Graham use Maurice’s hypnotism sessions with Lasker

Jones as a framing device. Like Ivory's film, their play combine a long running time with many adaptational omissions despite the relative brevity of Forster's novel. Interestingly, despite a running time of only two hours, it is Osment's 2007 radio dramatisation which comes closest of the three to adapting Forster's novel in full. Adapting *Maurice* to a purely audio medium, Osment can and does make extensive use of Forster's third-person narration (by John Bowe), but also includes numerous scenes absent from both Parsley and Graham's play and the released cut of Ivory's film: Maurice's upset at the dismissal of George the garden boy, his childhood fear of the dark, his schooling at Sunnington and adolescent development, the Gladys Olcott and Dickie Barry episodes, and Maurice's first sighting of Alec with the maids.<sup>2</sup>

Departing from all of these treatments, 2014–2018 brought a Brazilian, Portuguese-language, starkly contemporary staging of *Maurice* (by the Disclosure Theater Company, written by Andreane Lima). This Brazilian *Maurice* (which – reflecting the fragility of such work – could be viewed on YouTube in 2021 when I was preparing the live version of this paper but has now gone) used large-scale visual projection, contemporary and popular music (including, for instance, The Smiths' *Girlfriend in a Coma*), and confrontational performance to reassert *Maurice's* political power as a text with continuing relevance in the present: one which speaks, and is adaptable (both aesthetically and transculturally), to a range of cultures and contexts.

Such examples draw our attention to the living rather than fixed nature of texts, and also to the senses in which adaptation is an act of reception, and a societally, culturally and geographically conditioned one. Thus, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the “dated” *Maurice* Forster worried about in his lifetime, and the “embarrassing” *Maurice* belittled by the 1970s British literary establishment, is from other perspectives a politically powerful – or even dangerous and seditious – text in the numerous local and global contexts where homophobia is resurgent – or official policy – and the fights against conversion therapy, homophobic violence, or merely for the right to be, are real, current and not hypothetical.

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2 A composite episode which juxtaposes Maurice's contrasting responses to Gladys and Dickie, and Alec with the maids, both featured in Ivory's shooting script and are among the film's deleted scenes released on DVD/Blu-ray. Gladys Olcott (played by Serena Gordon) can be glimpsed fleetingly in *Maurice's* final cut, most notably in the subjective montage which conveys Maurice's dream in the Russet Room following his first hypnotism by Lasker-Jones. Dickie Barry was played by Adrian Ross Magenty, whom Ivory re-cast as Tibby Schlegel in *Howards End* (1992).

**Theme 4**, not unrelated to this, is that **We need a temporally and conceptually extended model of “adaptation”** which reaches both back and forward, to encompass, on the one hand, Forster’s own (pre-publication and wider) “adaptations” of his own texts; and, on the other, what Timothy Corrigan names as adaptation scholarship’s “third perspective”: “adaptation as an act of reception” (Corrigan 2017, 23) – to which we might further add reception as an act of adaptation. In considering adaptation as an act of reception (and vice versa), we need to attend to transcultural adaptation, the field of post-publication *popular* reception, and – cutting across the transcultural and the popular – the extensive, yet still widely disregarded, further work of re/adaptation and reimagining done by audiences/readers and fans (of Forster’s works and Forster/ian adaptations).

The remainder of this essay will revisit some of these themes and introduce others, while placing them within a second sense-making framework. Here, I propose that the field of Forster/ians adaptation can be conceptualised in (loosely temporal) terms of three phases.

### **The three phases of Forster/ian adaptation (and themes 5–10)**

#### *Phase 1*

**Phase 1**, extending from 1942 to 1973, comprises those adaptations of Forster’s stories and novels which were written and produced broadly during his lifetime, always for non-cinematic media: as BBC Radio plays or radio drama serials (from 1942), or for the stage (from 1951), followed from 1958 onwards by TV adaptations – which, in practice, were very often re-adaptations of the radio or stage scripts for the newer medium, at a time when British television drama remained overwhelmingly studio-based and the “filmed play” remained an acceptable format. The features of the Phase 1 adaptations underscore the importance of approaching Forster/ian adaptations with an awareness of **Theme 5**, namely **Media History**, in which **medium-specificity matters, and so do institutions**.

The Phase 1 adaptations were, for the most part, scripted by a recurrent set of names – presumably with Forster’s direct approval. And (as Fordoński notes) they were transmedially migrant: this “early period of adaptations” were “repeatedly recycled in various media” (Fordoński 2020, 13–14), with existing scripts adjusted, rather than Forster’s works being adapted afresh with medi-

um-specific considerations in mind. Given that Santha Rama Rau's 1960 stage adaptation of *A Passage to India* was a huge success first in London's West End and then on Broadway, with the eminent British-Pakistani actor Zia Mohyeddin originating the role of Aziz on both sides of the Atlantic at a time when he also featured in David Lean's 1962 epic film *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) (albeit only briefly, as Tafas, the Arab guide shot dead by Omar Sharif's Ali for drinking from the wrong well), it is wholly unsurprising that the 1965 BBC-TV *Play of the Month* version (directed by Waris Hussein, one of the first British-Asian directors) re-adapted Rau's play, and again starred Mohyeddin as Aziz. However, this Phase 1 practice of using a recurrent coterie of approved adapters and re-working the same adaptations across different media (Radio-Stage-TV) went wider, and needs to be understood in institutional terms.

This practice reflected the culture of the mid-twentieth-century BBC and its ways of working – but it particularly reflected Forster's close relationship with the BBC, and the control he exerted over adaptations of his work. We might anticipate, therefore, that this pattern would change after Forster's death – and indeed it did. With the sole exception of the short adaptation of Forster's queer short story *The Obelisk* for BBC2's *Premiere* series in 1977 (directed by first-timer Giles Foster), there would be no further TV adaptations of Forster's novels between the BBC's *Play of the Month: A Room with a View* in 1973 and Andrew Davies' revisionist adaptation of *A Room with a View* for ITV (the UK's independent television network, supported by advertising revenue rather than the UK television licence fee) in 2007. Interestingly, the very first TV adaptation of a Forster novel, in 1958, had also been an ITV production of *A Room with a View* – written and directed by Robert Tronson for Granada Television's *Play of the Week* strand – a fact which is institutionally significant on a number of fronts. Produced at a period when ITV's quality drama production was in the ascendant – overtly seeking to compete with the BBC, and at times outdoing the BBC's output in innovation – by Granada, the regional ITV company most renowned for its quality TV drama, Tronson's 1958 *A Room with a View* proves to be one of only two *television-specific* new adaptations of Forster's fiction during Forster's lifetime. The other was BBC-TV's 1966 *The Machine Stops*, screened as an episode of the sci-fi series, screened as an episode of the sci-fi series *Out of the Unknown*, which was likewise produced from a new, original-to-TV script, by the Czech-born screenwriter Kenneth Cavander and British film-industry veteran Clive Donner (neither of whom were part of the BBC Establishment old guard close to Forster).

A further point of note is that all of the 1958–1973 Forster TV adaptations were single television plays. In the heyday of the BBC-TV Classic Serial (and, from 1970, the BBC’s transatlantic co-production and distribution arrangement with Masterpiece Theatre in the US, following the UK’s first colour productions on BBC2 from 1967), not one of Forster’s novels was adapted to the TV Classic Serial format. Indeed, the first *episodic* TV Forster adaptation would not arrive until 2017’s four-part adaptation of *Howards End*, and this was the product of a commercial, institutional and technological TV ecology which had been transformed beyond recognition since Forster’s death: co-produced by the BBC and the US Starz Network, and scripted consciously (by the Bronx-born US film director and playwright Kenneth Lonergan, the screenwriter of Scorsese’s *Gangs of New York*) as a fresh adaptational response to Forster’s novel without reference to the 1992 film.

**Theme 6: Archives, availability and access.** Plainly, one priority for the development of Forster/ian Adaptations Studies is that we need more scholarship grounded in a broadened transmedial awareness of the full spectrum of Forster adaptations, and more work which directly studies past Forster adaptations across media forms. (One welcome example is Mihaela Cel-Mare [2021]’s application of a “transmedia perspective” to some of the theatre adaptations of Forster’s novels scripted and staged during his lifetime.) However, the advancement of such work on the “Phase 1” Forster adaptations is constrained by the limitations of archival preservation, availability and access, and these limitations apply to the adaptations for television as well as stage.

While the post-1980 Forster feature films (and their peripherals) are widely available on home media or online to study, the 1950s–1970s British televisual adaptations of Forster’s works are not. (The one exception is the 1966 BBC-TV *The Machine Stops*: the complete sci-fi series *Out of the Unknown* was released in 2014 as a 7-disc DVD box set.) The British Film Institute (BFI) national archive collections include some of these dramas (notably including the Waris-Hussein-directed 1965 BBC-TV *A Passage to India*, which was screened and discussed at BFI Southbank in 2018 as part of a season of Hussein’s work), but not all. Both productions illustrate – in their different ways – the studio-based production practices and aesthetics of British television drama in the 1960s (and throughout “Phase 1”). Telecine or filmed inserts or backdrops were used to convey *A Passage to India*’s exterior settings; while *The Machine Stops*’ entire premise lent itself brilliantly to the craft skills of hermetic, subterranean pro-



duction, costume and sound design juxtaposed with filmed sequences when Kuno reaches the earth's surface. (The same contrast served the Ulster-based theatre company Big Telly well in their 2020 *The Machine Stops*, one of the first dramas to be staged remotely via Zoom, by home-bound performers, during the UK's first Covid-19 lockdown.)

However, the high costs of broadcast-standard videotape and archive storage meant that recordings of TV programmes were only retained – even by the broadcaster – if deemed (at the date of retention or culling) to be of particular value for posterity. In consequence, so much past British television drama is “wiped, missing and lost” that the BBC Archives have a webpage with that title. In further instances, relevant materials may be archived but are hard to locate or access. So, while I particularly want to highlight the importance for adaptation – and production, and publishing – studies of methods which draw on empirical, archival sources, we know that (for varied and complex reasons) these sources are not always accessible.

## *Phase 2*

**Phase 2** comprises the 1984–1992 era of the Forster feature-films cycle. The films themselves might, at first glance, seem all too familiar. But here too there is a need to attend to the *institutional* context which gave rise to this step-change in the nature of Forster adaptation – a context largely disregarded in the dominant critical narratives around the films, which have been shaped more by the anti-fidelity turn in adaptation theory and criticism, and by counter-reaction to the cultural-political climate and culture wars of 1980s Britain.<sup>3</sup> While the former has popularised hostility to “fidelity adaptations” (see the Desmond and Hawkes 2006 textbook example cited earlier), with little care for cases where “infidelity” becomes problematic (for example, and clearly pertinent to Forster, in adaptations which straighten or neuter queer works and authors), the critique which denounced the “Merchant-Forster-Ivory” “heritage films” as ideological (and, by inference, somehow official) products of the Thatcher era conveniently ignores the films’ actual, more nuanced, institutional origins.

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3 For a fuller account of the connection between Thatcher-era policies, Britain's 1980s culture wars (largely manufactured, then as now, by the right-wing press) and the critique of “heritage cinema” – which was notably preoccupied with the Merchant Ivory Forster films – see Monk 2011a, Chapter 1, 10–28.

**Theme 7**, then, is that in Phase 2, **institutions remain important, but *different institutions and relations are important for the “Forster films”*** from those which governed the Phase 1 Forster/ian adaptations and shaped their characteristic features (namely, the culture and practices of the mid-twentieth-century BBC, the technologies and practices of 1950s–1970s television drama, and the preferences, control and personal and institutional connections of the living Forster). The emergence of the 1984–1992 Forster feature-films cycle at that particular moment was prompted and enabled by two “institutional” factors in particular: the arrival of an entirely new TV institution in the UK – the 1982 launch of Channel 4, the UK’s new fourth television channel, with a remit and ethos which transformed UK independent film production, the relationship between film and television, and the image of British cinema internationally – coupled with the Forster estate’s new willingness, by the early 1980s, to invite and consider bids for *cinematic* film rights to Forster’s novels.

Innovative and institutionally distinct from both the established BBC public-service-broadcasting model and commercial television – it combined a public-service remit to serve minorities with initial funding from ITV advertising revenue – Channel 4 was launched expressly as a “commissioning” channel – in contrast with the mid-century and 1980s BBC – with an explicit remit to support independent producers. This model brought the huge (indeed, near-legendary) transformative impact of Film on Four (later Film4) for British film production and creativity. Under the leadership of David Rose, Channel 4’s senior commissioning editor for drama, Film on Four was initially tasked with producing 15 to 20 low-budget films per year, financed and produced in partnership with other companies, with a cinema release for selected productions initially envisaged merely as a promotional tool.

In practice, “between 1982 and 1998 Channel 4 directly funded over 270 [film] productions” (BUFVC n.d.), with game-changing success.<sup>4</sup> With the exception of Lean’s *A Passage to India*, all of the 1984–1992 Forster films were either produced with varying degrees of Film on Four involvement and financial backing or were products of the wider impact of Film on Four’s success, which prompted other British TV companies/broadcasters to venture into feature-film funding and production (including the BBC, which launched BBC Films in 1990). Ivory’s *A Room with a View*, *Maurice* and *Howards End* (1992) were all Film on Four co-pro-

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4 For a full survey of Film on Four’s first decade of production, see Pym 1992.

ductions. So too was Merchant Ivory's earlier *Heat and Dust* (1983), adapted by Jhabvala from her own novel, and a consciously Forsterian project: unsparing towards the British in India, concerned with transgressive desire (Olivia, the young wife of a 1920s colonial official, has an affair with the local Nawab), and borrowing two characters from Forster's life, the Nawab himself (Shashi Kapoor), and his homosexual secretary Harry (Nickolas Grace), based on J. R. Acklerley.<sup>5</sup> By the early 1990s, *Howards End's* backers also included Japan Satellite Broadcasting and the Japanese Sumitomo Corporation investment group.

*Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Charles Sturridge, 1991) was, chronologically, the fourth film in the five-film 1984–1992 Forster cycle. Modestly budgeted, it displayed conscious efforts to distance itself from “heritage” filmmaking – and the (by 1991) virulent criticisms thereof – via a relatively drab realist aesthetic and satirically physical, almost slapstick, performances (centrally from Judy Davis and Rupert Graves as Harriet and Philip Herriton) which mocked early-1990s English Europhobia and xenophobia as much as their 1905 iterations. These efforts were, however, little appreciated by contemporary critics, and occluded by the higher profile (and sweepingly cinematic widescreen aesthetics) of Ivory's *Howards End*, which premiered in competition at the 1992 Cannes Film Festival, where Ivory won the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Prize (and was nominated for the Palme D'Or), followed by three Academy Awards (including Jhabvala's second win for Best Adapted Screenplay, on both occasions *in absentia*) and numerous nominations.

*Where Angels Fear to Tread*, in contrast, only reached US cinemas at all as a double-bill second feature with *Howards End*, and (despite a Royal Charity Premiere, organised by the HIV charity Crusaid) received lukewarm reviews in the UK. However, its genesis was, again, rooted in the move of British TV companies and teams already associated with quality TV drama into feature-film production. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was made by Stagescreen Productions, formed in 1986 by the veteran British TV drama producer Derek Granger (who turned 100 in 2021) and others, with London Weekend Television (LWT), the privately owned ITV franchise-holder for London and the Home Counties at weekends in tandem with the weekday Thames Television. More specifically, it was made by the producer/screenwriting/director team (Tim Sullivan and

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5 Channel 4 contributed 10% of the budget of Ivory's *A Room with a View* (total budget £2,259,000), 24% of the budget of *Maurice* (total budget £1,577,000) and 10% of the budget of the earlier *Heat and Dust* (total budget £1,100,000). Source: Pym 1992, 185, 166, 153. The budget of *Howards End* was around \$8 million.

Granger, Sturridge) behind Granada Television's 1981 adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, today still widely cited as one of the greatest TV drama series of all time. LWT's late-1980s move into feature-film production, in partnership with Stagescreen, was prompted by a complex context of competitive franchise renewal (in 1982, LWT had had to re-apply for its franchise for the first time in its history), ownership and leadership changes, and cost-cutting, against a backdrop of pro-competition, profit-focused shifts in UK broadcasting policy during the Thatcher era.

Under pressure to demonstrate (a 1980s neoliberal conception of) "quality," LWT responded in the most literal way possible, by hiring the *Brideshead* team. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was Stagescreen's/Granger and Sturridge's second LWT-funded cinematic feature film following their (more critically successful) film of Evelyn Waugh's satirical 1934 novel *A Handful of Dust* (Sturridge, 1988), chronicling the demise and tragic end of an upper-class marriage. In its media coverage and at the box office, *Handful* benefited from the swift re-casting of James Wilby "opposite" Rupert Graves immediately after Ivory's *Maurice* – even though, as Edmund White, interviewing the pair for American *Vogue*, conceded, "Although Wilby and Graves played lovers in *Maurice*, in *Handful* they're rivals for the same woman"<sup>6</sup> (White 1988). By 1991, as anti-heritage-film criticism gained ground, the cycle's repeat-casting practices ceased to be viewed kindly. Instead, they became routinely decried as proof of "incestuousness" (Craig 1991, 10) or worse, rather than the films' critics acknowledging acting skill or the significant pleasures of performance, persona and intertextuality for audiences.

The Phase 2 Forster adaptations, emerging from a new set of institutions and circumstances, and exhibiting different production, adaptation and aesthetic practices from Phase 1, are significant for two further reasons. First, Phase 2 marks the first time that the development of *new* screenplays adapted from Forster's novels, going back to the source, becomes the norm (rather than an occasional exception to the recycling of old Forster-approved scripts across media). There are caveats: Lean was contractually required (by Forster's decree) to use Santha Rama Rau's existing script for *A Passage to India*, but butchered it; Sullivan and Granger's screenplay for *Where Angels Fear to Tread* credits Elisabeth

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6 Wilby played Waugh's dull upper-class squire Tony Last, Kristin Scott Thomas his wife Brenda, Graves the shallow John Beaver with whom Brenda embarks on a trite affair.

Hart, writer of the 1963 stage adaptation. Two of the wholly new adaptations – *A Room with a View* and *Howards End* – were, of course, the work of Jhabvala (via a collaborative process involving Ivory's input; Jhabvala, conversely, was routinely involved in Ivory's editing-suite decisions), and both won Jhabvala Academy Awards for Best Adapted Screenplay (in 1987 and 1993). A third, Kit Hesketh Harvey and James Ivory's newly adapted screenplay(s) for *Maurice* – the first adaptation of *Maurice* in any medium – also benefited, in its final form, from Jhabvala's (by choice) uncredited involvement. Second, the Forster feature films of Phase 2 were the first instance of Forster's works being filmed using all the visual tools and language of cinema.

