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Ideas and Symbolic Scenes in the Works of E.M. Forster

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IDEAS AND SYMBOLIC SCENES IN THE WORKS OF E. M. FORSTER

by

Betty W. Werthman

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of English

Division of Graduate Instruction

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	11
INTRODUCTION	1
PART I. FORSTER THE ESSAYIST	
Chapter	
I. LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE NOVEL	4
II. ART AND THE ARTIST	13
III. MAJOR IDEAS	23
PART II. FORSTER THE NOVELIST	
IV. ATTAINMENT OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	37
V. THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY	56
VI. SELF-TRANSCENDENCE	81
CONCLUSION	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY	100

INTRODUCTION

"If there is on earth a house with many mansions, it is the house of words;"¹ and through the use of words, E. M. Forster, Englishman, novelist, short story writer, lecturer, and essayist, has made many significant contributions to one of the choicer mansions, and, thereby, to the cultural heritage of the English-speaking world. A man of ideas who sees a "perception of truth"² as one of the most-to-be-desired characteristics of the novel, Forster himself has gained eminence in the world of letters. Called both the "lawful issue" of George Eliot because he has made the "subtlest effort" of modern writers to present the novel of ideas,³ and a "moralist" equalling George Meredith and being "surpassed [in this category] by no English novelist since Jane Austen,"⁴ Forster represents the liberal tradition. Following graduation from Cambridge in 1900, Forster soon associated himself with the young writers, artists, and scholars who became known as the Bloomsbury Group. In addition

¹E. M. Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951), p. 80.

²See Chapter I, "Literary Criticism of the Novel," p. 6.

³E. K. Brown, "The Revival of E. M. Forster," Yale Review, XXXIII (Summer, 1944), pp. 668-81.

⁴Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 409.

to Forster, other outstanding persons among these young intellectuals included Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, and Lytton Strachey.

Forster's first public recognition came in 1905, following the publication of Where Angels Fear To Tread, and continued throughout the publication of each of his successive novels, The Longest Journey, A Room with a View, Howards End, and A Passage to India; but his prominence is not exclusively dependant upon this one facet of his art. Among other noteworthy writings are Aspects of the Novel, a literary criticism of the novel form, and Abinger Harvest and Two Cheers for Democracy, collections of essays. Although Forster has also published two volumes of short stories and a number of miscellaneous volumes, this study of the interrelationship of ideas within his works will be limited to his five novels, his two volumes of collected essays, and his treatise on the novel.

The first three chapters in this study, which present ideas gleaned from Aspects of the Novel and the collected essays, examine Forster's attitude toward art and life and show the emphasis which he places on the social function of art, the universality possessed by first class writing, the necessity for self-knowledge and affirmative action, and the value of tolerance, good temper, and sympathy in personal relations. The remaining three chapters, which present ideas developed in his novels, show how through specific scenes Forster conveys his basic ideas of life or exemplifies certain of his fundamental concepts of art.

PART I

FORSTER THE ESSAYIST

CHAPTER I

LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE NOVEL

Actually Forster did not publish his theory of the novel until after he had ceased to write fiction. In 1927, three years following the publication of his final novel, A Passage to India, Forster's critical study, Aspects of the Novel, appeared. Forster explains that he selected the word "aspects" because it is "un-scientific and vague, because it leaves us the maximum of freedom, because it means both the different ways we can look at the novel and the different ways a novelist can look at his work."¹ He lists these aspects as "The Story; People; The Plot; Fantasy; Prophecy; Pattern and Rhythm."

Before considering these aspects individually, Forster sets up the conditions of his study. He defines the novel by quoting Abel Chevalley, a French critic, who says that the novel is "a fiction in prose of a certain extent," and Forster adds that that extent shall not be less than 50,000 words.² He proposes to conduct his study of the novel as if all the novelists were seated at a circular table and were writing at the same time. He believes that this method of study will preserve him from the "danger of pseudo-

¹E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927), p. 24.

²Ibid., p. 6.

scholarship." He grants that the true scholar may have amassed all the facts and be able to make a chronological study, but he does not make this claim of scholarship for himself. He further limits his study by saying he will assume only the second duty of the two-part function of the critic as set forth by T. S. Eliot.

It is part of his business to preserve tradition—when a good tradition exists. It is part of his business to see literature steadily and to see it whole; and this is eminently to see it not as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time.¹

Forster believes that principles and systems are not applicable to the examination of the novel and that, if applied to it, the results should be subject to the re-examination of the human heart.² "The final test of a novel will be our affection for it, as it is the test for our friends, and of anything else which we cannot define." He admits that sentimentality may lurk in the background of his judgments and that others may consider this a worse evil than chronology, but he promises to keep it controlled. He explains that "The novel is sogged with humanity, there is no escaping the uplift or downpour, nor can they be kept out of criticism."

Forster says that the story, which he considers the lowest

¹Ibid., p. 23.

²Ibid.

and simplest of all literary organisms, is the most common factor of all novels. He wishes that it were not so, that it could be melody, or perception of the truth.¹ "Story" he defines as a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence and says that it has only one merit: making the reader want to know what happens next, and only one fault: that of not making him want to know what happens next. He does not believe that the sequence of events in time can be completely removed without the novel itself becoming unintelligible and valueless. The good novel must include both a time sequence and a measure by intensity which he calls "value."

Forster believes that through characters, "people," the life of values gains in emphasis. Of characters Forster says,

The novelist...makes up a number of word-masses roughly describing himself...gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures, and causes them to speak by the use of inverted commas and perhaps to behave consistently. These word-masses are his characters.²

These characters are not to be exactly like persons in real life; for, if they were, their story would be a memoir, a history. Forster says that characters in novels are based on evidence which has been modified and perhaps transformed by an unknown quality, the temperament of the novelist. While the historian deals with actions, the novelist not only deals with actions but must reveal the "hidden life." Forster describes a typical character.

¹Ibid., p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 44.

He is generally born off, he is capable of dying on, he wants little food or sleep, he is tirelessly occupied with human relationships. And—most important—we can know more about him than we can know about any of our fellow creatures, because his creator and narrator are one....If God could tell the story of the Universe, the Universe would become fictitious.¹

The novelist must know everything about his character even if he does not choose to tell the reader. The character in a novel must be convincing to be considered true. However, now that the novelist has added people and a sense of values, as well as time sequence, to his story, he has added to his problems; for many times these creations are uncooperative and attempt to kick the story apart.² Forster lists two instinctive devices which the novelist uses to control the characters. He creates characters either flat or round according to his need, the flat character in his purest form being constructed around a single idea or quality and the round character having many facets.³

The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round. It has the incalculability of life about it....⁴

The other device which the author uses in controlling his characters is point of view. Forster by-passes all critical formulae for the

¹Ibid., p. 56.

²Ibid., p. 66.

³Ibid., p. 67.

⁴Ibid., p. 78.

study and criticism of the novel on the basis of unity of point of view, provided the author has the ability to "bounce us; that is imperative."¹ He offers Dickens' Bleak House as an example of an author's ability to "bounce" the reader from one point of view to another and still gain his acceptance.

The interrelationship of the reader and the writer becomes greater with the addition of the third "aspect," plot. Forster defines plot as a narrative of events in which the emphasis falls on causality.² The plot, therefore, demands that the reader have both intelligence and memory. He needs memory because he must see the incidents both as isolated and as related to other facts; he needs intelligence to appreciate the mystery which is essential to a plot. If he cannot remember, he cannot understand.

The plot-maker expects us to remember, we expect him to leave no loose ends. Every action or work ought to count; it ought to be economical and spare; even when complicated it should be organic and free from dead-matter....The final sense (if the plot has been a fine one) will be...of something aesthetically compact, something which might have been shown by the novelist straight away, only if he had shown it straight away it would never have become beautiful.³

The skill of the novelist shows in his ability to solve the difficulties which arise when he is trying to blend harmoniously the sometimes conflicting demands of character and plot.

¹Ibid., p. 80.

²Ibid., p. 86.

³Ibid., p. 88.

Fantasy and prophecy demand imaginative insight from the novelist and imaginative understanding from the reader.