However, Phase 2's opening up of the possibility of (and, in theory, also the possibilities for) cinematic Forster adaptations was dependent on the approval and agreement of the executors of Forster's literary estate. As Jasper Rees rightly noted in the *Observer*, "no one can make a film of a Forster novel without seeking the permission of a committee of King's College [Cambridge] Fellows" (Rees 1991). And (as already evidenced), this process subjected – and presumably still subjects – would-be filmmakers, their proposals and their script drafts to detailed scrutiny. **Theme 8**, then, is that the post-1980 new wave of **Forster filmmakers and adapters seeking rights must negotiate with an exacting gatekeeper, the Forster estate and its Cambridge executors**. Feature-film adaptations of Forster's works were made possible for the first time by a shift in stance which would have been unthinkable during his lifetime: "Morgan said after he was dead we could do what we liked," one executor, the 89-year-old George Rylands, stated (Rees 1991). But the decisions about which of Forster's works were most worthy (or, in the case of *Maurice*, unworthy) of film adaptation, and which rights should be offered to whom, lay wholly in the power of the executors at King's; and their (strongly held but sometimes capricious) views and judgements of value and taste conditioned and constrained the kinds of adaptation that could and can be made. Moreover, as the Forster estate at King's profits from royalty income in perpetuity (including, for example, more than 40 years of worldwide home-video/DVD/Blu-ray royalties from Ivory's *A Room with a View*) as well as the direct sale of film rights (while substantial film-location fees form a further income stream for the colleges), it is vital to understand that the estate's decisions are also shaped by financial and commercial considerations. As the Pulitzer Prize-winning US journalist Joseph Lelyveld, reporting from the 1986 *Maurice* shoot at King's, confirmed:

King's College – which enjoys royalties from the movies and the greatly enhanced sales of Forster's novels that they inspire – had a direct interest in turning itself into a movie set. ... Over lunch, Dr [Donald] Parry [biologist, in 1986 the vice-provost of King's and one of the estate's executors] reacted quickly upon learning that a video cassette of *A Room with a View* would soon be marketed in Britain. "Do we get a piece of the action?" the don asked. "Of course, of course," said the producer [Ismail Merchant]. (Lelyveld 1986b)

Beyond the control of the dons lie the medium-specific qualities – and intangibles – of film and film performance; and, entwined with these, the distinctive sensibility and set of collaborative, creative, aesthetic and directorial practices for which Ivory and the Merchant Ivory partnership became known, and which thereby came to epitomise the "Forster film." In a sensitive recent appraisal, the Delhi-based film scholars Nildeep Paul and Madhubanti De reflect on the "fascinating history" and uniqueness of the transcultural Ivory–Jhabvala–Merchant collaboration: not merely "the longest-running [in] the field of independent cinema," but one which was able for almost 50 years to "maintain a relative autonomy over the form and subject of their cinema" even in their studio collaborations (Paul and De 2021). For Paul and De, the defining features of Ivory–Jhabvala–Merchant's oeuvre lie in the trio's "attempts to depict onscreen complex transcultural negotiations marked by concerns [with] identity and capital," raising a "maelstrom of issues [which] their films often found themselves at the centre of." The films themselves share a "narrative ambiguity" and "an emotional charge entirely peculiar to [Ivory–Jhabvala–Merchant]", traits which Paul and De attribute to the trio's exceptionally "wide sphere of influences" and "many cultural intersections" (Paul and De 2021).

There is, in short, a persuasive case for regarding Ivory–Jhabvala–Merchant (along with their fourth long-term collaborator and friend, the composer Richard Robbins) as collaborative cinematic auteurs whose concerns dovetailed felicitously with Forster's. **Theme 9** is that **we should attend to the cinematic and visual aspects of adaptation**, and to its intersections with cinematic authorship. "Authorship," however, implies control – but I propose that **we should attend equally to the less "controlled" aspects: the embodied and performative, the intangible – and even accidental – aspects of adaptation.**

“Visual adaptation” encompasses a film’s visual, cinematic, performed and embodied – but non-verbal/non-dialogue – adaptational strategies. I will first explore examples of the use of controlled, highly considered, cinematic adaptation strategies in Ivory’s *Maurice*, before turning attention to the more elusive matter of how casting, performance and embodiment contribute to screen adaptation, including in ways which may be unscripted, improvised and even visceral.

Examples of *Maurice*’s use of purely cinematic adaptation strategies include the use of subjective shots and superimpositions to express Maurice’s interiority in the sequence conveying his restless dream (or nightmare) just before Alec climbs to him in the Russet Room; and the film’s visual expression of Forster’s ending, or rather twin endings: Maurice and Alec’s kiss and embrace at the boathouse versus Clive closing his bedroom window shutters one by one, shutting out nature and the past, watched covertly by his concerned wife Anne (Phoebe Nicholls). Levine (1996) explores the ways in which further significant scenes find cinematographic equivalents for Forster’s “elusive narrative technique” in *Maurice*, in which shifting character point of view is combined with “frequent though cryptic authorial intrusions” (in the words of Claude J. Summers 1983, 149).

In the first of these examples, a complex subjective montage stands in for Forster’s passage towards the end of Chapter 37:

He had paid a doctor two guineas to draw the curtains tighter, and presently, in the brown cube of such a room, Miss Tonks would lie prisoned beside him. And, as the yeast of the trance continued to work, Maurice had the illusion of a portrait that changed, now at his will, now against it, from male to female... (Forster 1999, 165)

In Ivory’s visualisation, James Wilby’s Maurice tosses and turns in bed, with his subjective dream/nightmare represented by a montage of layered, transparent moving images: a replay of Maurice’s first hypnotism by Lasker-Jones earlier in the day gives way to images representing the hypnotism’s intended result, heterosexual marriage. The sequence substitutes Gladys Olcott for Miss Tonks (the latter was never a scripted character in the film), and Gladys lies “prisoned” next to Maurice in a punt-like boat on the Penge/Pendersleigh<sup>7</sup> lake, both of them dressed

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7 For unexplained (though guessable) reasons, the film aggrandises, or romanticises, Forster’s Penge to “Pendersleigh”.

in bridal white, but laid out as though dead in a coffin. The white costuming and watery setting recall the tragic/drowned women of Pre-Raphaelite art, Millais's *Ophelia* (1851–2) or Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott* (1888). In Ivory's visual adaptation, the "solution" Maurice clutches at by undergoing hypnotism – closeted straight marriage – is not merely a "prison" but a living death, for both parties.<sup>8</sup> (The ambiguous significance of water and drowning of course recurs, this time in dialogue, in the following scene when Maurice and Alec talk together in bed following their night of sexual passion and release: Alec, suggestively, equates getting one's head wet with "drowning before your day.") Forster's "illusion of a portrait that changed, now at his will, now against it, from male to female" is expressed visually by the boat-as-coffin dissolving into the "objects" Maurice "had never seen" (yet which have penetrated his unconscious): a shot of Alec from above, sitting bare-legged in the boat, bailing out rainwater.

In my second example, the film's ending again uses a subjective shot – this time to convey Clive's not only entirely subjective but transtemporal vision – but with no use of superimposition. Instead, the subjective shot is sharp-cut into a shot/reverse-shot sequence: an out-of-kilter use of this tool of classical film grammar. Shot/reverse-shot's usual function is to establish or reinforce spatio-temporal unity, and spatio-temporally coherent character point-of-view, within the continuity editing system: shot one shows a character looking; shot two shows what they are looking at, normally within the same cinematic space and time. Ivory's subjective insert, however, overtly disrupts space-time unity, in a scene where audiences are already experiencing the unease of witnessing two unhappy, lonely people: one (Clive) putting on an act, unaware that the other (Anne) is observing him anxiously. This sense is heightened by the camera holding on Anne's reflection in the dressing-table mirror for a very long take, her hands clasped as if in prayer, inviting audiences to speculate on the thoughts and emotions behind her shifting expression.

Ivory's inserted shot attempts to address by visual means the challenges Forster's penultimate paragraph presents for any adaptation of *Maurice*:

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8 In the shooting-script version of *Maurice*, this image would have been counterposed with an earlier scene, within the post-title sequence, in which a game of charades exposes Maurice's deeply awkward performance of heterosexual courtship with Gladys. (The charades device contributed to the shooting script's adaptation of Forster's Chapter 8.) Wilby's Maurice mimes "marriage" by putting an antimacassar on Gladys's head, then "marries" Dickie by placing a curtain ring on his finger and, in his over-enthusiasm, falling onto Dickie.



To the end of his life Clive was not sure of the exact moment of [Maurice's] departure, and with the approach of old age he grew uncertain whether the moment had yet occurred. The Blue Room would glimmer, ferns undulate. Out of some external Cambridge his friend began beckoning to him, clothed in the sun, and shaking out the scents and sounds of the May term. (Forster 1999, 214)

Thus, before closing the final pair of shutters, Clive pauses, leans and looks sadly out of the window; but instead of cutting to what he would objectively see (the grounds of Penge/Pendersleigh), Ivory cuts to a shot of a gowned Maurice, "beckoning him" from a Cambridge quad, literally calling "come on!," then smiling and waving as he retreats. The film's final shot cuts back to Clive, still framed by the window, where he is joined by Anne. In place of Forster's stinging last line ("...to devise some method of concealing the truth from Anne" [1999, 214]), the film has Anne asking: "Who were you talking to?" (outside, during Maurice's final showdown with Clive), to which Clive replies with a lie: "No one. No one. I was just trying out a speech." As Adam Mars-Jones has observed, 'in another sense' Clive's lie is "no more than the truth" (Mars-Jones 1987). However, the sequence's long-take observation of Anne has established that she already knows something in her marriage is wrong, inviting audiences to speculate on what she might already suspect or know, and casting doubt on Clive's ability to "conceal the truth."<sup>9</sup>

As will be apparent from these examples, acting, casting decisions, and matters of actor appearance, persona and embodiment are further elements which need to be considered when studying film adaptation. The impact of performers and performance is particularly crucial in Ivory's films. Paul and De (2021), like many commentators before them, draw attention to Ivory's distinctive reputation, and unusual approach, as a director of what they term "actors' films." In every Merchant Ivory film, actor selection, the director-actor relationship, and the "essence" of the chosen performers are key: "Whether in appearance or personality they have to have some kind of individual distinction. I don't want actors who aren't very much themselves" (Ivory in Long 2005, 15). Ivory

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9 The long-held shot of Anne in this final scene mirrors an earlier, and more unusually framed, long-held shot which interrogates Clive's emotional (non-)reaction when Anne announces her "private notion" that Maurice is "in love".

has long been renowned for his exceptional degree of trust in his actors and as the least interventionist of directors, though claims that he gives his performers “free reign to flesh out their own characters” (Paul and De 2021) are often overstated. The effectiveness of this approach in Ivory’s three Forster films was greatly helped by the use of one of the UK’s leading casting directors, Celestia Fox, enabling him to “take [the shortlisted contenders’] talent for granted in most cases” (Ivory in Long 2005, 15).

On the other hand, Merchant Ivory’s low budgets and tight shooting schedules – with no rehearsal time – and the role of personal relations and informal networks in their casting choices introduced risks, contingencies and a need to improvise. These forces can be felt in Ivory’s *A Room with a View* and especially *Maurice* (less so in the more generously budgeted *Howards End*), with consequences for adaptation, including the adaptational impact of circumstances the director cannot control. On location in Italy, *A Room with a View*’s crew strove to artificially create Forster’s field of violets where George first kisses Lucy, but could not achieve this convincingly – so the scene was instead filmed amid the field’s real vegetation of poppies and grasses.

*Maurice*, dramatically, lost its lead actor weeks before filming was due to start when Julian Sands – George Emerson in Ivory’s *A Room with a View*, re-cast by Ivory as Maurice Hall – fled the project. James Wilby, the replacement Maurice, had initially been cast as Pippa Durham’s comically dull fiancé Archie London, and stepped up into the title role with only “eight days to prepare, but ... absolutely no reservations” (Clinch 1987, 44). A disconcerting number of the creative inputs into *Maurice* as an adaptation can be traced to the web of connections around Sands. Hesketh Harvey, hired by Ivory as *Maurice*’s novice co-screenwriter, was (at the time) Sands’ brother-in-law. Oxford graduate Hugh Grant was cast as Clive backed by a strong recommendation from Hesketh Harvey (Cambridge); the two knew each other well because both were performers on the Oxbridge live comedy revue circuit. Catherine Rabett, cast as Pippa Durham, was Hesketh Harvey’s wife. Lasker-Jones was originally to have been played by the American actor John Malkovich, a close friend of Sands, but Malkovich was lost to the production when Sands went, and had to be replaced very late – by Ben Kingsley – after the shoot had started. Amid these complications, even at replacement stage Ivory persisted in casting a blond rather than black-haired Maurice, on the pragmatic (and some would say facile) grounds that “I’d already cast the dark-haired Hugh Grant as Clive, [so] I decided on the blond

James Wilby" over Ivory's other choice, the dark-haired Julian Wadham (Ivory in Long 2005, 213).

While casting substitutions provide one lens for thinking about the role of casting decisions in shaping film adaptations, attention to the details of film performance, and equally to the more elusive matter of screen presence, provide still richer material for an analysis of what performers bring to the Forster films as screen adaptations. Given the nature of naturalistic screen acting (as less acting than "being"; or, more minimally still, as an essence whose effects depend upon its "capture" by the camera and the subsequent shot selection and editing) these lines of analysis need to attend not merely to acting "craft" but to the effects of the actor's screen body, physicality, persona, gestures, and face, particularly at moments of *photogénie*.<sup>10</sup> To push this observation further, there are moments in some of the Forster films where face, body and even viscerality – and unscripted, extemporised and "fluffed" performance elements – become central and are now indelibly part of the cinematic adaptation.

For instance, the haptic qualities of the scene in Ivory's *A Room with a View* where Lucy, having returned soaked by rain to the *pensione* following George's kiss, reacts with sulky defiance to Charlotte's reprimands, make it feel canonic that *Lucy* (rather than only Helena Bonham Carter) has a huge cloud of hair. Hugh Grant's combination of beauty, natural arrogance and seamless ad libs ("Featherstonhaugh, I think I'm going to eat one of your apples") imbue the Clive of Ivory's *Maurice* with a glamorous self-assurance which the TV Tropes wiki rightly identifies as an instance of "Adaptational Attractiveness" (TV Tropes 2022). Indeed, this effect fed directly into Andrew Higson's response to the film in one of the founding texts of heritage-film criticism: because he found Grant's Clive Durham "a far more attractive and fascinating character than Maurice," Higson concluded that these pleasures of performance undercut Forster's critical intentions, and extended this argument to the Forster films collectively, not solely *Maurice* (1993, 120–1). A difficulty here is that Higson's

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10 The early twentieth-century film theorist and filmmaker Jean Epstein elaborated the concept of *photogénie* in complex terms across a number of essays – "Magnification" (1921), "The Senses I" (1921) and "On Certain Characteristics of Photogénie" (1924) – culminating in the small-print-run book *Photogénie de l'impondérable* (1935). The concept is simultaneously aesthetic, cultural and theoretical; but, "[a]t its heart, *photogénie* seeks the essence of cinema" (Farmer 2010). *Photogénie* stands in opposition to narrative drive, and is "variously associated with transformation, expression, the close-up, movement, temporality, rhythm, and the augmentation of the senses" – in particular, the power of the close-up, "in which subtle movements of the face are revealed" (Farmer 2010).

personal reaction to Grant's Clive (as a heterosexual male academic) is neither universal among *Maurice's* audiences nor particularly representative of audience reactions (especially among the film's intended queer constituencies). I have sat in many cinema screenings of *Maurice* where audience members hissed or laughed at Clive towards the end, most of all during Maurice's powerful "The Reason You Suck' Speech" (a further TV Tropes classification), where Clive first comically fails to understand Maurice's news that he has "shared" (sexually) with Alec ("Sh-shared what?"), then recoils fastidiously.

On the matter of adaptation and accidents, one prime example is the "creaky-chair scene" in Ivory's *Maurice* (Cambridge: "Summer Term 1910"), immortalised as such because the – unplanned – creaking of the wicker armchair where Maurice and Clive first tentatively embrace provides almost the only sound in an otherwise near-silent scene, underscoring the drawn-out, sublimated, erotic tension of the moment. Anecdotes about the creaky chair are a long-established part of the film's promotional setlore. A second example from *Maurice*, in contrast, has gone un-noted and remains unexplained: Rupert Graves' saliva-slurred adaptation of Forster's closing words of the novel's penultimate Chapter 45 following Maurice and Alec's reunion (and, in the film, their visceral close-up kiss) at the boathouse: "Now we shan't never be parted – it's finished" in place of Forster's "And now we shan't be parted no more, and that's finished" (Forster 1999, 209). Ivory's annotated shooting script faithfully replicates Forster's words, which are not altered in his handwritten annotations (Hesketh Harvey and Ivory 1986, 134), implying that the change was extemporised on set and actor-led: an example of Ivory giving his actors free reign. The reason for the changed line is therefore undocumented; and the change may have been spontaneous, and the reason practical: Graves' version is easier to speak than Forster's, particularly at the height of performed passion as he pulls out of a deep kiss with James Wilby. The change nonetheless has adaptational effects: "never be parted," with its promise of eternal love, feels more swooningly romantic than Forster's more practical "now we shan't be parted no more."

The same scene's close-up kiss and embrace is also, of course, the film's supreme moment of *photogénie*, in which the lovers' embodiment by the actors, their rapturous faces lit and shot in chiaroscuro close-up, and the wet, face-eating viscerality of the kiss itself (unprecedented in cinema in 1987, and still startling today), come together in an act of visual adaptation. There are, however, other scenes in which Ivory's *Maurice* adapts, makes meaning and provokes

affect pre-eminently through the power of the actors' faces: perhaps most strikingly in Wilby's astonishing silent performance when Maurice is forced to brave out the Reverend Borenus's unexpected (and, for both Maurice and the absent Alec, highly threatening) appearance at Southampton Docks.