There is more in the novel than time or people or logic or any of their derivatives, more even than Fate. And by "more" I do not mean something that excludes these aspects nor something that includes them, embraces them. I mean something that cuts across them like a bar of light, that is intimately connected with them at one place and patiently illumines all their problems, and at another place shoots over or through them as if they did not exist. We shall give that bar of light two names, fantasy and prophecy.¹

Forster says that both fantasy and prophecy have a relationship to mythology which differentiates them from the other aspects he has been discussing. He says that fantasy glances about, that its confusion is fundamental.²

The power of fantasy penetrates into every corner of the universe, but not into the forces that govern it--the stars that are the brain of heaven, the army of unalterable law, remain untouched--and novels of this type have an improvised air, which is the secret of their force and charm.³

He says that fantasy implies the use of the supernatural, but it does not need to express it.⁴ The supernatural figures used in fantasy are a "number of rather small gods," but the gods of prophecy shall be "whatever transcends our abilities."

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²Ibid., p. 136.

³Ibid., p. 110.

⁴Ibid., p. 112.

This quality of prophecy, Forster says, may be detected by an emphasis in the novelist's voice. Though it is characteristic that such a novelist's works have a roughness of texture, desirable in all works of art, the reader discovers that these vivid details pass and that the novelist has not really been focusing upon the immediate, but instead upon the universe or something universal. Forster says that the prophetic novelist does not reflect and that he does not "hammer away," but he implies that such a novelist extends the reader's experiences.

Prophetic fiction, then, seems to have definite characteristics. It demands humility and the absence of the sense of humour. It reaches back....It is spasmodically realistic. And it gives us the sensation of a song or a scud....Its face is towards unity....¹

For Forster only four novelists—Dostoevsky, Melville, D. H. Lawrence, and Emily Bronte—achieve this pinnacle.²

Beauty and pleasure are frequently brought to the novel by the author's skillful use of pattern. Forster says, "Pattern is an aesthetic aspect of the novel, and...though it may be nourished

¹Ibid., p. 136.

²Ibid., p. 137. In Forster's discussion of prophecy, pages 125-147, he makes these comments about the writers named above:

"In Dostoevsky the characters and situations always stand for more than themselves; infinity attends them; though yet they remain individuals they expand to embrace it and summon it to embrace them; one can apply to them the saying of St. Catherine of Siena that God is the soul and the soul is in God as the sea is in the fish and the fish is in the sea. Every sentence he writes implies this extension and the implication is the dominant aspect of his work."

by anything in the novel—any character, scene, word—it draws most of its nourishment from the plot."¹ Pattern is closely allied with the author's mood and most suitably externalizes that mood. The most common danger lies in the use of a too rigid plot pattern which shuts out life.

Forster defines rhythm in fiction as "repetition plus variation" and uses Proust's employment of "the little phrase" as exemplifying the possibilities of rhythm. This musical phrase comes in and out of Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, helping to tie the book together and lessening the need for external form.² Forster believes that the function of rhythm in fiction is "not to be there all the time like a pattern, but by its lovely waning and waning to fill us with surprise and freshness and hope."³

.....
 "Nothing can be stated about Moby Dick [by Melville] except that it is a contest. The rest is song."

.....
 "What is valuable about him [D. H. Lawrence] cannot be put into words; it is colour, gesture and outline in people and things, the usual stock-in-trade of the novelist, but evolved by such a different process that they belong to a new world."

.....
 "Wuthering Heights [by Emily Bronte] is filled with sound—storm and rushing wind—a sound more important than words and thoughts. Great as the novel is, one cannot afterwards remember anything in it but Heathcliff and the elder Catherine....No wonder they 'walk'; what else could such beings do? Even when they were alive their love and hate transcended them."

¹Ibid., p. 152.

²Ibid., p. 168.

³Ibid., p. 169.

Forster believes that if he could get a better perspective, if he could view all "human and pre-human activity," he might detect a relationship between "the development of the novel" and "the development of humanity." He believes that human nature modifies only if "individuals manage to look at themselves in a new way," and he implies that the perceptive novelist gives them this opportunity.¹ Above all, the idea which the novelist must cling to is "expansion...not completion. Not rounding off but opening out."²

¹Ibid., p. 172.

²Ibid., p. 169.

CHAPTER II

ART AND THE ARTIST

Forster's continuing interest in the place of art and the artist in society is apparent in Abinger Harvest, a collection of essays published in 1936, and in Two Cheers for Democracy, a collection of essays published in 1951. Although in Abinger Harvest Forster devotes but one essay to art per se, he consigns an entire section to his essays about books. In his discussion of strengths and weaknesses in the works of Jane Austen, Marcel Proust, T. S. Eliot, and Sinclair Lewis, Forster particularly shows his great love of art. Moreover, in Two Cheers for Democracy a number of his essays directly analyze the arts. His ideas on this subject may be classified in terms of the function of words, the definition of art, the values of art, the universality of art, and the problems of the artist.

Art, Forster points out, is created from words--words which, although they may be combined in infinite variations, can readily be divided into two groups according to their function--informative or creative.¹ The words which are intended to instruct include traffic signs, bus signs, other public notices, and newspaper

¹Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy, p. 77.

stories; and they say, "Stop," "Go," "Please Hold the Hand Rail," or "Flood Rains Threaten." Words which inform may be imaginative, and words which are imaginative may inform, since the two functions are not mutually exclusive; however, the primary purpose of words which create atmosphere is to create works of art.

In "Art for Art's Sake" Forster defines art:

A work of art—whatever else it may be—is a self-contained entity, with a life of its own imposed on it by its creator. It has internal order. It may have external form. That is how we recognise it.¹

Forster says art is "eternally virgin," and, although it exists in neither space nor time, is "indestructible."²

Forster does not believe that art alone matters, but he does believe in art for art's sake. He thinks that man cannot limit his life to the creation or appreciation of masterpieces without sterilizing his own powers of creativity, but he believes that art has a value of its own apart from all else and that this value should be recognized. For example, Macbeth has many facets: it gives knowledge of legendary Scotland; it teaches many things about human nature, and it presents a world created in poetic form by Shakespeare. Macbeth is a self-contained entity. It has a life of its own, and it has internal order.

The word "internal" preceding "order" is important because

¹Ibid., p. 89.

²Ibid., p. 82.

Forster believes that man seeks order and that art can supply this need.

Order is something evolved from within, not something imposed from without; it is an internal stability, a vital harmony, and in the social and political category it has never existed except for the convenience of historians.¹

If the discoveries of science remained without technological application, order might be achieved in society and government, but the application of discoveries continually disrupts, and order is never achieved. Forster believes that religion and the arts offer man his only two possibilities for finding order. He seems to feel that the order which religion offers is a tenuous one, one which can neither be proved nor disproved, but that the order available to man through the arts is definite and that from this source man can find some fulfillment for that portion of his spirit which desires order. This, Forster says, is the major contribution of art.

The value of art is not, however, confined to the satisfaction of this one desire. Throughout his essays, Forster names other functions of art. Art can take us inside a special chamber of the human spirit,² can give us the pleasure of inhabiting two worlds at once,³ can make us

¹Ibid., p. 90.

²Ibid., p. 236.

³Ibid., p. 247.

feel small in the right way.¹ Art functions as an antidote to troubles because it supports the common humanities.²

The arts are the only material objects in the universe which possess harmony.³ Literature is based on man's integrity and gives people cause to hope,⁴ for literature speaks to the heart.⁵ In discussing Marcel Proust's life and last illness, Forster says that what mattered to Proust was not life but art, which alone for Proust made any meaning out of life.⁶ And in "A Note on the Way," Forster says that the arts have helped in the general belief in loveliness, which is part of man's armor against brutality.⁷ In "Does Culture Matter?" Forster says,

Works of art do have this peculiar pushful quality; the excitement that attended their creation hangs about them, and makes minor artists out of those who have felt their power.⁸

Another value concerns man's need to understand. Forster believes that the deepest roots of humanity are spiritual, that the deepest desire is the desire to understand...that the really important things in books are the words in them--words, the wine of life.⁹

Because good literature has the quality of universality,

¹Ibid., p. 219.

²Ibid., p. xi.

³Ibid., p. 92.

⁴Ibid., p. 85.

⁵Ibid., p. 224.

⁶Ibid.

⁷E. M. Forster, Abinger Harvest (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), p. 71.

⁸Forster, Two Cheers, p. 107.

⁹Ibid., p. 304.