### *Phase 3*

**Phase 3** of Forster/ian adaptation comprises everything that comes after the 1984–1992 Forster feature films, plus those earlier adaptations which fall outside the “classic adaptation” category. In contrast with Phase 2, his third (and, at present, final) phase is characterised by its heterogeneity: adaptation to a range of media, across a range of forms and aesthetic approaches, by creators with varied interests. This heterogeneity can be mapped (I suggest) in terms of four lines of development which, for convenience, I label A to D. A common – but not universal – feature across all four is the impulse to rediscover, and adapt or re-adapt, the Forster who is not “heritage,” raising welcome questions of genre and aesthetics and – often, but not always – extending public perceptions of Forster and his works beyond notions of “heritage” aesthetics or “classic” adaptation. This is particularly true of lines A: Sci-Fi Forster and B: Queer Forster, but less true in, for example, certain twenty-first-century US attempts to adapt Forster's novels (centrally, *A Room with a View*) as musical theatre, which try to simulate the mise-en-scene and perceived “prettiness” of the 1984–1992 Forster films, with kitsch results. Indeed, a further feature of Phase 3 is the great diversity of twenty-first-century “Forsterian” aesthetics and production design.

Post-*Howards End*, the 1990s proved to be a fallow decade for realised Forster adaptations. (Michael Burge's 1993 screenplay *Other Kingdom*, based on Forster's eponymous short story, remains unproduced; and two theatre projects scripted in the 1990s, Scott Sickles' bio-drama *Nonsense and Beauty* – about Forster's relationship with Bob and May Buckingham – and Simon Dormandy's *A Passage to India*, were both eventually staged in 2018–19, in the US and UK respectively.) For this reason, my Phase 3 examples date predominantly from the period since 2000, reflecting a proliferation of new productions – amid wider evidence of proliferating interest in Forster – in the twenty-first century. **Line A: Sci-fi Forster** comprises the field of cross-media adaptations of Forster's 1909 story *The Machine Stops*. This essay has already noted three examples, each (fittingly) making cutting-edge use of the current, “new” or mixed media of their time of production,

beginning with the 1966 black-and-white, studio-based, BBC-TV version produced for the sci-fi series *Out of the Unknown*. Significantly the TV version has been followed by more than one wave of post-digital rediscovery of Forster's story in a global(ised) rather than UK-specific context, with each wave responding both to new socio-cultural developments (the rise of the Internet, the 2020–22 Covid-19 pandemic) and available new technologies, yielding a proliferation of “small” adaptations across media (radio, short films, animations, stage).

The first post-digital wave of *The Machine Stops* adaptations began, as far as we know, with Gourjian and Waese's 1998 animated short film *Plug*, which (it turns out) is already old-new-tech history: a 2020 YouTube upload by a third party (not the makers themselves) curates it as “an old short film that used computers from the late 90's [sic]” (c:\90s\_tech 2020). The second wave kicked off with one of the first dramas to be expressly conceived conceived for both performance by socially-isolated performers and reception by home-bound audiences, via the video-conferencing platform Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic: Big Telly's *The Machine Stops*, produced by the Ulster-based theatre company in partnership with the Riverside Theatre, University of Ulster, Coleraine, in June 2020. In contrast with the futuristic aesthetics of the 1966 BBC-TV version, however, Big Telly's production was distinguished by a steampunk aesthetic, enabling them to comedically marry loosely Victorian/Edwardian costumes and character personae with the “new” technologies of Forster's own age.

**Line B** comprises works which adapt the posthumously outed **Queer Forster** across a range of media and forms. This line was instigated by BBC2's 1977 TV adaptation of Forster's posthumous queer short story *The Obelisk*, but has proliferated apace since 2000. Notable examples include Jorge Torregrossa's US cultural and geographical translation of *The Obelisk* in his short film *Desire* (2000), and Philip Osment's new 2007 Classic Serial adaptation of *Maurice* for BBC Radio 4, both already discussed; and a new stage adaptation of *A Passage to India* (2002) by the London-based gay Jewish US playwright Martin Sherman which – significantly – was developed and staged by the company Shared Experience, pioneers in the fusion of physical and script-led theatre. In addition, the period since 2010 has brought a proliferation of revivals of Roger Parsley and Andrew Graham's 1998 stage adaptation of *Maurice* on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2010, it played for two sell-out runs at the Above the Stag pub theatre, London's only dedicated LGBTQ theatre venue; followed by its 2012 US premiere in San Francisco; its 2013 UK amateur premiere Norwich; in Autumn 2018, a new staging at

Above the Stag's expanded new premises in south London, directed by James Wilby, the 1987 *Maurice* of Ivory's film; and, in February 2020 (just before the pandemic struck), a Cambridge University student production at the ADC Theatre. The last two stagings each, in different ways, attest to the (pragmatically driven) limitations and conventionality of Parsley and Graham's script (to which Wilby wisely made dramaturgical adjustments). In the global south, the same period also brought the Disclosure Theater Company's separate, contemporary, more radically staged version of *Maurice* in Brazil, already discussed. In a further radical development, the 2019 RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts) Festival in London brought an experimental, short-run production of Simon Dormandy's *The Point of It*: a sparsely staged, highly effective, loose adaptation which fuses *The Other Boat* (1957-8, published 1972), *The Story of a Panic* (1904) and *The Point of It* (1911). In its creators' words, the production

takes three overlooked stories by E. M. Forster – stories of great power and theatrical potential – and weaves them into a single drama set today and in 1912. No one writes better about the tragic collision of convention and desire – between the comfortable life that we cling to and the violent urge to be free – but there is nothing especially Edwardian about such a conflict, so we have updated and reshaped the stories to make Forster's vision of the human spirit struggling to be free available to a new audience in a highly theatrical staging, reframing his vision in the light of contemporary gay and intersectional experience. *The Point of It* will be performed by an ensemble of six, doubling and trebling roles in a style that combines physical theatre with naturalism. Though the action covers a century and spans the globe, it takes place in a single setting, which is transformed by the actors as they go. (RADA 2019)

As both illustrated and elaborated by *The Point of It*'s website synopsis, and materialised in the production itself, the diversity of twenty-first century "Forsterian" aesthetics and production design is a significant feature of Phase 3 adaptations, evident across strands A and B, and already more widely evidenced in this essay. The aesthetic range in theatre adaptations alone spans minimal, expressionistic stagings and physical-theatre performance styles, the steampunk props and styling (and corresponding larger-than-life performances) of Big Tel-

ly's *The Machine Stops*, and the use of multimedia and eclectic contemporary music in the Brazilian *Maurice*.

Alongside these fresh and refreshing contemporary approaches to Forster, however, the post-2010 period has also brought instances of kitsch Edwardian pastiche, amid a (perhaps surprising) prevalence of cross-media Merchant Ivory copyism. Marc Acito (book) and Jeffrey Stock (music and lyrics)'s US musical-theatre adaptation of *A Room with a View* – first staged in San Diego in 2012, then in Seattle in 2014, and billed as “the new romantic musical comedy” – exemplifies both tendencies. Acito and Stock's *A Room with a View* was praised by the US media for the sophistication of its score (“lushly orchestral ... includes lovely arias and choral pieces, and draws knowingly on Italian opera, popular period music and the oeuvres of Broadway masters Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim,” according to the *Seattle Times* as quoted on Stock's own website [Stock 2021]). But despite sophisticated sets and illuminated location backdrops, its “period” production and costume design were conservative, while the staging of individual scenes has the look (in stills) of a kitsch simulacrum of Ivory's 1985 film. Indeed, the 2014 Seattle staging of Acito and Stock's *A Room with a View* expressly sold itself on its on-stage emulation of the Sacred Lake skinny-dipping scene from Ivory's 1985 film, while simultaneously claiming to be inspired by *Downton Abbey*. Adding to the sense of kitsch, the original 2012 production was staged at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego's Balboa Park, a roofed-in 1935 copy of another American copy of Shakespeare's Globe.

However, the tendency for twenty-first century Forster adaptations to mimic Ivory's films – most commonly, by restaging Ivory's shot compositions – is not limited to kitsch examples. A striking number of the post-2010 stage productions of Parsley and Graham's *Maurice*, amateur and professional alike, have done the same, mimicking iconic shots or publicity stills from the 1987 film in their own actor direction/staging, and even in their promotional photography. For an example of the latter, see the promotional still for the US premiere of Parsley and Graham's *Maurice* at San Francisco's New Conservatory Theatre in 2012 (posted at Kruger 2012): a three-shot of this production's Clive, Alec and Maurice which copies, in mirror image, the composition and the subtleties of body language and facial expression in one of the best-known publicity stills for Ivory's film.

**Line C:** The twenty-first century has also yielded two new examples, both produced for television with a global market in mind, which might be termed **The Revisionist – or Condescending – Forster Adaptation**. *A Room with a View*



(2007), newly adapted by Andrew Davies for ITV as a single 93-minute TV movie and directed by Andrew Renton, and *Howards End* (2017) newly adapted (as already discussed) by the US writer and director Kenneth Lonergan as a four-part, four-hour miniseries co-produced by Starz and the BBC and directed by the British Hettie Macdonald (most often a director of contemporary rather than period drama) were (by definition) significantly more lavishly budgeted than the Phase 3 adaptations discussed thus far. Both productions combined high production values (including, in *Howards End*, the use of digital techniques to construct an impression of spatial continuity between the Schlegels' London townhouse and the Wilcoxes' mansion flat) with a determinedly naturalistic, but otherwise conventional, take on classic-adaptation aesthetics.

The two productions were shaped by different adaptational stances and attitudes in relation to their Forster sources. While Lonergan, engaging with Forster's novel as a first-time reader, responded to *Howards End's* modernity (and particularly that of the Schlegel sisters) appreciatively, Davies seemed engaged in a cruder mission to not merely de-romanticise *A Room with a View* but blast the 1985 Merchant Ivory version into oblivion. Davies changed Forster's ending to kill off George in World War I. Less defensibly, he had Mr Beebe seeking out rent boys in Florence, while de-queering everything else (in contrast with Ivory's film). The 2017 *Howards End* made some use of race-blind casting (Rosalind Eleazar, of mixed white British and Ghanaian heritage, was cast as Jackie Bast; the Schlegels were given a black maid). While both adaptations were keen to demonstrate their alertness to the themes of class and classism in the source texts, the 2017 *Howards End* somewhat blunted the force and point of Forster's social critique, in part by casting the bankable but too young, and far too attractive, Matthew Macfadyen as Henry Wilcox. What unites both productions is their revisionist impulse – the belief that Forster needs “modernising” – entangled with commercial imperatives and the eternal drive to attract younger contemporary audiences. This was explicit in Davies' overtly anti-heritage adaptation of *A Room with a View*, but also evident in *Howards End's* logic in hiring Lonergan and in its youth-facing transnational casting strategies. Hayley Atwell, a US–British dual national known to audiences as Agent Carter in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, was excellent as Margaret; Philippa Coulthard, US-born, London-based and Australian-accented, made a wobblier Helen.

Last, **Line D** consists of the proliferating recent field of **Forsterian Bio-Drama, Bio-Fiction and “Literary” Paratexts**. One telling feature of this field is that, to date, there has been a stark contrast between the fate of biographically in-

spired Forster dramas written for the stage, and the Forsterian paratexts seized as hot properties by the literary publishing industry. (In the theatre, Matthew Lopez's universally acclaimed 2018 gay history epic *The Inheritance*, inspired by *Howards End*, stands in a separate class of its own.)

Sickles' stage bio-drama *Nonsense and Beauty* (already mentioned) finally received a premiere in the USA (at the Rep Theatre, St Louis, Missouri) in 2018–19 after reportedly being 'in development' since 1994. Charles Leipart's *A Kind of Marriage* (2016) – on precisely the same theme: the triangular relationship between Forster, Bob Buckingham and Bob's wife May – had a 2017 rehearsed reading in London (with Alex Jennings as Forster and Anna Carteret as his mother), but has yet to receive a full production.

In contrast, Bethan Roberts' 2012 novel *My Policeman*, loosely "inspired" – or, at least, initially publicised as having been loosely inspired – by the same relationship, was published by the corporate giant Random House and has now sold its film rights to Amazon Studios. Filming of the resulting Amazon Original movie was announced in the *Hollywood Reporter* in February 2021 and completed the same summer – amid much UK tabloid interest during the shoot, since *My Policeman* stars pop-star-turned-actor Harry Styles (as Tom Burgess, the loosely-based-on-Bob policeman character) and Emma Corrin, Princess Diana in Season 4 of Netflix's *The Crown* (2020), as Marian (the novel's narrator and May figure). Confirming its positioning as a transnational product packaged for global audiences, *My Policeman* is, furthermore, scripted by Ron Nyswaner, the Oscar-nominated screenwriter of the Hollywood AIDS drama *Philadelphia* (Jonathan Demme, 1993) and produced by the prolifically successful Greg Berlanti, director of the hit US gay male romance *Love, Simon* (2018).

Meanwhile, in the wake of almost two decades of online *Maurice* fanfiction – frequently interesting, sometimes excellent – and three prior unofficial *Maurice* book sequels, in Summer 2021 the literary agent Matthew Carnicelli and editor Jonathan Galassi – chairman and executive editor of the US publishing house Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, formerly of Random House – brought to the world (for better or worse) William DiCanzio's 336-page debut novel *Alec*: a "retelling" of Forster's *Maurice* which, in the words of *Publisher's Weekly*, "liberally quotes dialogue from Forster's novel for dozens of pages, creating a satisfying blend of fan fiction and intertextuality" (Anon. 2021). While, as a connoisseur of *Maurice* fanfiction for more than a decade and a fan of Alec Scudder for more than half my life, I was open to being pleasantly surprised by DiCanzio's project, as critical

scholars we might equally view such products as the perfect marriage between corporate publishing, corporate profit, and a more spurious literary elitism.

As **Theme 10**, I end this essay with the reminder that **Publishing, including “literary” publishing, is a business**. For anyone wondering why a twenty-first-century publishing industry powered by literary hype, prize culture (usefully explored in Murray 2012, Chapter 4) and rights sales might prefer Forster/ian paratexts to the works of Forster himself, the answer may simply be that the paratexts are more monetisable – a monetary value the literary publishing business seeks to heighten by projecting them as works of prestige.

To conclude, I want to pick up on a question posed by Nick Cyril Fischer which was central to his own paper at the June 2021 *E. M. Forster: Shaping the Space of Culture* conference (“To whom does Forster beautifully belong?”) and adapt it. In my adaptation, I propose that we ask: in the twenty-first century, to whom does Forster belong? To his twenty-first century public(s), readers, fans ... and even, among these, to the creators of Forster-inspired and Forster-adapting fanworks? Or to a publishing industry which seeks to capitalise on these forms of popularity? In short, who determines where the boundaries lie between the self-asserted cultural legitimacy and prestige of the “literary” Forsterian paratexts and their publishers, and the self-published Forsterian paratexts created by readers, audiences, fans? To paraphrase Forster in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1972, 6), is one of the “evils of money” that it might blind or distract us from asking such awkward questions?

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## Guilty Style: Lauren Oyler's *Fake Accounts* and E.M. Forster's Legacy in the Age of Autofiction

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**Abstract:** This essay provides an example of Forster's contemporary literary legacy beyond explicit re-workings of his texts and life. Building on existing scholarship, it adopts the concepts of spectral legacy and dialogue as a framework for thinking of legacies that are not a matter of straight descent, but of a later work standing in a more oblique relation to its precursor. The essay reads Lauren Oyler's recent novel *Fake Accounts* (2021) as participating in such a spectral dialogue with *Howards End*. Forster's conflicted liberal humanism – committed to the ameliorative potential of culture, on the one hand, and painfully aware of the limited social and political efficacy of this commitment, on the other – offers a framework for understanding the formal qualities of autofiction, one of the most visible trends in contemporary literature. The essay posits guilt, one of the primary qualities of liberal thinking both in Forster's time and the present moment, as the core of this particular Forsterian legacy.

**Keywords:** E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, liberalism, style, Lauren Oyler, autofiction

### Introduction

For the moment, E. M. Forster's legacy seems assured. Even though he might not enjoy the same intellectual and academic prestige as some of his peers, such as Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and T. S. Eliot, his life and work continues to attract the attention of contemporary artists working in different media and genres. Focusing only on literary works published after the millennium, one can point to a series of novels directly inspired by Forster's life and work: in *Closed Circle* (2004), Jonathan Coe adapts parts of the storylines of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End*; Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) updates the latter in a transatlantic and multicultural setting; *Sex and Vanity* (2020) by Kevin Kwan rewrites *A Room With a View* for the twenty-first century; William di Canzio's *Alec*



(2021) continues the story of Alec Scudder from *Maurice*; finally, at least three bio-fictional treatments of Forster's life have been published in the last decade: Bethan Roberts's *My Policeman* (2012), Damon Galgut's *Arctic Summer* (2014), and Haydn Middleton's *The Ballad of Syd and Morgan* (2018).<sup>1</sup>

All of these works explicitly adapt characters, plot structures, or themes from Forster's novels and stories (as well as real-life occurrences in the case of bio-fiction). While it makes sense to locate Forster's legacy in works that directly invoke him as a precursor, it also restricts the notion of legacy. Legacies are not only a matter of straight descent; a later work may also stand in a more oblique relation to its precursor, at a slight angle, so to speak. In response to this problem, Alberto Fernández Carbajal developed the concept of "spectral legacies" (2014, 18) with recourse to Jacques Derrida's work on hauntology. Such legacies refer to "forms of inheritance which exceed the most easily decodifiable and intelligible" and derive from an "internalized indebtedness, which is granted materiality wittingly or unwittingly" (19). Here I emphasize unwitting connections and supplement the idea of spectral legacies with what Fordoński calls dialogue. The latter's framework for categorizing Forster's legacies consists of three categories – adaptation, inspiration, dialogue – defined by their connection to an original. While an adaptation retains "the most direct and clearly visible presence of Forster's source material," inspiration offers a more "subtle" reworking of "motifs, places, and characters." Finally, dialogue occurs "when authors approach Forster's work in a creative way, responding to the ideas of the writer rather than adapting them" (2020, 15). I propose to open up the idea of dialogue in the spirit of spectral legacies and to extend it to contemporary texts unwittingly corresponding with Forster's oeuvre.

This essay reads Lauren Oyler's novel *Fake Accounts* (2021) as participating in a spectral dialogue with *Howards End*. Forster's liberal humanism and his defence of culture as socially relevant produces a narrow narrative purview that self-consciously disavows the social breadth of its formal precursors, the great realist novels of the nineteenth century. Forster's conflicted liberal humanism – committed to the ameliorative potential of culture in the vein of Matthew Arnold, on the one hand, and painfully aware of the limited social and political

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1 I here rely on Krzysztof Fordoński's (2020) meticulous account of contemporary works inspired by and related to Forster's work in other ways. Aside from traditional literary examples, he also considers other media, such as the radio (18-20), theatre (20-23), television (23-25), film (25-28), various musical adaptations (28-30), and graphic novels (16).

application of this commitment in the present – offers a framework for understanding the formal qualities of one of the most visible trends in contemporary literature: autofiction or semi-autobiographical fiction not concerned with disguising its relation to the life of the author. The essay posits guilt, one of the primary qualities of liberal thinking both in Forster’s time and the present moment, as the core of this particular Forsterian legacy; however, guilt is not to be understood as a feeling of wrong-doing, but as a heightened awareness of the limited nature of realism as well as that which it excludes. When I write of a guilty style, I mean to emphasize a morally motivated self-consciousness about the project of fiction that opens a literary-historical vista extending from 1910 to the present. Due to the scope of the paper, I will concentrate on elaborating what I call guilty style in both Forster and Oylar; that is, rather than analysing the nature of spectral legacies and dialogue, I focus on a possible application of these concepts to transperiodic literary history.

### **Guilty Style I:** *Howards End*

The form of *Howards End* points to Forster’s ambiguous position in literary history, combining “Victorian form” with “modernist, Edwardian” content (Weihl 2014, 444). Michael Levenson more generally remarks on “the heterogeneity of modes, the diversity of styles, tones and manners” (1991, 81). Virginia Woolf notices a similar tension and considers the novel a failure for not successfully integrating its divergent impulses. She attributes this failure of Forster’s realism not to lacking descriptive power, but to a pedagogical instinct that leads the narrator to break into the realistically constructed world and thereby to undercut its imaginative power:

[J]ust as we are yielding ourselves to the pleasures of the imagination, a little jerk rouses us. We are tapped on the shoulder. We are to notice this, to take heed of that. Margaret or Helen, we are made to understand, is not speaking simply as herself; her words have another and a larger meaning. (349)

Barbara Rosencrance complains that Forster too frequently “substitutes preachiness for the integrated imagery of a coherent position” (1998, 413). The mixed mode of *Howards End* and its “strikingly large amount of authorial reflection”

(Kermode 2009, 107), therefore, seems to derive from the tension between an essentially realist narration and a political vision that interrupts the former in the form of authorial commentary.

The nature of this commentary might contribute to the aesthetic failure of the novel, as many of the critics cited above believe, but it also represents a stylistic quality that characterizes a genre of contemporary fiction. The particular mixture of boldness and reticence that defines the narrative of *Howards End* is the style of a writer highly conscious of the tension between a liberal humanist apologia for culture – in the Arnoldian sense – and a realist genre whose political vigour has always been derived from a portrayal of exactly those spheres of society not traditionally concerned with culture and the arts. Forster's sense of guilt derives from the knowledge of what his novel excludes, but which he considers necessary to exclude in order to instantiate his vision; consequently, *Howards End* can be read as an example of guilty style.

It is, of course, problematic to talk about realism as a monolithic concept, but in the first decade of the twentieth century, realism remains closely connected to a broad representation of society. *Howards End*, for example, would not withstand the critical scrutiny George Eliot expends on the "social novels" (1883, 141) of her day in "The Natural History of German Life," one of the founding documents of literary realism. Aside from completely ignoring the lower classes, Forster seems to construct Leonard and Jacky Bast exactly as Eliot believes a novelist should not: from "the motives and influences which the moralist thinks *ought* to act" on them rather than seriously considering "what are the motives and influences which *do* act" on the couple (145, emphasis in original). Were he to focus solely on the aristocracy, his novel would not have to uphold Eliot's standards since "it is not so serious that we should have false ideas about ... the manners and conversation of beaux and duchesses" (146), but *Howards End* has a broader social scope. *Howards End* occupies an uncomfortable middle position: on the one hand, the novel's realist narration is an essential aspect of its claim to the social relevance of culture; Forster takes great care to construct recognizable urban, suburban, and rural settings in order to have his argument play out in the real world. On the other, he does not want to adopt the social breadth of the traditional realist novel because it would pull the rug out from under his Arnoldian vision of culture. He is left with an uneasy compromise: in refusing "the capaciousness of the great Victorians" (Levenson 1991, 86), Forster signals the limitations of his project; if he left it at that, however, it would not amount to

more than a perfunctory gesture, but Forster's novel persistently and relentlessly emphasizes the problem at the heart of cultured liberalism.

"We are not concerned with the very poor," the narrator states at the outset of chapter six. "They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet" (2000, 38). The exclusion of a certain group of people in the context of a novel is nothing remarkable given that it is an implicit quality of every novel, and the pronouncement that the poor are unthinkable might be less interesting as a symptom of Forster's unfamiliarity with people outside of his own class than as a reflection of his political agenda or, to be more precise, the aesthetic mode of his politics. In 1938, Forster would describe himself as "a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him" (Forster 1972c, 72), which Levenson reads in relation to the growing conviction among liberals that the belief in radical individualism was compatible with a new faith in the progressive transformation of society through governmental reform in the tradition of utilitarian thinking (1991, 87–88). Forster, following Matthew Arnold rather than Jeremy Bentham, sees the individual as the inviolable core of liberalism and defends the individual against governmental interference throughout his life.<sup>2</sup> This focus coupled with his concern for how the individual relates to culture produces the narrow focus of *Howards End*.

Both in the novel and in his non-fiction, Forster does not refrain from exposing the inherent partiality and elitism of liberal humanism, particularly its insistent faith in the social importance of culture. The "hungry and the homeless," he told the Congress of Intellectuals in Defence of Culture in 1935 in no uncertain terms, "don't care about liberty any more than they care about cultural heritage. To pretend that they do is cant" (1996, 61). For Forster to pretend that culture is worthless because the hungry and homeless have more pressing needs to attend to, however, would be just as problematic. He considers poverty and disenfranchisement as the products of a society that ignores the very values and sensibilities culture transmits. To deny their importance, therefore, would be to abandon the hope of equality (or harmony, to use a key Arnoldian term). In *Howards End*, this attitude gives rise to the uncomfortable liberal dissociation of "culture from society while still considering it to have a crucial social function" (Widdowson 1977,

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2 The history of liberalism and Forster's relation to it is of course a great deal more complex than such a reduction implies. Frederic Crews (1961: 19–36) still remains one of the best introductions into this history. The same applies to Forster's relationship to Arnold, which is covered in more detail by McGurk (1972) and Stone (1966, 235–77).

93). Margaret's panegyric to "Differences - eternal differences, planted by God in a single family, so that there may always be colour" is followed by her warning Helen not to grow destitute over Leonard's demise. "Don't drag in the personal" - her highest creed - "when it will not come." Leonard, for all his suffering, got an "adventure" out the events, and when Helen wonders if that was enough, Margaret retorts with finality: "Not for us. But for him" (Forster 2000, 288-89).

Aside from explicit reminders such as this one, the novel's imagery is deeply ambivalent. Water, for example, "is simultaneously (like the realm of spirit and mystery) a great authority and (like the realm of business mores, panic, and emptiness) a force of erosion and hopeless flux" (Graham 1988, 173). Similarly, Howards End as a symbol of Forster's vision of England is ambiguous, given how the "red rust" of London on the horizon encroaches on it at the close of the novel. By that point, Levenson points out, the house is threatened by the very civilization it is meant to represent: "Howards End, signifying England, is contained and threatened by England; the symbolic vehicle sputters; the house is now, again, merely a house, jeopardized by the appetite of suburbs and the smoke of cities" (1991, 95). The image of the sputtering vehicle elegantly invokes the Wilcoxian culture of the motor-car that undermines the loftier pretensions of the Schlegel philosophy while ultimately itself breaking down. The far from triumphant ending of the novel is only the final instance of Forster lifting the veil on his vision to reveal its problematic base, and it begins as early as the first sentence: "One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister" (2000, 3). Even though any realist narrative is as subjective and selective as any other, to invoke the arbitrariness of the structure of a story is to disavow a claim to generality or comprehensiveness and to embrace partiality.

If one is inclined to read the opening sentence as a disingenuous and empty gesture, one would do well to recall that in Forster's liberal humanism, partiality is not the result of a lack of impartiality but a measure of healthy self-consciousness. In his most emphatic writing on this problem, mostly the essays and broadcasts of the 1930s, Forster repeatedly draws attention to the danger of moral superiority. In "Jew-Consciousness" (1939), he cautions his audience not to confuse the relative absence of antisemitism in England as opposed to Germany with an absence of racist and other discriminatory prejudices (1972b). In the speech of defence of culture mentioned above, he admonishes the English in the same terms about the danger of fascism. Even if this danger currently is "negligible," it would be wrong to suppose that similar processes are not

working away behind the façade of constitutional forms, passing a little law (like the Sedition Act) here, endorsing a departmental tyranny there, emphasizing the national need of secrecy elsewhere, and whispering and cooing the so-called 'news' every evening over the wireless, until opposition is tamed and gulled. (1996, 62)

Much more than advocating scepticism towards a particular political ideology, Forster embraces the credo that "epistemological certainty is dangerous because of its will-to-power and its refusal to give difference its due" (Armstrong 2009, 286); and it is exactly this attitude that leads Zadie Smith to conclude that Forster was at his "most radical" when he was defending "his liberal humanism against fundamentalists from the right and left" (2010, 15).

Forster's self-conscious liberalism is on full display in *Howards End*. The novel unflinchingly performs its unease about the limited nature of the worldview it espouses. The disavowal of the poor, the constant reminders of the wealth on which the liberalism of the Schlegels is built, and an ending that questions the sustainability of the vision of Howards End as the England of the future all contribute to making the novel "the most comprehensive picture of liberal guilt" in its century (Born 1995, 135). The novel, however, mediates this guilt in a manner that prevents a sliding into inaction associated with the scepticism Forster advocates; that is, a scepticism that constantly turns inwards and demands self-evaluation.

Helen's swaying between her Schlegelian fervour for the inner life and her infatuation with the Wilcoxes at the beginning of the novel offers an example of the vulnerability of a liberalism as staunch as Forster's. If one is radically open to the opinions of others, one is also more likely to understand and to be convinced by them. Julie Ellison identifies this as the crux of modern liberal guilt:

Liberals are thought to feel particularly malleable, always in danger of having their too-ready sympathy absorbed by someone else's agenda, or they are at least thought to worry more about this potential. Liberal guilt, then, is bound up with the feeling of being implicated in systems of domination and with the subsequent awareness of the emotional instability produced by this ambivalent position. (1996, 350)

The discriminations of *Howards End* shore up liberal consciousness against sympathetic dissolution, on the one hand, and they admonish readers not to read the novel as a purely political tract. "If we read the novelistic registration of the limits of politics" in *Howards End* "as the abandonment of politics," Amanda Anderson argues, "then we are asking literature to be something it isn't, something entirely coterminous with political theory or political action" (2016, 97-8). Forster neither ignores how problematic it is to build a worldview celebrating the rights and worthiness of the individual on a wilful blindness towards a large proportion of the population, nor does he present the novel as a blueprint for political action; rather, he is fully aware that the lack of blindness bears dangers of its own, as does the quietude derived from the knowledge of the limitations of the liberal humanist novel. As a result, he advocates a self-conscious, context-dependent blindness that still characterizes (non-defeatist) liberalism today: to defend culture against fascism even if the majority of a population might not care about culture is as little a reason to desist in one's efforts as to abandon the fight against climate change because the majority of the planet's population is engaged in much more basic struggles. To feel guilty about having the privilege to even see a problem is part of the bargain, and this bargain, considered in formal terms, represents one of the aspects of Forster's contemporary legacy.

**Interlude:** *On Beauty*

Before turning to Oyler's novel and the genre of autofiction, I want to briefly look at what still might be the most celebrated contemporary literary adaptation of Forster's work: Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*. Smith formally rejects the liberal problem Forster performs so elaborately in *Howards End*. Her narrator at no point excludes any group of people from the novel's purview, nor does the narrative voice self-consciously comment on the narration. On the contrary, in making her version of the Schlegels and Wilcoxes mixed race and Black, respectively, providing a much fuller account of the Leonard Bast figure in the young African American poet and rapper Carl Thomas, as well as including working-class Haitian immigrants in her narrative, Smith stakes a claim to the very social breadth which Forster's novel lacks. While she fulfils this claim in particular in the portrait of Carl Thomas, who is much more lifelike than Leonard (should Carl have gotten anyone pregnant, one would be hard-pressed to find readers who would attribute it to an umbrella), her sweeping social vision runs into the same problem as Forster's.

Carbajal, for example, points out that the one-dimensional portrayal of the Haitian community “effectively aligns the novel’s ideological perspective with the bourgeoisie whom the novel aims to critique in the first place” (2013, 43). By adopting a Westernized view of Haitian history and mediating it through an adolescent consciousness of Levi Belsey, who is as susceptible to sympathy as Helen at the beginning of *Howards End*, Smith, according to Carbajal, fails to exploit the political potential of her vision. This, however, might be less a failing of Smith’s imaginative powers than a failure of form – more specifically, Forster’s form: “there are some implicit dangers in honouring the liberal, ‘middling’ line of Forster’s writing. The Haitians in *On Beauty* remain as ‘unthinkable’ as the very poor in *Howards End*” (Carbajal 2013, 50). But to what extent does Smith honour Forster’s middling line in stylistic terms?

*On Beauty* displaces liberal guilt from the narrator to its characters. In comparison to its literary forebear, Smith’s novel does not perform its anxiety about what remains outside of its representational power. This lacking narratorial self-consciousness ultimately enables Carbajal’s critique. Without the narrator’s concessions about the limits of her project, Smith’s novel adopts realism’s claim to broad social representation, which in turn is the measure by which Carbajal identifies the novel’s failure to adequately represent the members of the Haitian community. To put it differently, in not adopting Forster’s guilty style, Smith’s novel seems to speak from an authoritative position very much unlike that of *Howards End*. In this regard, *On Beauty* does not belong to the legacy of liberal guilt I am concerned with here. For that, one needs to look to a different contemporary genre.

### **Guilty Style II: Fake Accounts**

Lauren Oyler’s *Fake Accounts* is narrated by an unnamed character who shares aspects of Oyler’s biography: both spend time in New York City and Berlin; Oyler’s career was facilitated through successful involvement with popular sites like *Bookslut*, *Vice*, and *Bookforum*, while her unnamed counterpart works as a “blogger” producing “two to three articles per day about ‘culture’” for a website read by “millions of people” every month (2021, 66–67); both have a sizeable following on Twitter, although Oyler’s currently is much higher – close to 30,000 while her narrator’s count is somewhere in “the mid four figures” (66); finally, the description of the narrator’s Twitter profile picture matches Oyler’s at the time of writing this article.



The novel tells the story of the narrator's relationship with a man named Felix, whom she discovers to operate a popular Instagram account peddling alt-right conspiracy theories. Since Felix is not aware of her discovery, the narrator takes great pleasure in planning out the break-up, revelling in the prospect of fully indulging in the moral superiority afforded by the situation. Before she can carry out her plan, however, Felix dies in an accident. Although his death does not unsettle her greatly, she takes it as an occasion to leave behind her life in New York City and moves to Berlin, where the remaining plot takes place. The narrator gets a job as a babysitter and goes on various dates and attends other social occasions, for which she adopts a number of fake identities until a final plot twist not to be revealed here brings the story to a close. As this brief summary indicates, the novel primarily stages questions of authenticity in a world deeply shaped by online representation and interaction, but it not only does so in terms of its content. Its form suggests a preoccupation with the relationship between a new conception of authenticity propelled by social media and novelistic form.

Oyler considers the fictionalizing of the self that defines autofiction and semi-autobiographical writing as a response to the way we present ourselves online. In a conversation with Courtney Bales-tier on the *WMFA* podcast, Oyler links the popularity of autofiction to the advent of identities that are both fictional and non-fictional in reality TV and on social media:

The novelist who is using their life in some way, or using themselves and putting themselves in a story that may or may not be true, is quite similar to the sort of Twitter user who is making bombastic declarations or publishing takes that aren't quite real. (Bales-tier 2021, 21: 17-21: 43)

In this perspective, autofictional narration can be understood as being more realistic than traditional realism. Oyler makes reference to Rachel Cusk's take on her own turn to autofiction as a disillusionment with traditional fiction, which began striking her as "fake and embarrassing." Cusk, who experienced a creative slump after publishing a semi-autobiographical account of her divorce, found that afterwards "the idea of making up John and Jane and having them do things together seem[ed] utterly ridiculous" (Kellaway 2014). Even though Oyler does not endorse this statement on the podcast, she points out that traditional realist narratives seem more removed from life than autofiction, which simply

provides “an easier and more natural way to write.” In this regard, autofiction is an aesthetic choice, but, crucially, it also is a more moral one.

“I see myself using myself as an example because that’s what’s at hand, and because it’s really the only ethical way you can bring in the real world, to sacrifice yourself on the altar of truth (Balestier 2021, 34: 09–34: 26). With this in mind, autofiction can be understood as a genre that inherently performs the awareness of its own limitations. “Presenting the author as what he is, some guy who writes books that you may ignore or pay attention to as it suits you,” Oyler argues elsewhere, “seems the most moral approach to novel writing one could take” (Oyler 2020b). It is increasingly difficult to defend a realism of sympathetic identification in the vein of George Eliot in the twenty-first century when “our awareness of others’ lives is greater than ever before.” If autofiction “may seem like the product of a self-obsessed culture that is incapable of imagining others’ lives” (Oyler 2020b), it also functions as a critique of the presumptions of realism. Here one might turn back to *Howards End* and Forster’s portrayal of Leonard Bast.

Daniel Born argues that Forster’s treatment of Leonard both reveals his lacking familiarity with people like him and an essential problem of realism. The latter, Born argues, is

always an illusion, its effect of objectivity achieved by excluding overt reference to the subjective vantage point and biases of the observer. Therefore, Forster’s willingness to reveal his own position vis-à-vis Leonard Bast displays not ignorance of Bast, but in fact necessary recognition that ‘realism’ about Bast is problematic. (1995, 129)

As I argue above, to point out that realism is problematic does not alleviate the guilt of assuming a highly exclusive narrative, neither in Forster’s nor in Oyler’s case.