Forster believes that society places too much emphasis on the creative personality of the artist. Great literature need not be signed. The paradox of the modern world is that words which inform, such as the traffic instructions and newspaper stories previously mentioned, and which are, therefore, subject to inaccuracies, are unsigned, and thus given the psychological advantage of anonymity; while, on the other hand, great literature, which has the quality of universality, is signed; and the personalities and lives of the writers become topics of interest, often of greater interest than their words. Forster's conception of the creative process and a portion of his brief for anonymity are best given in his own words:

Just as words have two functions—information and creation—so each human mind has two personalities, one on the surface, one deeper down. The upper personality has a name....It is conscious and alert, it does things like dining out, answering letters, etc., and it differs vividly and amusingly from other personalities. The lower personality is a very queer affair. In many ways it is a perfect fool, but without it there is no literature, because unless a man dips a bucket down into it occasionally he cannot produce first-class work. There is something general about it. Although it is inside S. T. Coleridge, it cannot be labelled with his name. It has something in common with all other deeper personalities, and the mystic will assert that the common quality is God, and that here, in the obscure recesses of our being, we near the gates of the Divine. It is in any case the force that makes for anonymity. As it comes from the depths, so it soars to the heights, out of local questionings; as it is general to all men, so the works it inspires have something general about them, namely beauty. The poet wrote the poem, no doubt, but he forgot himself while he wrote it, and we forget him while we read. What is so wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who

wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse. Lost in the beauty where he was lost, we find more than we ever threw away, we reach what seems to be our spiritual home, and remember that it was not the speaker who was in the beginning but the Word.¹

In a comparison of the writings of Charles Lamb and Robert L. Stevenson with those of Shakespeare and Dante, Forster illustrates both the universality of a work of art and its essential anonymity, and presents his test of good literature.

If we glance at one or two writers who are not first-class this point will be illustrated. Charles Lamb and R. L. Stevenson will serve. Here are two gifted, sensitive, fanciful, tolerant, humorous fellows, but they always write with their surface-personalities and never let buckets into their underworld. Lamb did not try, bbbuckets, he would have said, are bbeyond me, and he is the pleasanter writer in consequence. Stevenson was trying oh ever so hard, but the bucket either stuck or else came up again full of the R.L.S. who let it down, full of the mannerisms, the self-consciousness, the sentimentality, the quaintness which he was hoping to avoid. He and Lamb append their names in full to every sentence they write. They pursue us page after page, always to the exclusion of higher joy. They are letter writers, not creative artists, and it is no coincidence that each of them did write charming letters. A letter comes off the surface: it deals with the events of the day or with plans: it is naturally signed. Literature tries to be unsigned. And the proof is that, whereas we are always exclaiming "How like Lamb!" or "How typical of Stevenson!" we never say "How like Shakespeare!" or "How typical of Dante!" We are conscious only of the world they have created, and we are in a sense co-partners in it...We forget for ten minutes his name and our own, and I contend that this temporary forgetfulness, this momentary and mutual anonymity, is sure evidence of good stuff.²

¹Ibid., pp. 83-84.

²Ibid., pp. 84-85.

This passage, emphasizing the anonymity of art, shows also that Forster himself believes in genius and inspiration very much in the bardic tradition. He also expresses a longing for the days when a poem was not an expression but a discovery which was sometimes supposed to have been shown to the poet by God.

Forster is fully aware of the peculiarly irrational nature of the creative process. He says, for example, that the artist has the power of retaining and digesting experiences, which, years later, he may give forth in a different form; that to the end of life he is accompanied by "a secret store."¹ Of Virginia Woolf he says:

She liked receiving sensations—sight, sounds, tastes—passing them through her mind, where they encountered theories and memories, and then bringing them out again, through a pen, on to a bit of paper. Now begin the higher delights of authorship. For these pen-marks on paper were only the prelude to writing, little more than marks on a wall. They had to be combined, arranged, emphasised here, eliminated there, new relationships had to be generated, new pen-marks born, until out of the inter-actions, something, one thing, one, arose....² It was not about something. It was something.

Speaking of the spontaneity of the creative process, Forster says that Marcel, the hero of Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, is left at the close of the novel starting out to be an author rummaging into his past, disinterring forgotten facts, facts which exist again for an instant before they crumble and are lost forever.

¹Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 128.

²Forster, Two Cheers, p. 243.