In a passage reminiscent of the opening of chapter six of *Howards End*, and repeatedly quoted in full or partially in reviews (Kitamura 2021; Marz 2021; Stern 2021), Oyler’s narrator interrupts the flow of the story to declare:

Usually when you have these sort of searching bourgeois-white-person narratives you have to offer a disclaimer, *I know my problems do not rank in comparison to the manifold sufferings of most of the world’s*

*people...but*, but this preamble isn't meant to be perfunctory, a tick on a checklist; I really mean it as a point to be made in itself. Nothing was wrong. I had no problems. And yet I had problems. (2021, 110; emphasis and ellipsis in original)

While this might not exactly be a proclamation of liberal guilt (although it can be read that way), it points to the uneasy humility of autofiction as a genre that does not claim the responsibility and breadth of the great realist novel. Oyler can safely assume that readers unfamiliar with her previous work and life will go online before or after they read the novel to uncover the similarities between her narrator and herself. This knowledge in turn feeds into the form of the novel, as it does not only signal the limitations of the narrative (some woman writing a book that you may pay attention to if you like), but also of the reader's position.

"Under the terms of popular, social-media-inflected criticism," Oyler writes, readers are "now judge and jury, examining works for their political content and assessing the moral goodness of the author in the process" (2020b). Autofiction, in this perspective, can be understood as a genre that pre-empts the charge most easily levelled against it. It flaunts its limitations in its form, which is to say it rejects any liberal guilt that might be read into it, faulting readers for their impulse to impose a feeling of guilt on authors who never set out to make sweeping claims about the world in the first place.

But the matter does not seem to be that simple. If the form alone were enough to prevent the stylistic self-consciousness I read as a form of liberal guilt, passages about the nature of one's pain in relation to that of others would not be necessary. Neither would it be required for authors of autofiction to temper their generalizations. Celebrated writers of autofiction like Karl Ove Knausgård, Ben Lerner, and Sheila Heti<sup>3</sup> "are prone to making grandiose observations about the meaning of life and art," Oyler states, but "they usually admit these observations were grandiose, through self-deprecation or comedic timing" (2020b). The cause

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3 Tope Folarin argues that publishers and the literary establishment primarily associate autofiction with white authors, particularly these three as well as Cusk. He argues that writers like Knausgård, Lerner, Heti, and Cusk profit "from an ongoing, ever-recurring conversation about their work that constantly probes and redefines what they have accomplished and extends the lifecycle of their work beyond the typical book promotional time frame." At the same time, this valorization "also signals that certain lives are worthy of being transformed into literature regardless of how prosaic and boring they may be, while others are not" (Folarin 2021). This argument points at another aspect beyond the scope of this paper - namely, why autofiction might be considered a guilty style.

of such self-irony does not necessarily have to derive from guilt about one's ability to make grandiose claims, but it seems increasingly difficult not to read this self-consciousness in terms of writers' awareness of everything that is excluded by their texts and, therefore, makes them vulnerable to moral criticism. Because even if such criticism need not bother an author, and it does not seem to be on the fore of Oyler's mind, she does have an inherently moral conception of the novel as an art form.

Literary novels matter to Oyler, as much as they do to Forster, and if Forster is unwilling to abandon culture and the novel in the face of their social irrelevance, Oyler is unwilling to abandon the novel as a tool for meaningfully engaging with the world in the face of its limitations. "Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot," writes George Eliot (1883, 145). It seems unlikely that Oyler would ever indulge in such rhetoric; all the same, she is unwilling to relinquish the novel into the amoral wilds of aestheticism. She is reluctant to "say something about how serious literature 'helps us understand what it means to be human' or whatever," but then she concedes: "I do believe something to that effect," adding that "commercial literature" (Goldstein 2020) cannot provide the same effect as serious literature. Oyler is a critic who deploys "whatever," a word which might seem atypical for a someone whose critical language usually is highly acute, strategically (consider, for example, her review of Jia Tolentino's *Trick Mirror* (2020c)). In the passage just quoted, it perfectly encapsulates the attitude of guilty style: Oyler does not seem to be embarrassed to endorse what essentially is a liberal humanist conception of the novel, but she is painfully aware that doing so without performing her self-consciousness will make her an easy target of a moral critique that has no bearing on her argument. As a consequence, she is more preoccupied with critiquing contemporary novels that fail to live up to the novel's promise than she is in defending the form (which is one of many points at which she diverges from Forster).

Oyler's Forsterian belief in the novel's potential leads her to harshly criticize contemporary novels that merely "depict reality" rather than "respond to it, critique it, or engage with it" (Oyler 2020a). Oyler is sharply opposed to what she perceives as one stylistic trend in contemporary literature that seems to address the limited scope of the novel not through unhampered maximalism, but in a fragmented and cryptic minimalism that works primarily through suggestion rather than analysis. In *Fake Accounts*, the narrator listens to an interview with

a writer whose work resembles that of Jenny Offill in *Dept. of Speculation* (2014) and *Weather* (2020). But Offill's "aphoristic" fragments in paragraphs "set alone on the page, white space above and below" (Self 2014), which enthused reviewers, neither impresses the narrator nor Oyler.

The former finds this particular style "melodramatic, insinuating utmost meaning where there was only hollow prose" (2021, 164). What reviewers consider the style's greatest strength becomes a weakness in her eyes. "What's amazing about this structure," comments the narrator of *Fake Accounts*, "is that you can just dump any material you have in here and leave it up to the reader to connect it to the rest of the work" (180). In contrast, Roxane Gay, reviewing *Dept. of Speculation*, finds Offill's fragments highly suggestive:

The narrator offers observations like: "The Buddhists say there are 121 states of consciousness. Of these, only three involve misery or suffering. Most of us spend our time moving back and forth between these three." There is gravity to the mere idea of Buddhism. We're supposed to do something with this information, right? There is meaning here, whether about marriage or love or life or all of the above, but the precise nature of that meaning is never fully revealed. (2014)

Oyler seems to take issue first and foremost with the position in which such writing places the reader, "who ends up searching for clues, chasing the narrative like a spy, or a conspiracy theorist" (2020a). If autofiction undermines the moral self-righteousness of readers by indicating the limited scope of its project, novels in the vein of Offill seem to tease the reader with the knowledge that the author is in fact providing meaningful commentary on a lot of topics – if only the reader did the necessary work. This achieves a reversal of Forster's guilty style: instead of signalling the restrictions of a given narrative, such novels constantly hint at commenting on a totality without doing so. Oyler, in contrast, belongs to a field of contemporary writers who negotiate their engagement with the world through the medium of autobiographical fiction in order to acknowledge partiality as a necessary quality of the novel.

For all the differences between *Howards End* and *Fake Accounts*, their authors' attitudes towards the project of realism connect them in a meaningful way. These attitudes produce a particular style, which is best understood in Susan

Sontag's terms, not as "knowledge of something (like a fact or a moral judgment)," but "the form or style of knowing something" (2009, 22). It is at the level of style that Forster enters a spectral dialogue with Oyler, who invites her readers, to quote Forster, to "put our heads together and consider for a moment our special problem, our special blessings, our special woes. No one need listen to us who does not want to. We whisper in the corner of a world which is full of other noises, and louder ones" (1972a, 102). The ethos of this passage – the belief in the importance of what is under discussion coupled with the performance of one's awareness of its limitations – prefigures Oyler's understanding of autofiction as a form, and in doing so it offers an example for understanding an aspect of Forster's contemporary legacy that has not yet received scholarly attention. This legacy is stylistic, as both *Howards End* and *Fake Accounts* allow their readers to experience a literary engagement with the world that is at once insistent on its social relevance and conscious of the vast unspoken-of reaches of the world it cannot but fail to address.

This essay was written as part of a research project supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The author thanks the SNSF for their financial support. I also want to thank Patrick Cronin for his comments on an early draft of the essay.

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## E. M. Forster: A Bibliography of Critical Studies

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E. M. Forster studies are a remarkably vibrant field of literary studies with dozens of books, papers, and articles published every year. There were 68 publications in 2020 alone, with at least 59 more already appearing in 2021. Their number and variety, however, are difficult to embrace as up to now there has been no single comprehensive source which would include if not all (as this seems hardly possible), then at least a majority of them. Even the best available online resources include only a fraction of the existing works. Those which appear in renowned journals or are published by distinguished publishing houses are usually easy to find, although locating Forster-related chapters in monographs is not quite as simple. However, there are hundreds of others the discovery of which requires much more effort, especially when they appear outside the anglophone academia or only in print. The purpose of the present publication is to make the task somewhat less arduous.

The most comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography of critical works about Forster is *E. M. Forster: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him*, compiled and edited by Frederick P. W. McDowell. However, as it was published in 1976 it includes only works published up to 1975, and the listing is not complete for the period from 1973 to 1975. It was only partly complemented in 1982 by McDowell himself in the article “‘Fresh Woods and Pastures New’: Forster Criticism and Scholarship since 1975”, and further in 1986 by Evelyne Hanquart in her “Complement de bibliographie critique 1975-1985”. Forster’s own works were summed up in 1985 by Brownlee J. Kirkpatrick in *A Bibliography of E. M. Forster*. Since then there has been no attempt to take stock of Forsterian studies.

The aim of the present project is to include all Forster-related scholarly publications which were not presented in McDowell’s bibliography. The earliest of the publications included here appeared in 1973, the most recent are scheduled to appear in 2022. Consequently, the present bibliography covers the period of fifty years and includes 1648 entries, a little less than the 1913 entries McDowell included for the period 1905–1975. However, the focus here is somewhat different, the present bibliography includes only published academic texts, there are no unpublished PhD theses, book reviews, or popular press articles. At the same

time, the range of languages included is much broader, as one of my aims was to introduce Forsterian scholarship in all of its variety. In one important aspect the present bibliography is obviously inferior to the work of McDowell: it is not annotated. It is, however, still a work in progress. The present publication does not end the work, it is rather intended to make it accessible to all Forster scholars around the world at this, quite advanced as I believe, stage of development. The further plan is to make the bibliography available in a digital searchable form on the website of the International E. M. Forster Society. When it goes live, it will be possible to add more features and, naturally, update it regularly.

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## I

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**Michelle Fillion, 2010.**

***Difficult Rhythm: Music and the Word in E. M. Forster*  
(Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press)**

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In his 1939 essay “Not Listening to Music,” E. M. Forster ambitiously grapples with what he terms “music itself.” Eschewing definition in favour of description, the author introduces the concept of “rhythm” which both encapsulates and transcends aesthetic ideology: “There’s an insistence in music—expressed largely through rhythm; there is a sense that it is trying to push across at us something which is neither an esthetic pattern nor a sermon.”

Michelle Fillion’s study picks up and expands on these cross-media formulations of rhythm. The book’s title comes from Forster’s 1927 Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, in which he argued that a great novel should imitate music’s ability to set in motion a quivering vibration which continues to affect the receiver long after the music has ceased. For Fillion, then, “at the apex of [Forster’s] literary metaphysics is the concept of ‘difficult rhythm,’ by which ‘great chords’ resound below the verbal surface of a novel and echo after it has closed” (xviii). Fillion’s book proceeds as an astute analysis of Forster’s biographical and practical experience with music, in Chapter 1, before delving into the intricate schematics of the music of Forster’s novels.

One of the book’s key strengths is its ability to capture, through a delicate matrix of historicist, contextual, and conceptual approaches, the political undertones to Forster’s musical aesthetics. Such rejection of music as an apolitical art form is timely – over the past four decades musicologists and revisionist scholars alike have been working to diminish the purported *cordon sanitaire* between music and politics.<sup>1</sup> Werner Wolf’s 1999 work, *The Musicalization of Fiction*, which inaugurated the concept of musico-literary intermediality, was a flagship critical effort to this end. As such, Fillion’s study joins a dynamic debate on the

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1 See, for instance: Joseph Kerman, 1985. *Musicology* (London: Fontana); Lawrence Kramer, 1990. *Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press); Susan McClary, 2010. *Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

role of music in the representation of identity in twentieth century fiction. Chapter 3's focus on the Wagnerian leitmotif as a method of revising the characterisation of *The Longest Journey*, and Chapter 5's astute analysis of Brahms' *Four Serious Songs* from the concert programme in *Howards End* offer especially cogent discussions, locating gender politics within the broader modernist tension between individual and collective identities. Chapter 5 with an invocation of the "stark realism" of Brahms as a means of portending the impossibility of "only connecting" is particularly subtle and effective.

Fillion's prose is impressive in its clarity, particularly given the ambitious scope of the project. Intended for musicologists, literary scholars, as well as "general readers," the book incorporates musical technicalities (often including a page or more of sheet music per chapter), synopses of the works in question, as well as astute forays into close reading. Despite such an itinerary, the study is never overburdened by jargon and retains an accessible tone, counterpoising the critical and the evocative elements of its argument. Fillion also supplements her formalist analyses with archival work, presenting some of Forster's hitherto unpublished musical projects in Chapters 7 and 8. While the former chapter outlines Forster's ambitious attempt to annotate all of Beethoven's piano sonatas, the latter makes effective use of unpublished libretto drafts and musical scores to examine Forster's involvement in the opera *Billy Budd* and his close collaboration with composer Benjamin Britten. The chapter contends, convincingly, that the opera – exemplifying the view Forster expressed in "Not Listening to Music" that "the arts were to be enriched by taking in one another's washing" – was a product of cross-pollination and mutual influence between the composer and the librettist.

A notable void in Fillion's otherwise meticulous study, however, is the omission of Forster's short stories, which contain a wealth of musico-literary techniques and intermedial constructions. Chapter 6, in particular, with its focus on Forster's last novel, *Maurice*, would have benefitted from reference to the author's early short fiction. The proposition that Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony serves not only as a nonverbal mutual admission of homosexuality between Maurice and Clive, but that the pair's ultimate parting represents the novel's denunciation of Victorian ideals of Uranian love which the *Pathétique* embodies, finds echoes in Forster's earlier stories. For instance, the key role of the "musical whistle" in the 1904 "The Story of a Panic," whose insistent melody alerts Eustace to an "understanding" of his "desire for Gennaro," leading to him ultimately being "saved" and escaping the austere mores of Ravello. Likewise, the tenets

of the chapter resonate with the sexual-political elements of Forster's escapist "fantasia," observed in the 1908 story "The Celestial Omnibus," where music is cast as an agent of transgression – a "truth in the depth, truth on the height" – providing a stage for the culturally unspeakable, becoming an early variation of the techniques the author deploys in *Maurice*.

Such additions would bring nuance to Fillion's argument, illustrating the evolution and diversity of Forster's musico-literary formulations and his developing engagement with the sociopolitical climate of the era. Similarly, to supplement the effective archival work, a closer engagement with Forster's nonfiction and epitextual material (integration of his influential *Abinger Harvest* is particularly scant) would help anchor the conceptual framework of the study. This may aid in decreasing the turn of the book to speculation, as witnessed by the frequent appearance of such terms as "surely," "likely," "perhaps," and "appears to," which tend to dilute the otherwise beautifully robust prose.

Yet such omissions do not detract overmuch from what is an accomplished study of Forster's cross-medial aesthetics. Expanding Werner Wolf's critical methodology of musical "thematization" in modernist literature to include historicist, formalist, as well as previously unpublished, accounts of Forster's engagement with intermediality, this study is an interdisciplinary resource and an asset to the broadening field of musico-literary studies.

**Tsung-Han Tsai, 2021.**  
***E. M. Forster and Music***  
**(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)**

Parker T. Gordon,  
 University of St Andrews

Tsung-Han Tsai's *E. M. Forster and Music* offers fresh readings of Forster's engagement with music, analysing for the first time in a single-author study Forster's essays and short stories in addition to his longer fiction. Tsai's research, detailed and thorough, invites scholars to investigate the rich topic of Forster and music, especially with a political lens. The examples Tsai provides throughout the book are not exhaustive but more of a model for the diverse ways researchers can examine different types of Forster's texts (e.g. fiction, non-fiction) and music (e.g. audible, material). This interdisciplinary study also emphasizes Forster's political views, which Tsai convincingly demonstrates as interwoven into Forster's "representations of music" (4). *E. M. Forster and Music*, therefore, contributes both to literary scholarship of Forster's works and word and music studies through rigorous scholarship and insightful close readings.

Through the monograph's introduction, five chapters, and "Postlude," Tsai discusses Forster's short stories, essays, broadcasts, and correspondence in addition to the novels. *E. M. Forster and Music* therefore builds upon Michelle Fillion's *Difficult Rhythm* (2010), the first monograph study of Forster and music. Tsai argues that Fillion's omission of the shorter fiction and non-fiction "miss[es] the opportunity to uncover themes which Forster consistently tackles through drawing music into his writing" (12). Rich in archival research, Fillion's study opened new paths of inquiry and proposed methodologies for interdisciplinary study. Tsai similarly uncovers variant examples of musical allusions in Forster's manuscript drafts to propose alternate readings of Forster's works, which are supported by analysis that builds throughout each chapter and across the entire volume.

The understudied wartime film *A Diary for Timothy* (1945), written by Forster, provides a brilliant introductory example for Tsai's explanation that Forster's commentary on music is "unquestionably political" (4). In the first chapter, Tsai responds to Forster's use of the term "rhythm" in writings from Forster's time in Egypt, essays by Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, and in *A Passage*

to *India* (1924). Rather than the focus *Difficult Rhythm* places upon Forster's use of "rhythm" in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), which Tsai argues "seems purely – and oddly – aesthetic" (45), *E. M. Forster and Music* instead focuses upon Forster's earlier uses of the term, which present a more racialized or othered context. Tsai's approach, therefore, identifies Forster's "endeavour to challenge the association of rhythm with Western stereotypes about the unchangeability of non-Western cultures, as well as to reimagine that association" (47).

From this re-contextualization of Forster's "rhythm," Tsai turns to "The Queering of Musical Instruments" in the second chapter, which examines Forster's rationale for only including "Western musical instruments instead of 'exotic' Indian ones in *A Passage to India*" (50). This focus upon "the material existence of music" (49) rectifies what Tsai observes as critical neglect of Forster's work in material culture studies within both literary studies and musicology. Tsai identifies Ronny's viola, the Maharajah's harmonium, and the broken piano in the European guest house as "objects through which human relations are mediated and by which the boundary between public and private is negotiated" (49). Additionally, these instruments are not just symbols of "national identity of the British abroad" but rather are used by Forster to demonstrate "webs of complex relations between colonizer and colonized" (52). Tsai's clever readings of the three instruments further demonstrate how research of Forster's material musical objects also reveals new political contexts.