That instant is the artist's instant; he must simultaneously recollect and create.¹ And in his essay concerning the value of literary criticism, Forster says that the artist, looking back on his creation, will wonder how on earth he did it, and that indeed he did not do it on earth.²

Forster wrote these essays concerning art and the artist's place in the scheme of things when the world was under the threat of war or was, actually, at war; consequently, many of his comments show his concern with the artist's obligation in such crucial times. He feels that the artist's duties have been fulfilled if he is "sensitive and courageous" and that he must use this courage to express what he wishes to express.³ His discipline should be self-imposed, and it may be aesthetic rather than social or moral.⁴ Forster says that the artist helps to civilize the community, stimulate thinking, and encourage people to enjoy the world into which they have been born.⁵

Forster believes that society should allow freedom of expression to the artist. In fact, he acknowledges that all people need to express themselves, and he believes that the kind of society which allows them the most liberty is democracy.⁶ He emphasizes

¹Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 96.

²Forster, Two Cheers, p. 114.

³Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 66.

⁴Forster, Two Cheers, p. 59.

⁵Ibid., p. 113.

⁶Ibid., p. 69.

that only the doctrine of laissez-faire seems to work in the world of the spirit; for when society attempts to plan and control men's minds, it stunts them, since control brings censorship, the secret police, serfdom, and the community of slaves.¹ The intervals between the displays of force he calls "civilisation"; and these intervals he wishes to make as lengthy as possible. He hopes for a social order in the future which will provide the arts with fuller inspiration and better material conditions.²

Although Forster himself is apparently not unresponsive to criticism, he ascribes to the critic only two minor capacities—he can help an artist to keep good company, and he can help the artist with the minutiae of style. That is, if the writer belongs to a clique, the critic can help him to be aware of the value of the group with whom he is associating; and if he is over-using certain words, as Forster did the word "but," the critic can call attention to this fact. However, Forster thinks that in great matters criticism cannot help.³ He himself has nearly always found criticism irrelevant:

When I am praised, I am pleased; when I am blamed, I am displeased; when I am told I am elusive, I am surprised—but neither the pleasure nor the sorrow nor the astonishment makes any difference when next I enter the creative state.⁴

The nineteenth-century conception of the artist as a Bohemian was not inaccurate according to Forster, who feels that the artist must avoid "mateyness."⁵ The artist himself need not be too much

¹Ibid., p. 57.

²Ibid., p. 90.

³Ibid., p. 121.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 93.

concerned about his isolation, for he realizes that he can better achieve if he attempts detachment.¹ If he is seduced by society, he may stop himself from doing the "one thing which he, and he alone, can do—the making of something out of words or sounds or paint or clay or marble or steel or film which has internal harmony and presents order to a permanently disarranged planet."²

Forster believes that art has a social function, that, by aiding man both in his quest for order and in his quest to understand, art fulfills a human need. He feels that art is closely related to life and that the greatest art has the quality of universality.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 93.

CHAPTER III

MAJOR IDEAS

Since Forster considers many topics in Abinger Harvest and Two Cheers for Democracy, it seems most feasible to group his ideas according to four direct statements regarding his beliefs: he believes in the importance of personal relationships and the private life,¹ in culture,² in "places,"³ and in the past.⁴

Forster's statement of belief in the past is shown not by any particular essay which directly expresses reasons for his faith in the past, but by many references to this belief and by the space and thought he gives to the people and happenings of that past. In an essay which was written in 1935, entitled "Liberty in England," Forster says, "I do care about the past. I do care about the preservation and the extension of freedom."⁵ Again in 1947 in an essay about Forrest Reid, Forster reiterates this belief.⁶ However, the greatest single expression of his belief in the past is found in "The Abinger Pageant," which traces the history of the village

¹Ibid., p. 55. ²Ibid., p. 101.

³Ibid., p. xii. ⁴Ibid., p. 271.

⁵Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 61.

⁶Forster, Two Cheers, p. 271.

of Abinger. This pageant "is rural rather than historical and tries to show the continuity of country life."¹ In the prologue the Woodman says, "I welcome you first to our woods, because they are oldest. Before there were men in Abinger, there were trees." In Episode III the Woodman continues,

But before we begin, remember once more we are only a village, and listen once more to some local names: to the names of some of our people. They come down to us through the centuries, not as old as the woods and fields, but very old, and many of them are with us this afternoon and playing to you in our Pageant. Listen to a few of our Abinger names.