In the third chapter, Tsai similarly examines a piece of sheet music, a "coon song" open on the piano in the reception room in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905). This sheet music, neglected in other scholarship, is shown to be "[e]xplicitly racist" and "implies [Lilia's] unrefined taste and artistic vulgarity, associating her with colonial power and highlighting her whiteness" (94-95). Tsai's analysis of this sheet music pairs with another musical example from *Where Angels Fear to Tread*: the opera scene from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. This opera is analysed in Fillion's study, but Fillion neglects the literary source for the opera, Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*, so it was a pleasure to read Tsai's analysis of the intertextual connections to both Scott's novel and to Gustav Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, in which Emma Bovary attends Donizetti's French version of the opera, *Lucie*. Through identifying representations of national identity, Tsai demonstrates how Forster navigates the political associations of an English character attending an Italian opera in Italy based upon a Scottish novel, which shows Forster's "destabili-

zation of national character, playing with musical stereotypes and exposing their superficiality" (100).

The monograph then pivots to Forster's writings about Wagner in the fourth chapter, where the political and musical arguments of the book appear to coalesce most naturally and with great effect. Tsai's research shows that Forster's "participation in and advocacy of ... wartime musical activities, in which German music had a prominent part, only highlight the absence of Wagner in his writing during and after the war" (107). Tsai's examples from Forster's writing about Siegfried from Wagner's *Ring* as a "cad," rather than the more conventional hero figure, are entertaining and reveal more of Forster's humour and satirical voice. Ultimately, the association between heroism and Wagner's hero characters led to Forster's "resistance to heroism, which is also a resistance to propaganda" (126), which Tsai persuasively argues as a reason why Forster did not complete his Beethoven sonata project.

Tsai's final chapter proposes that Forster's views on "Amateurism, Musicology, and Gender" are represented in the characters of Vashti from the short story "The Machine Stops" (1908) and Dorothea from the unfinished *Arctic Summer*, which Forster began writing in 1911. Both women have jobs associated with musicology - careers that were emerging and becoming more professionalized in the early twentieth century. Tsai's research of these two characters and Forster's views on folksong collecting and musicology reveals misogyny but also, Tsai argues, a "resistance to the gendered hierarchy of professional and amateur" (146). The succinct conclusion to the section on Vashti, following Tsai's convincing case for Forster's satirical depiction of the character, proposes that the negative portrayal of Vashti suggests Forster's criticism of "professional norms and the domination of patriarchy" (146). This arrival appears to neatly wrap up the argument, but such an argument would benefit more from further discussion considering the weight of evidence to the contrary presented earlier.

In a book where the arguments are well sustained and tightly articulated, three short sections appear almost out of place: a brief section on Tchaikovsky and *Maurice* in the fifth chapter and two sections in the "Postlude" on Hugo Wolf's songs and Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* (1951), for which Forster collaborated as lyricist. These informative sections do not bring the book to an end but rather introduce new arguments and information that might have been better placed as short interludes between chapters. These small criticisms aside, the volume is well presented from Cambridge University Press with ample margins

for writing annotations. Tsai's footnotes throughout the text are unobtrusive and useful, providing information about further sources, such as identifying a 1955 recording of the *Ring* performed by the same cast and led by the same conductor that Forster would have seen during his Bayreuth Festival visit in 1954 (131). Two minor comments for future reprints and editions: the publication date for *Abinger Harvest* was 1936 rather than 1935 as listed on pages 31 and 63; a typo on page 111 omits "a" in "happy ending in contemporary fiction."

Perhaps what is most delightful about Tsai's scholarship is the keen ear turned towards Forster's ironic narrative voice. Tsai takes the necessary time to work through Forster's use of double meanings, satire, and tongue-in-cheek, providing scholars with a model for discussing irony in Forster's works, especially in relation to musical examples. Open to Forster's sense of irony and playfulness, Tsai pursues Forster's ironic narrative voice, tracing new meanings and connections hidden in musical representations and demonstrating that attention to the "irony, irresolution, and ambivalence" (165) in Forster's work is a rewarding pursuit.

Tsai's debut monograph merits pride of place alongside Fillion's *Difficult Rhythm*. Both are indispensable scholarly studies of Forster's relationship with music. Each presents different aspects of Forster's life with music, and both are necessary works for any scholar of Forster or literature and music. *E. M. Forster and Music* demonstrates that there is more still to be said about Forster's musical life and writing. Both Tsai and Fillion, rightly so, limit the scopes of their studies because the field of Forster's engagement with music in his fiction, non-fiction, and personal life is so richly enlightening to our understanding of his works. Forster, as Benjamin Britten wrote, is indeed "'our most musical novelist'" (176), and just like similar studies of other modernist writers and music, Forster's relationship with music cannot be articulated in only one or even two monographs. *E. M. Forster and Music* proposes "a return to the text and its contexts ... to uncover unexpected nuances in and stimulate new understandings of Forster's work" (165), and, in doing so, it breaks new ground in Forster (and music) studies and the field of single author and music studies.



**Krzysztof Fordoński, Anna Kwiatkowska,  
Paweł Wojtas, Heiko Zimmermann (eds.), 2020.  
*Language and Literary Studies of Warsaw* No. 10.**

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The 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Language and Literary Studies of Warsaw* is dedicated to Edward Morgan Forster, celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the novelist. The issue also marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International E. M. Forster Society. The journal is composed of four main sections: biography, the novels, the encounters with Forster, two conference reports, and four reviews of publications. The editors' preface gives a brief summary of the activities of the journal in the first decade of its existence.

Krzysztof Fordoński's article entitled "Adaptation, Inspiration, Dialogue: E. M. Forster and His Oeuvre in Contemporary Culture" discusses various forms of adaptations and responses to the works of Forster. The article sheds light on short films, opera, musicals, other musical inspirations, politics, and scholarship on Forster. Fordoński concludes that works inspired by Forster and adaptations of his works prove that they require "a response, and [provoke] still new questions."

The Biography section of the journal starts with "E. M. Forster in Africa" by Evelyne Hanquart-Turner. In 1929, George Barger, a chemist, and his wife Florence went on "a lecture-tour to last for several months in various African countries" invited Forster to come "a long tour in sub-Saharan Africa." Forster relates the details of the tour in "Africa Journal." Hanquart-Turner places Forster's works on Africa within a historical context, including the essay "Luncheon at Pretoria" and the short story "The Life to Come." The article concludes with Forster's depiction of his travels: he calls himself a "globe-trotter" of unadventurous travels.

The next article of the biography section is "Reading Forster's Will" by Daniel Monk. His emphasis is mostly on the ethical background of Forster's last will that reflects the biographical and sociological aspects of the document, mostly a testimony of the writer's friendships. Forster's point of view on the social class structure of England and his belief in friendship are clearly reflected there. He bequeathed money to working class men "by going beyond conjugal-

ity and blood ties" as he preferred keeping company with people "alien to his class." Monk calls Forster's will "traditional, pragmatic, progressive." He likens it to his novels as both "record an alternative history, genealogy and temporality." He concludes by asserting Forster's richness as an intellectual, distinguished author as his will reveals his aims and relationships by unfolding a "public and private readership" within his sense of "conflicting modes of existence."

The section dealing with the novels opens with the paper "'Facing the Sunshine': Nature and (Social) Environment in E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View*" by Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad. The article explores the relationship between human beings and nature through the narratological construction and the characters. Prorokova-Konrad argues that Forster's notions of individualism and diversity stem from his descriptions of nature and the environment. Forster's eco-philosophy is also scrutinized through his "application of the images of nature in the discussions of the social environment." Prorokova-Konrad concludes that every human being is different from one another like the beautiful nature cycle of spring, summer, autumn, in which nature is "a beautiful and sublime force."

John Attridge's "Posing as Pastoral: The Displacement of the 'Very Poor' in *Howards End*" scrutinises the displacement of the poor people who are presented as elements of the pastoral landscape in the novel. Forster's alignment with the upper middle-class protagonists in his pastoral imagery, however, does not mean that he is unconcerned with the lower-class characters. Attridge questions the notions of "bourgeois-liberal guilt" that juxtaposes "rural working life" in the novel. He argues that the novel delineates the scarcity of concern for the fate of the very poor by pinpointing the struggle between the two Edwardian classes. Attridge concludes by drawing attention to Forster's inclusion of many "very poor" people in *Howards End* and reveals Forster's empathy with them; yet the very poor are displaced in the pastoral spaces by the upper middle classes.

The next article in the novel section is "O/other and the Creation of the Self in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*" by Elif Derya Şenduran. It examines the symbiotic relationship between the Lacanian Other and the imaginary other by referring to Lacanian and Braidotti's epistemology. The topological structure of the moebius band also illustrates the cross binaries including rational/irrational, wo/man, culture/nature in the novel with the assertion that the binaries are never opposites but reversed images and accomplices of one another whose split is a traumatic or a pleasurable event that blurs the boundaries of hierarchical

binaries for the characters in *Howards End*. The notions of imaginary other (Paul for Helen, Ruth for Margaret) and the Lacanian Other are “incompatible in the characters’ intrasubjective and intersubjective relations” in the novel.

Nadia Butt’s article is entitled “Travel and Transformations: The Transcultural Predicament of Female Travellers in E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924).” Travelling women assert their freedom and liberty and experience cultural differences in a new country. As they change their location, their travel can be regarded in terms of gender, colonialism, transnationalism, memory and modernity in the novel. Cross-cultural and cross border travel with new perspectives may lead to some conflicts. The friendship of the easterners and the westerners is at stake due to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized reminding us of the familiar and unfamiliar, as well as the “connection and disconnection” present in the conflicts of colonialism. Butt concludes that “the plight of Adela Quested and Mrs Moore,” not only lays bare the new women traveller amidst “the imperialism of female tourism” but also their “self-discovery.”

The next article of the novel section is “Modern Hindu Reformers’ View of Hinduism Reflected in *A Passage to India*: “Caves” as a Symbol of the Universal Formless God, and “Temple” as Idolatry” by Toshiyuki Nakamichi. The article elucidates the interrelated “Caves” and “Temple” parts of the novel, in terms of Forster’s point of view on Hinduism as it is reflected in the novel by focusing on Neoplatonism, the Brahma Samaj’s concept of “Brahman” and Plotinus’s concept of “the One,” Advaita Vedanta’s maya, “the illusionary appearance in Brahman” and Hindu Reform Movements. As Nakamichi argues, Forster’s writings foreground his perception of Hinduism, his awareness of the similarity between the ancient Indian philosophy and Plotinus’s philosophy. Nakamichi concludes that Forster conceives “Nirguna Brahman through the eyes of Plotinus and that he portrays Nirguna Brahman as embracing both “evil” and “good” which confuses Mrs Moore and Adela.” As Buddhism goes beyond questions of being and nonbeing with its idea of nothingness, influencing the Western nihilism and Vedanta’s Maya; *A Passage to India* mirrors the Brahma Samaj’s Hindu reform movements and Western concept of nihilism in the nineteenth century.

The following section of papers discussing Forster’s short stories starts with Athanasios Dimakis’s article “Hotel Melodrama in E. M. Forster’s “The Story of a Panic” and “The Story of the Siren.” His essay explores Forster’s male protagonists who reflect the modernist aspect of his works within “the avant-garde sentimentality and melodrama regarding Peter Brook’s inter-

pretation, “queer ostentation, exaggeration, flamboyance, and theatricality of their protagonists.” Dimakis asserts that the paradoxical discontents of hotel culture are embodied in Forster’s hotel literature. The everchanging atmosphere of hotel life pertains “the terrible human melo-drama” within either a heavenly or hellish atmosphere.

Anastasia Logotheti’s article “So Far No Other”: Alterity in Forster’s “The Other Boat” examines the change in “The Other Boat” within the notion of “imperialist politics.” The hierarchies such as colonizer/colonized foreground the essentiality of the “other” in the story from the vantage point of Saidian Orientalism. Logotheti acknowledges that the notion of “our place” in the story is negated through alterity that remains a threat to the norms of society.

Marcin Tereszewski’s “Dystopian Space in E. M. Forster’s ‘The Machine Stops’” illustrates spatial configurations and their relation to the dystopian aesthetic, leading to “corporal disintegration” in the story, drawing on Fredric Jameson’s postmodern perspectives in the journal. Tereszewski epitomizes the “spatial turn” by describing “real” spaces in the story with the argument of enunciating the loss of a mode of living transformed by modernity in the story that Forster manifests “spatiality implicit in the postmodern.” In Forster’s story, the society is kept isolated from “one another” and “knowledge.” Giving “full reign” to technology ultimately results in the destruction of the established mechanised reality of the Machine due to the “mental enslavement of population.” Tereszewski concludes that not creating a “cognitive map” of environment leads to alienation; the anomie of the state in the story, hence, can be observed in “Kuno’s illegal acts of physical engagement with his surroundings.”

The fourth section of the journal deals with the encounters with Forster. The first article of this part is Margaret D. Stetz’s “E. M. Forster and the Legacy of Aestheticism “Kipling’s Poems” (1909) and Forster’s Dialogue with Max Beerbohm.” The article focuses on Forster’s 1909 lecture “Rudyard Kipling’s poetry,” in which he explores the “‘Art-for-Art’s-Sake’ principles of the late-Victorian Aesthetic Movement.” As Stetz argues, Forster reflects on visual imagery in order to constitute his own ideology, so he moves away from the “Decadent aestheticism” of the earlier generation first and gets closer to “Bloomsbury’s ethical aestheticism.” In his lecture, Forster approaches “aesthetic cosmopolitanism,” as he strives to produce a free voice to decipher the conflicts of the alterity of the new age with his belief in “Art for Art’s Sake” despite his disbelief in the idea that it is only art that matters.

The next article of section four is Harish Trivedi's "Forster, Kipling and India: Friendship in the Colony," which explores the conflicts in human relationships within imperial attitudes and nationalism that resists them in Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901). The intimacy of friendship is also essential to manifest the sexual politics effective in the dramatic consequences of individual relationships. Trivedi states that, in the present day, Kipling's and Forster's work are contemporaneous despite the differences in how they reflected different worlds. The contrapuntal reading of Trivedi coheres a system of external relationships. Kipling and Forster encounter different aspects of India, as they adhere to different perspectives in England. Both *Kim* and *Passage* project friendship and intimacy as psychological need.

Hisashi Ozawa's article "The Mother-Child Relationship in E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" compares the two works from the vantage point of the mother-child relationship. The futuristic stories lay bare the fast technological advancement and its application to human reproduction. The representation of mother and son in Huxley's work owes to Forster's story in terms of theme, plot and characters. Ozawa examines the relationship between Vashti and Kuno and Linda and John. Both works represent the mother and the child in an imaginary world without succumbing to fixed images like "maternal love." Ozawa concludes that the intricate love/hate relationship between the mother towards the son is beyond definition, which elucidates the state constructed aspect of family relationships in two different dystopic worlds, embedded in Forster's short story and Huxley's novel.

The section closes with Robert Kusek's article "Go West!" In Search of the "Greenwood" in Mike Parker's *On the Red Hill*" that scrutinizes Forster's queer rurality with doubts of "queer anti-urbanism and new nature writing." The city and queer sexuality manifest modern male nonheteronormativity and place. Forster's influence on Parker's book and its four auto/biographical characters are explored within queer sexuality and rural life in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, valorising the non-metropolitan queer life. The form and structure of the book are based on the repetitiveness of a loop resembling the four seasons, natural cycles of the frame narrative. In the book, the trajectory of time is cyclical, leading to queer temporality. Secondly, Kusek draws on Forster's adherence to queer rurality as a means that inspires him and provides intertextual sources for the construction of identity, as *On the Red Hill* displays "transgenerational conversation with queer past and a conversation with Forster."

J.H.D. Scourfield's conference report is titled "Re-Orienting E. M. Forster: Texts, Contexts, Receptions, The Cambridge Forster Conference 2020." The report presents a conference which, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, had to be cancelled after five years of planning. Scourfield also adds a long list of scheduled presentations at the end of his report. The second report presents the online symposium "E. M. Forster's Legacies Half a Century After His Death: Nostalgia, Heritage and Queer" on November 7, 2020, a part of the 40th annual conference of the Virginia Woolf Society of Japan.

The review section of the journal starts with Fraser Riddell's review on "Emma Sutton and Tsung-Han Tsai, 2020. *Twenty-First-Century Readings of E. M. Forster's Maurice*." The greatest strength of the volume is its focus on *Maurice* as the production of "queer forms of collaboration." Ewa Kujawska-Lis reviewed the collected volume entitled *The World of E. M. Forster – E. M. Forster and the World* edited by Krzysztof Fordoński and Anna Kwiatkowska. In turn, the latter reviewed the documentary *His Longest Journey*, produced and directed by Adrian Munsey & Vance Goodwin. Kwiatkowska concludes that the documentary is a memorable, marked and commented "cinematic patchwork." The last review of the issue is Krzysztof Fordoński's review of *Forster in 50* by Heather Green and J. C. Green. The book accompanied an exhibition that was intended to illustrate the time Forster spent in the area of West Hackhurst, which, however, did not take place as planned because of Covid restrictions.

The 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Language and Literary Studies of Warsaw* offers a wide spectrum of Forster's studies from various scholars and authors around the world, enabling researchers a distinctive source to broaden their perspectives on the writer's life, thoughts, and works.

**Sara Sass, 2021.**  
*There Are Some Secrets*  
**(Austin, TX: Atmosphere Press)**

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The publication by Sara Sass, *There Are Some Secrets*, with an enticing cover designed by Josep Lledo, is a laconic pocket book introducing us to the different shades of the life of E. V. Lucas, the publisher of A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* books and a close friend of famous J. M. Barrie.

Richly illustrated with black-and-white photos and drawings of the Edwardian epoch, the book unveils the poignant and sometimes cryptic facts related to the artistic, literary and political echelons of Edwardian society against which the life of Lucas is presented. In other words, it shows intricate connections between Lucas' life and the world in the wake of the new century.

The book is divided into twelve mini-chapters (each 1.5 to 6 pages long), with the exception of Chapter III, which comprises 26 pages. Each little part touches upon different aspects and/or stages of Lucas' biography, for example, his marital life, his friendship with Barrie, or his attitude towards children (not only his own). The longest chapter is generally devoted to the literary ambitions of Lucas. Nevertheless, apart from presenting Lucas' struggle to become a part of the London upper class educated elite, the chapter also informs the reader of his marriage to Florence Elizabeth Gertrude Griffin, the daughter of a colonel commissioned in the US army, mentions Lucas' own offspring and sheds light on his personality.

The closing part connects Lucas with the present times through his daughter Audrey. It briefs us on her literary career, her co-operation with the BBC radio, pointing out at the same time her belittled position within the British literary world.

Though very short, the book is quite informative. Each page is a source of various facts and opinions on Lucas' life, both public and private. The brevity of the offered discussion, however, is quite tantalizing at places – we get but a glimpse of some issue, which is not followed by a further, more complex consideration. On the other hand, this sectional, looking-through-a-keyhole

type of perspective can be also attractive since it complements the secrecy mentioned in the title; it arouses the interest in the reader to learn more about E. V. Lucas and his world and, as a consequence, may serve as a springboard for further research. Additionally, at the end of the book, Sass offers a list of a variety of interesting sources (many of them accessible on-line) one may consult in their own pursuit to untangle the secrets of the lives of the people whose names fill the pages of the publication.



**José A. Lemos de Souza, 2021.**  
***Sobre o Espaço em Howards End: a Reescrita***  
***do romance de E.M. Forster no cinema.***  
**(São Paulo: Pimenta Cultural)**

**Wendell Ramos Maia**  
**University of Brasília**

The publication of *A Passage to India*, by Edward Morgan Forster (1879–1970), may have been a noisy event in the English literary scene of the 1920s — and this was most likely due to the historical context in which it came to light, a few years after the massacre perpetrated by the British on April 19, 1919, in Amritsar, in the province of Punjab, India. The massacre was still in the collective memory when an established writer delivered a scathing critique of British imperialism, a critique that has since been taken seriously. However, it is in the 1910 edition of *Howards End* that we have Forster in great form. When published, it was considered the book of the year. Forster himself was aware of the value of the work — as he wrote in his *Commonplace Book* in 1958:

*Howards End* my best novel and approaching a good novel. Very elaborate and all pervading plot that is seldom tiresome or forced, range of characters, social sense, wit, wisdom, colour. (Forster 1988, 203)

The “only connect” of his *Howards End* — which echoes in *Maurice*, published posthumously in 1971 — is the solution to the most pernicious aspect of the contemporary industrialized world: against its leveling character, which degrades man, turning him into an obscure individual in amidst the amorphous mass, Forster exalts the relationships — such as Margaret’s with Mr. Wilcox, Maurice with Clive — that can rescue man, take out of the sameness. “Live in fragments no longer” (Forster 2011, 195). It is through these relationships that the atom-man, or mass-man, can overcome this leveling and find something beyond. As he said in a May 1943 letter to the Chinese journalist and translator Hsiao Ch’ien (1911–1999): “*Maurice* works out in a particular direction: the thesis of the importance of personal relationships generally laid down in *Howards End*” (Beuaman 1993, 231). Or as he wrote elsewhere: “People and books reinforced

one another, intelligence joined hands with affection, speculation became a passion, and discussion was made profound by love” (Forster 1962, 35).

There are at least two translations in Brazil for each of his books. However, it is worth noting that Forster is not a well-known author in the country, except perhaps for his *Aspects of Novel* — whose first Brazilian translation appeared in 1969<sup>1</sup> — which is read and discussed in some university courses. The fact that he is not well known does not mean that there is no interest in him and his work. His short story collections, *The Celestial Omnibus* and “The Machine Stops” were translated a few years ago.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there are researchers who are dedicated to studying his work and his thought, and this is what we would like to highlight: this interest has resulted in some works that have been published, such as the book by José A. Lemos de Souza, Professor at the University of Maranhão, *Sobre o Espaço em Howards End: a Reescrita do romance de E.M. Forster no cinema* [On Space in Howards End: On Space in Howards End: The Rewriting of E. M. Forster’s Novel in Film],<sup>3</sup> published in 2021.

Although they are not neglected, Lemos de Souza is not particularly interested in the aforementioned aspects of *Howards End*, but in presenting a study on the way space/environment is worked not only in the novel itself but also in the way it was translated into cinematographic language in the 1992 film directed by James Ivory and which featured Vanessa Redgrave, Emma Thompson, and Anthony Hopkins in memorable performances.

The plot of the novel revolves around a country house, Howards End, which belonged to Ruth Wilcox, Henry Wilcox’s wife. Encounters, disagreements, love relationships, friendship, and disappointment mark the lives of the two families, the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels. Forster establishes a contrast between them in order to criticize certain aspects of society and the time in which the story takes place. While the Schlegels represent liberal and idealistic thoughts, the Wilcoxes would be the reflection of the English bourgeoisie, uneducated, pragmatic. The limitations of spirit and imagination (in some characters) figure not as a problem related to the English character, but as a consequence of the pressures of work in contemporary society.. These pressures are present in the Wilcox family, repre-

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1 Forster, E. M. 1969. *Aspectos do Romance*. Porto Alegre: Globo.

2 Forster, E. M. 2018. *A Máquina Para*. São Paulo: Itaú Cultural & Iluminuras, Forster, E. M. 2019. *O Ômnibus Celeste e outros contos*. Porto Alegre: Class.

3 Lemos de Souza, José A. 2021. *Sobre o Espaço em Howards End: a Reescrita do romance de E.M. Forster no cinema*. São Paulo: Pimenta Cultural, 2021.

sentatives of the “business mind”, of the “inner darkness in high places that comes with a commercial age” (Forster 2011, 190, 347). Forster, however, sees this “darkness” with optimism; unlike Bennett or Wells, he displays a faith and confidence that the enlightenment or self-affirmation achieved by individuals in his earlier fiction can be extended to contemporary society as a whole; the Wilcoxes can be rescued through the personal relationships that Margaret Schlegel considers to be a supreme value (Stevenson 2007, 210) — “are the real life” (Forster 2011, 28). Life can be rebalanced by the interconnection of Wilcox and Schlegel values. “Only Connect! That was the whole of her sermon” — of Margaret.

Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted,  
and human love will seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer.  
Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation  
that is life to either, will die. (Forster 2011, 195)

By the end of the novel, with Margaret and Henry Wilcox marrying and settling in Howards End with Helen and their son, much of this connection seems to be achieved; the commercial and industrial forces that threatened English life were contained for a moment — successfully (Stevenson 2007, 210).

To analyze the film, Lemos de Souza draws heavily on André Lefevere’s (1945–1996) idea that appears in his *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, that the transposition of a literary work affects the interpretation of a text and contributes to projecting the image of writers and their works — a notion that is corroborated by the fact that the Brazilian translation of *Howards End* appeared just after the book was adapted for the cinema.

The tendency that emerged in British cinema (overshadowed by Hollywood and even by German and Italian cinema) in the mid-1980s to evoke its past can be understood as a reaction to the fact that Britain had lost its status as a former world Power — it was precisely in the midst of an unprecedented crisis that Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979. This focus on rescuing the past and affirming national identity also appeared at a time when the United Kingdom’s entry into the European Union generated debates and suspicions about its effects.

In the book, as the author reminds us, London appears to be a space dominated by the effects of modernization whose consequence is the fragmentation of the relationships between individuals, who distance themselves from each

other and are separated by their social conditions. The London where Leonard Bast lives is a dark place, which becomes clear when he walks home, very different from the one in which the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes live. The semi-rural space of *Howards End*, on the other hand, works as a contrast, as that place of integration, in which people get closer and create bond. In fact, the country house serves as a refuge for the intense process of transformation and fragmentation experienced by the City, however, it also serves as a space in which changes take place: it is there where a new family nucleus is formed after death of Leonard Bast and the arrest of Charles Wilcox, which leads Henry to reconsider and allow Helen and her son to live with the family.

As the author says, in Forster's novel, space serves as a symbolic resource to discuss issues of gender, social class, and sociocultural transformations taking place in British society at the beginning of the 20th century, while in the film, space becomes a fundamental element for the aesthetics of this period (or heritage) genre. The image, and its manipulation through working with the camera, the arrangement of shots, perspective, focusing, cutting, editing, all these are important and proper procedures in the formatting of a film. Allied to this are the sets, costumes and other details that enrich the image — in *Howards End* the exuberant images of locations and costumes appear in the spaces in which the Wilcox and Schlegels lifestyles are displayed. This exuberance also serves to reinforce the image of the past at a time when England was adapting to its new condition — since evoking the past is the purpose of this genre. In short, for the author, while the book discusses the transformations that were taking place at the beginning of the 20th century, the film makes some adjustments aiming at the audience that will watch it, thus meeting a demand at the time in which it was produced.

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## E. M. Forster – Shaping the Space of Culture Conference Report

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The conference *E. M. Forster – Shaping the Space of Culture* was an online meeting which took place on June 7, 2021. The event was triggered off by the cancellation of the long awaited Forsterian convention that was to take place in Cambridge in April 2020 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Forster's death. Yet, as we all remember, in Spring 2020 we found ourselves locked down in our homes, trying to accommodate to, what we then thought, a temporary inconvenience. By the end of 2020 it was becoming clear that the Covid-19 pandemic was to stay with us much longer. Therefore, in order to make up for the loss at least slightly and to address the desire expressed by several members of IEMFS to meet and share the ideas despite the circumstances and against the odds, the International E. M. Forster Society decided to hold a virtual conference devoted to the life and work of Forster. The academic online meeting took place in June 2021 to commemorate the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Forster's death and to celebrate the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of our Society.

The aim of the conference was to evaluate the presence of Forster and his oeuvre in the world of culture. The word 'space', a commodious term, in the title of our conference was to reflect, in the first place, a vast array of angles from which Forster and his works, both literary and non-literary ones, can be approached. But above all, the notion of the space of culture was to underline the multicultural and multidimensional character of his works and ideas. In his novels, shorts stories, lectures, or radio broadcasts, the writer created the space which is a meeting point of various fields of human activities, a construct allowing for interdisciplinary collaboration. His narratives feature many voices, many geographies, and many cultures. Space, thus, can stand for numerous notions and can accommodate for scholarly discussions enclosing different subjects and areas of knowledge. As for the other word from the title, equally important, 'shaping', it also has a double-layered meaning. On the one hand, it refers to Forster's creativity, his way of shaping fictional worlds and, in turn, the way his writing became a part of Modernist culture. On the other hand, 'shaping'

expresses the importance of Forsterian element in the present-day culture, its ceaseless influence on the thinking and writing of others. Subsequently, the conference addressed the rich and complex worlds created by Forster a century ago and demonstrated how his works, and the values he stood for within British and world culture(s), got recontextualized in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The event, despite technical challenges, was a great success and it was quite exceptional for a couple of reasons. It was the first online conference organized by the International E. M. Forster Society. It was also the fourth conference under the auspices of the Society devoted entirely to Forster. And, perhaps most importantly, the conference, thanks to the mighty Machine, succeeded in bringing together Forsterian scholars from all over the world, thus confirming the continuity of the presence and legacy of Forster and his works.

The papers and presentations prepared for the conference and available online ahead of time were followed by the compelling and engaging discussions which reflected the rich nature of the oeuvre of Forster and the responses in literature, arts, social history his writings continuously generate half a century after his demise. Additionally, the symposium indicated the variety of perspectives that can be applied while researching the works and life of Forster. Subsequently, many aspects of Forster's oeuvre and life, as perceived by various theories, methodologies, and schools, were presented. The researchers focused on re-reading Forsterian texts by looking at them from the 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, on contemporary receptions of the writer as well as on the extent to which and the way in which different cultures influence the shaping of our perception of Forster nowadays.

The meeting, opened by the head of the Society, Prof. Krzysztof Fordoński, was divided into two parts. Part 1 was inaugurated by Prof. David Scourfield of Maynooth University in the Republic of Ireland, who delivered a very illuminating plenary lecture on Forster's Rome. In his presentation Scourfield brought attention to the fact that although Italy features in Forster's fiction frequently, Rome merely makes some background appearance. Yet, as he argued, these fragments of Rome and its culture are also important within the context of Forster's work and life. Afterwards, he discussed Forster's relation with Rome through classical antiquity, the aspect which comes to the fore in his writings. He also underlined the fact that this Roman facet of Forster's work is neglected since it is Greece and its culture that features more often there. He also added that in scholarly consideration, the figure of Forster is usually viewed via Victorian Hellenism. Scourfield, thus, focused on analysing the scattered traces of Roman

culture represented in Forster's works with Latin literature, especially Vergil, various references, visual arts allusions, quotations or comments. In conclusion, the scholar stated that Rome, in its many disguises, is still a bridge between the past and the present; it keeps on influencing our world just as it once did when it comes to Forster, his life and oeuvre.

This part of the conference was sub-divided into three sections. Section 1 entitled "Place and Space" was opened by John Attridge's talk on "Great Worlds, Little Societies and Echo Chambers – Revaluating Cambridge and Cultural Capital in *The Longest Journey*". Attridge focused on the imperfections, indicated by Forster in the novel, of Cambridge University environment, a seemingly ideal space for cross-cultural understanding. He argued that Forster, rather than blindly praising Cambridge academic life, was conscious of its various drawbacks. Moreover, Attridge viewed Forster's doubts expressed, among others, in *The Longest Journey*, as a form of foreshadowing of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century universities, which are frequently referred to as 'echo-chambers' that ill-equip students for their later lives beyond the campus.

The discussion on the importance of space and place was continued by Irina Stanova. In her paper, "Creation of Transcultural Space in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Its Film Adaptation", she compared the source text and the film. Her analysis was based on the concept of transcultural space, which, on the one hand, is perceived as a concrete physical and geographical space, but on the other, is also viewed as a narrated space and a more abstract one characterized by eventual symbolic elements. The comparative analysis allowed Stanova to evaluate the changes in representation of transcultural space enforced by the process of adaptation. Following the space-place oriented discussion, Diana Hirst considered "'Place-Feeling' in the Fiction of E. M. Forster and Elizabeth Bowen". First, she examined the way Forster generated 'place-feeling'<sup>1</sup> in the short story 'The Curate's Friend' and the novels *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*. Next, Hirst looked at Bowen's three war-time short stories in order to consider the construction of 'place-feeling' in them. The selection of texts was based on the assumption that Forster's texts refer to those of Bowen's. The

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1 The term was used by Elizabeth Bowen when she wrote about Forster's influence on her writing. In her contribution to *Aspects of E. M. Forster* edited by Oliver Stallybrass, she notes that "the central, most powerful magnetism of the Celestial Omnibus stories was in their 'place-feeling'" (Stallybrass 1969: 5), and Forster himself uses a similar expression commenting on the fiction of others, noting that "[m]any novelists have the feeling for place – Five Towns, Auld Reekie and so on" (Forster 1978: 51).



section was closed with Emma Sutton's presentation of *Twenty-First-Century Readings of E. M. Forster's 'Maurice'* (2020). The book edited by her and Tsung-Han Tsai is the first book-length study of this posthumously-published novel. The publication is composed of nine essays which look at *Maurice* in the context of literature, film and new media and changes in the perception of the novel as well as its afterlives during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Section 2, entitled "Queer", explored the issue of homosexuality within the framework of literary texts, history, and Forster's life. Claire Braunstein Barnes opened the panel presenting the paper "'Áh yòù sílly àss, góds live in woóds!' – Queer appropriations of Edwardian Classicism in Forster's short stories and *Maurice*". In her essay, she examined the interplay between Classical tropes and queer identities. In her considerations, Barnes focused on the way Forster approached and interpreted the scholarly Classicism. She concluded that his understanding of queer classicism is characterized by a more universalised quality, which, in turn, points to the divergence from the Wildean and Philhellenic background typical of his upbringing and of the previous century. Further on, Rohit Chakraborty discussed "Queers of Brit-India: Assimilation, Excision, and (Dis)Orienting Homosexuality in E. M. Forster's *Maurice* and Neel Mukherjee's *Past Continuous*". He concentrated on the (a)symmetry between the two texts when it comes to negotiating homosexuality with nationalism. Chakraborty also demonstrated how the two texts are interconnected and how they simultaneously Orient and disOrient homosexual desire.

Athanasios Dimakis explored the transgressive potential of the hotel in the short story "Arthur Snatchfold" (written in 1928 and published posthumously in 1972). He argued that the space of the hotel comes to resemble a Foucauldian counter-site and is central in the analysis as the hotel is a heterotopic place; it is a heterotopia of crisis and deviation but also a place of infinite possibility. Closing the section, Dominika Kotuła elaborated on "Spaces of desire in E. M. Forster's *Maurice*, 'The Other Boat' and 'Dr Woolacott'". She pointed out that the protagonists of the narratives in question exist simultaneously in the official, codified social spaces and in 'the secret places'. Interestingly, the disruptive, forbidden type of desire can exist only in the 'othered' spaces. Such areas often determine the characters' identities and fates, profoundly influence their perception yet, at the same time, they rarely seem to be of permanent or definite quality.

The next part, that is Section 3, was named Echoes. It was opened with Krzysztof Fordoński's "A Very Different Room with a Completely Different

View: Kevin Kwan's *Sex and Vanity* as an 'Update' of E. M. Forster". Fordoński demonstrated how an adaptation, trying to reinvent Forster's characters and plot twists, can easily kill Forster's novel if the author does not pay enough attention to such crucial elements of the narrative as the time of its action, the location, and, most importantly, the social origins of the main characters. The result is, as Fordoński concluded, that *Sex and Vanity* reads like a glossy magazine in which the focus is on detailed descriptions of expensive clothing and extravagant interiors.

Pursuing Forsterian reverberations, N. Cyril Fischer asked himself the question: "To whom does Forster beautifully belong?"<sup>2</sup> According to scholars, the work of Forster can be classified within a couple of canons, such as modernist literature or queer studies. His life and work are also recognized by a few celebrated contemporary writers, Zadie Smith or Alan Hollinghurst, among others. But Fischer claimed that something crucially Forsterian is missing from this contemporary picture of the writer. Namely, Forster's reception in other, far less mainstream circles, is not being given the proper attention. He argues that such sources give us the opportunity to enquire into those aspects of Forster's legacy that have been apparently lost, frequently due to the agitation caused by well-established authors and well-funded film adaptations.

Cecilia Björkén-Nyberg discussed "Vocal Mapping: The Representation of E. M. Forster's Spatial Imagination in Audiobook Narration" drawing on the connotation 'echo' has with sound. She contended that in Forster's narratives specific descriptions are often counterbalanced by spatial imagery that has some affinity with music and that, in turn, suggests a certain sense of budding freedom. Additionally, Forster's spatial imagery seems to belong to a liminal zone, that is something between place and space. Following, Björkén-Nyberg addressed the question of spatiality as represented in the vocalisation of Forster's Edwardian novels. She pondered on the way the audiobook voice, the temporal medium, is able to create a heteroglossia of narratorial, focalised, and mimetic voices. More specifically, she focused on audionarratological and prosodic features, and showed how they bring out new dimensions in Forster's spatial imagination. The last presentation in the section, Sandhya Shetty's "'The Planet Must Have Looked Thus': Telluric Forster" looked at Forster's work from yet another angle. As Shetty noted, *A Passage to India* is a novel that thinks geologically.

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2 The title alludes to the question ("To whom do you beautifully belong?") Nick Guest, the protagonist of Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty* (2005), asks himself and others repeatedly.

Therefore, discussing *A Passage to India*, she enters into a dialogue with geology. In other words, tracing the telluric Forster, Shetty attempted to reconceptualize the novel as literary stratigraphy. According to her, the dynamic history of the Earth's crust is brought to imaginative life in the novel's descriptive invocations of ancient continental drifts and geological processes.

Part 2 of the conference was opened by Professor Claire Monk from De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, who delivered a highly enlightening lecture entitled "Forster and Adaptation: Across Time, Media and Methodologies". In her presentation, Monk proposed further directions of the development of Forster and Forsterian adaptations studies. Consequently, she posed a question of how we can best conceptualize studying the field of adaptation and mediation responses to Forster's works at the present moment. She argued that when looking for answers, one should take into consideration, on the one hand, commerce and institutions involved in the process of adaptation and, on the other, culture networks and relations, paying particular attention to the rapid development of technology and digital culture. Thus, Monk applied a cross disciplinary perspective to examine current state of Forster adaptation scholarship. Next, she suggested a chronological organization of the Forster adaptation studies based on, among others, Forster's lifetime, interest in this work or media used. Subsequently, she arranged Forster adaptations within three phases, namely, phase one (1942-1973) – the adaptations realized during Forster's lifetime and of which Forster was aware; phase two (1984-1992) – Forster feature films cycle appears; and phase three – generally any adaptation after 1992, across various media. Then all the phases were discussed in detail, including comments on various methodologies that were or could be used in Forster adaptation criticism.

After the lecture, the meeting continued with Section 4, which was devoted to travel. First, Francesca Pierini presented her paper entitled "From E. M. Forster to Harlequin Short Contemporaries: The Making of Italy in Anglophone Literary and Popular Fiction". Pierini's claim was that highly diverse texts (for example, the works by Forster, Daphne du Maurier, Ian McEwan, Sarah Hall, on the one hand, and commercial brands of popular fiction, like historical romance novels, Harlequin short contemporaries, Harlequin manga, on the other) aimed at different audiences, could constitute interesting venues of inquiry into the processes of identity formation and cultural representation. Consequently, she highlighted the manners by which cultures are taxonomically perceived and organized within a global context. Then, Jason Finch talked about "Forster and

Public Transport: The Case of ‘West Hackhurst’”. He recontextualized Forster within the current ‘mobilities turn’ in the humanities, the turn which centers on pursuing the questions and feelings related to movement. Finch deliberated on the field of public transport in Forster’s life and works, an area which so far has been neglected. He examined in detail the question of the influence of public transport mobilities on the narrative of Forster’s 1940s–50s memoir ‘West Hackhurst: A Surrey Ramble’. The framework of mobility studies was also employed by Hager Ben Driss. She debated over “Mobility Justice in E. M. Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread*”. Driss reasoned that mobility is at the heart of the plot of Forster’s debut novel and it functions as a narratological strategy of characterization. By focusing on movement and stasis, either voluntary or coerced, one can note the emergence of certain patterns related to (im)mobility and how the movement or its lack shapes cultural and gendered spaces.

The following panel, Section 5, was dedicated to Culture. It was started off with Ria Banerjee’s consideration of “Clothing and Culture in E. M. Forster’s Wartime Writings”. She referred to the times when Forster lived in the British protectorate of Egypt, 1917-1919. According to her, this was the period when Forster’s anti-war sentiments were expressed especially vividly through clothing (for instance, his refusal to wear the Red Cross uniform after hours). Banerjee further argued that clothes could be viewed as a cultural site for Forster in Egypt. To prove her point, she gave examples from Forster’s wartime notes which touched upon wardrobe, and reflected on the writer’s subsequent usage of men’s clothing in such a way that the clothes became devices for creating space in which a range of overlapping human activities was reflected.

Afrinul Haque Khan in her paper “Shaping the Culture of Tolerance: A Study of Forster’s Humanism in *Howard’s End* and *A Passage to India*”, examined Forster’s idea of tolerance, stating at the same time that this concept is central to the writer’s perception of humanism. As Khan contended, for Forster tolerance was a type of force which made the connections between different races, classes, and nations possible. On the basis of the two novels, Khan demonstrated how Forster’s literary texts express and construct the culture of tolerance. Furthermore, she pointed out the features that characterize Forster’s approach to tolerance. The question of culture within the context of *A Passage to India* was of interest also to Ellie Gardiner who elaborated on “Bridging the Gulf: The Complex Relationship of East and West in Forster’s *A Passage to India*”. She paid particular attention to the division into the Chandrapore

East and the Anglo-Indian West part of the city in the novel. Gardiner demonstrated how Forster presented this split through friendships, misunderstandings, and spirituality. Additionally, she examined the tripartite structure and multicultural space of the novel, the elements which further emphasize the impossibility of a full connection of East and West. The section was closed with the paper "Shaping a Queer Museum: Forster, Ancient Egypt and the British Museum" delivered by Professor Richard Bruce Parkinson. The Author argued that Forster's connections with Egypt were formed through the Hellenistic past and modern village life rather than through the shallow, popular, and/or academic Egyptology. Parkinson discussed the development of Forster's attitude toward national museums in reference to *Maurice* (as revised in 1932) and earlier works which include references to classical collections.

The final part of the conference, Section 6, comprised of two papers dedicated to the theme of Communication and Technology. Anna Kwiatkowska, in "The Voice of the Machine in E. M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops'" focused on disclosing the scattered traces of the Machine 'psyche' in order to differentiate the voice of the Machine and its way of reading the reality from the one belonging to the human story-teller. She clarified that within the multiple voices of the narrative (human narrator, characters), there is also the voice of the Machine. While the human voices expressing their respective views on the presented world can be fairly easily matched with their owners, the voice of the Machine is characterized by a large degree of anonymity. Nevertheless, it can be identified by examining two, interlinked, planes, namely linguistic and perspectival. Additionally, Kwiatkowska stated that in order to discern the automatic mind, the assessment of the degree of emotional saturation of utterances as well as an attitude towards human beings suggested in them should be considered. The second paper, by Elif Derya Şenduran, "Speaking through the Wearisome Machine: E. M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops'" also considered the only science-related story created by Forster. Şenduran decided to explore the notion of space and view the air-ship and the machine as a metonymic extension of capitalist modernity and Anthropocene. Subsequently, she pondered upon the concepts of universal commodification and cultural hegemonization, and commented on the lock-down enforced by the Machine, resulting in immobility of the lives of Vashti and her son Kuno. As Şenduran stated, the machine's cognitive mapping for Vashti, that is incompatible with Kuno, delineates the maladaptation of machine life to cultural practices of survival in the story.

At the close of the conference, the event was discussed and concluded. The meeting confirmed that E. M. Forster is still very much present in the world of culture. Moreover, the multi-layered and rich response from the participants clearly showed that the interest in Forster, his texts, both literary and non-literary ones, as well as their influence on the space of culture (popular culture included) and literature is steadily growing. The scholarly papers, presentations and discussions that followed apparently demonstrated that the issues the writer tackled are continuously stirring emotions among both the researchers and fans of Forster.

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## Call for Papers

### The Myths of Modernism / Modernism and Myths: Then and Now

The year 2022 marks the centenary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*. To celebrate this watershed in the history of the English-language literature *The Polish Journal of English Studies* invites papers for inclusion in a special issue titled *The Myths of Modernism / Modernism and Myths: Then and Now*.

As suggested by the title, the project has not only a dual, but a repeatedly bifurcating nature. On the one hand, it centres on the modernists themselves: their love of myths, as well as the myths that now surround them. After all, modernist writers from Joyce and Yeats to Woolf and Lawrence were fascinated by their own literary predecessors, the classics, "the dead poets and artists" whom Eliot mentions in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." At the same time they were driven by the desire to break with the past. Once rebels, even outcasts, some of them authors of outlawed works, they have long been canonised and mythologised. Thus, on the other hand, the project also looks at the generations of writers who have followed the modernists, and have engaged in their own rewriting of ancient scripts and/or have entered into a dialogue with the modernists themselves as pivotal figures within the literary mythos.

Both laudatory and critical/revisionist approaches are welcome. Philip Larkin observed, irreverently:

What I do feel a bit rebellious about is that poetry seems to have got into the hands of a critical industry which is concerned with culture in the abstract, and this I do rather lay at the door of Eliot and Pound... I think a lot of this myth-kitty business has grown out of that, because first of all you have to be terribly educated, you have to know everything to know these things, and secondly you've got somehow to work them in to show that you are working them in. But to me the whole of the ancient world, the whole of biblical and classical mythology means very little, and I think that using them today not only fills poems full of dead spots but dodges the writer's duty to be original.

Is this a fair – or unjust – assessment of the modernists’ supposedly (?) elitist esotericism? How did the modernists approach “the pastness of the past” and “its presence”? What relations did they form with their “ancestors”? What is the use of “this myth-kitty business” today? Does “the whole of the ancient world, the whole of biblical and classical mythology mean very little” to contemporary writers? Or, on the contrary, far from creating the feared “dead spots,” ancient myths can be given a new life in new texts that – exactly by taking us to their distant origins – illuminate the most vital issues of our present moment? Our special issue offers an opportunity to reflect on the above, and other related questions.

Please send a 150-200-word abstract (titled Surname\_PJES\_Myths) together with a short biographical note to [izabela.curyllo-klag@uj.edu.pl](mailto:izabela.curyllo-klag@uj.edu.pl) and [ewa.kowal@uj.edu.pl](mailto:ewa.kowal@uj.edu.pl). The deadline for submission of abstracts is **31 March 2022**. Notifications about proposal acceptance will be sent by 15 April 2022. The deadline for submission of completed papers is **15 July 2022**. Planned publication: December 2022.

The topic of this special issue of *PJES* will be discussed during a panel at the 31<sup>st</sup> PASE conference titled “Transitions,” held by the Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, on 1-2 July 2022. Detailed information about the arrangements concerning the PASE conference will be provided at a later date.

Special Issue Editors / Panel Organisers:

Dr Izabela Curyłło-Klag

Dr Ewa Kowal



## Reading old age, the ageing body and memory in British and American literature and texts of culture

Age studies point to all life stages as culturally and historically idiosyncratic, and complicated even more by various intersectional perspectives. Within this age(s)-focused field of analysis, humanistic and critical gerontologists as well as historians of old age issued an ardent call to redefine old age as equally ephemeral and multi-layered as any other life stage. Addressing the existing studies of the formative and foundational quality of youth and adulthood, gerontologists of various subdisciplines objected to seeing old age as simply the end of life, and to defining it as a precise point in time rather than a nebulous period with no exact opening temporal bracket. Thane (2000) in particular stressed the difficulty in defining old age in term of chronology only, proposing to view it as a functional and cultural category as well. More precisely, scholars noted, one is sooner *made (to feel)* old by culture and society than one perceives oneself as being such. Consequently, even if it is an essentially intimate and embodied lived experience, old age must be seen as an experience with a set of socio-cultural prescriptive and proscriptive rules of conduct and decorum as well as social sanctions and rewards.

Addressing all of said emerging conceptual recalibrations, Gullette claimed that indeed age “could be the next analytic and hermeneutic concept to make cutting-edge difference” (2004: 106) in humanist research. . Having specifically worked on middle and old age in her research, she further noted that, just like with other necessary intersectionalities, to talk about ageing is to keep unravelling and disentangling “the din of representations, unseen internalizations, [and] unthinking practices” (Gullette 2004: 27). Old age can then be seen as simultaneously “the culmination or the dreary denouement of life’s drama” (Cole 2006: xx), written as somatic and mental narratives of decline (Gullette 1997) as well as the most meaningful moment of human existence, “a time for recapitulating, connecting part to part, re-membering” (Carson 1987: xii), leading to wisdom only allowed to the members of this in-group. From such a dialectic other questions are engendered: Do we with age become the embodied repositories of knowledge and guardians of traditions? Do we need to properly perform old age as the various gerontideologies socialize us to do

(Mangan 2013)? Are we our ageing bodies? How do our auto/self-narratives change with age? Can we “read the beginning in the end and the end in the beginning” (Baars 2016: 82)?

This themed volume aims to critically address and further identify the meaning(s) behind and potentialities of old age and ageing. As *growing* and/or *being* old are not only subjective and embodied experiences but also socio-cultural phenomena, the points of departure in this collection are the three fundamentals in gerontological research: 1) old age, 2) the (ageing) body and 3) memory, the latter understood not only as recollecting one’s spatio-temporal past but, in particular, re-membering one’s somatic “past-ness”. Such intertwining of old age with memory inevitably invites studies of nostalgia, seen as both positive and negative approaches to and perceptions of one’s embodied past. We thus welcome papers that engage in age and gerontological readings within British and American literature and paraliterary texts of culture (i.e. ego-documents, conduct texts, philosophical tracts, etc.) across all historical periods. Book reviews within the field of literary age studies or literary gerontology are welcome as well.

Please send a 150-200-word abstract (titled **Surname\_PJES\_Old age**) together with a short biographical note to [kbronkk@amu.edu.pl](mailto:kbronkk@amu.edu.pl) The deadline for submission of abstracts is **1<sup>st</sup> June 2022**. Notifications about proposal acceptance will be sent by **20<sup>th</sup> June 2022**. The deadline for submission of completed papers is **1<sup>st</sup> November 2022**. Planned publication: 2023.

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**Claire Braunstein Barnes**. With a background in Classics and English (BA Oxon., 2014) and Classical Reception (MPhil Bristol, 2015), Claire's work looks at the use of classical tropes to express personal authenticity in early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century texts – with a particular emphasis on E.M Forster and his contemporaries. Following her MPhil, Claire worked in education (teaching both Latin and English) before returning to academia in 2019. She is now a DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford (supervisor: Professor Fiona Macintosh) and works as part of a Classical Reception archive and research project, the Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama (APGRD). Claire is Light Senior Scholar at St Catherine's College, Oxford.

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Iris Murdoch's *The Bell*," *The Iris Murdoch Review*, Kingston U.P. (2020), "Hotel Melodrama in E. M. Forster's 'The Story of a Panic' and 'The Story of the Siren,'" *Language and Literary Studies of Warsaw* (2020), and "Hotels in Literature" (with Anna Despotopoulou and Chryssa Marinou) in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Urban Literary Studies* (2021). Athanasios is the recipient of the 2020 William Godshalk Prize for New Durrell Scholarship awarded by the International Lawrence Durrell Society.

**Jason Finch** is Associate Professor, English Language and Literature, at Åbo Akademi University. A co-founder and currently President of the Association for Literary Urban Studies (ALUS), he works on modern urban literatures, including representations of housing and transport mobilities. He is the author of *E.M. Forster and English Place: A Literary Topography* (Åbo Akademi UP, 2011) and *Deep Locational Criticism: Imaginative Place in Literary Research and Teaching* (Benjamins 2016) and co-editor of seven books, the latest *Literatures of Urban Possibility* (Palgrave 2021). From 2019 – 22 he is one of four PIs on the HERA-funded four-country project Public Transport as Public Space in European Cities: Narrating, Experiencing, Contesting (PUTSPACE).

**Niklas Cyril Fischer** received his PhD from the University of Sydney and currently teaches English literature at the University of Fribourg. He has co-edited the collection *Portable Prose: The Novel and the Everyday* (Lexington Books, 2018) and is the author of "E.M. Forster, Realism, and the Style of Progressive Nostalgia" forthcoming in *Journal of Modern Literature*. He currently is pursuing a research project on noise in literary history.

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**Dr. Afrinul Haque Khan** is Assistant Professor and Head in the Department of English at Nirmala College, Ranchi, India. She has done her doctoral research on the works of V. S. Naipaul and her thesis is titled *Displacement and Migration: Major Themes in the Works of V. S. Naipaul*. Her areas of research interests include Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Literature, Postcolonial Literature, Film studies, Gender Studies etc. Her papers have been published in several reputed national and international journals and books.

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**Claire Monk** is Professor of Film & Film Culture at De Montfort University. She is a specialist in British film, the cultural politics of reception, transmedia adaptation and the films of Merchant Ivory Productions, and known especially for her place in the debates around 'heritage' literary adaptations. Her work from the monograph *Heritage Film Audiences* (Edinburgh UP, 2011) onwards has pioneered research into audiences and online fan practices and fan productivity around these films. The British Film Institute's 2019 UK Blu-ray premiere of James Ivory's 1987 *Maurice* features her audio commentary, acclaimed by *The Arts Desk* as 'revelatory'. Her current projects include a cultural history of Forster's *Maurice* across time and media, scoped in her chapter 'Maurice without ending' (2020) in Tsai & Sutton (Eds) *Twenty-First-Century Readings of E. M. Forster's 'Maurice'* (Liverpool UP). Wider publications include *British Historical Cinema* (Routledge, 2002), co-edited with Amy Sargeant; 'EMI and the "pre-heritage" period film' (2021) 18:1; *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (2021, 18:1); 'From "English" heritage to transnational audiences' (2016) in Cooke & Stone (Eds) *Screening European Heritage: Creating and Consuming History on Film* (Palgrave Macmillan); 'Heritage Film Audiences 2.0: period film audiences and online fan cultures', *Participations* (2011, 8:3); and 'Sexuality and heritage' (1995/2001), anthologised in Vincendeau (Ed.) *Film/Literature/Heritage: A Sight & Sound Reader* (British Film Institute).

**Richard Bruce Parkinson** trained as an Egyptologist at Oxford. He was a curator in the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum (1990–2012), and is now the statutory Professor of Egyptology at the University of Oxford and a fellow of The Queen’s College, Oxford. He specialises in the editing and interpretation of ancient Egyptian poetry, together with its modern reception. Drawing on his work on ancient texts, he has also published on LG-BTQ+ world history.

**Elif Derya Şenduran** earned her BA degree in English Language and Literature from Ankara University. She received her MA degree in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University. She completed her Ph.D. in English Literature at Middle East Technical University in December 2020 with her dissertation “The Intersection between Two Others, the East and the West in E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*.” She has also worked as an English Instructor at different universities previously. Her research interests include modernism, 20th Century English Novel, Shakespeare, Lacan, post-structuralism, cultural studies, comparative literature.

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