(A voice recites): Edser, Smallpiece, Longhurst, Overington, Etherington, Felly....²

The importance of places to Forster is evident not only from his statement of this belief, but from his devoting an entire section to "Places" in Two Cheers for Democracy, in addition to the several essays on this subject in Abinger Harvest. However, the places which he personally believes in are the country, particularly rural England, which he knew as a child and continues to know as a man, Cambridge, India, and, to a certain extent, London. His love of nature is obviously an integral part of his devotion to places.

Love of the countryside shows in his concluding comments about his trip to the United States. His visit ended in the

¹Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 330.

²Ibid.

Berkshires:

At night there were fireflies...Some of them flew at the level of the grass, others across the curtain of birch trees...and the memory of them sparking in the warm rain and the thunder is the latest of my American impressions, and the loveliest.¹

His affection for the country also shows in his comments concerning the building of a satellite town in the midst of the countryside he had known as a boy. Forster says,

But I cannot equate the problem. It is a collision of loyalties. I cannot free myself from the conviction that something irreplaceable has been destroyed, and that a little piece of England has died as surely as if a bomb had hit it.²

Forster is concerned with changes in the relationship of people to the land. He says that the impetus of the industrial revolution has been accelerated since World War I and has

...meant the destruction of feudalism and the relationship based on land, it has meant the transference of power from the aristocrat to the bureaucrat and the manager and the technician. Perhaps it will mean democracy, but it has not meant it yet, and personally I hate it....It rests on applied science, and as long as science is applied it will continue....We must face the unpleasant truths that normal life today is a life in factories and offices, that even war has evolved from an adventure into business, that even farming has become scientific, that insurance has taken the place of charity, that status has given way to contract. You will see how disquieting all this is to writers, who love, and ought to love, beauty and

¹Forster, Two Cheers, p. 336.

²Ibid., p. 59.

charm and the passage of the seasons, and generous impulses, and the traditions of their craft.¹

Cambridge and India are both handled with apparent love in essays devoted to them, and of London he says,

I used to loathe London when I was young....I used to denounce her pomp and vanity, and her inhabitants for their unmanliness and their unhealthy skins....Time has tamed me, and though it is not practicable to love such a place (one could as easily embrace both volumes of the Telephone Directory at once), one can love bits of it and become interested in the rest.²

The most poignant expression about a particular place is found, however, in the words of the Woodman of "The Abinger Pageant" and involves a return to the countryside:

Look into your hearts and look into the past, and remember that all this beauty is a gift which you can never replace, which no money can buy, which no cleverness can refashion. You can make a town, you can make a desert, you can even make a garden; but you can never, never make the country, because it was made by Time.³

Forster believes that culture makes life more meaningful, and he discusses this belief in "Culture and Freedom,"⁴ an anti-Nazi broadcast, and in "Does Culture Matter?,"⁵ a two-part essay.

¹Ibid., pp. 273-274.

²Ibid., p. 357.

³Forster, Abinger Harvest, pp. 343-344.

⁴Forster, Two Cheers, p. 31.

⁵Ibid., p. 100.

His interest in culture is also exemplified by many other essays, for a great number of them discuss the process of artistic creation, the creator, or the aesthetic products of the present and the past.¹ Forster believes that "If you drop tradition and culture you lose your chance of connecting work and play and creating a life which is all of a piece."² Culture gives people an opportunity to "stretch their minds":

The words and the images that have come down to us through the centuries are often contradictory, they represent a bewildering wealth of human experience, which it is our privilege to enjoy, to examine and to build on.³

Forster condemns the governmental culture of the totalitarian states (which he differentiates from the national culture of England) because such a culture is always falsified.⁴ He believes that people must be allowed to hear, to listen, and to look, and to be permitted contact with great minds of the past, for "Only people who have been allowed to practice freedom can have the grownup look in their eyes."⁵

Forster says that indifference is also a formidable adversary of culture. He believes that "What is needed in the cultural Gospel is to let one's light so shine that men's curiosity is aroused....,"⁶ that

¹These essays are included in the discussion entitled "Art and the Artist," pp. 13-22.

²Ibid., p. 103.

³Ibid., p. 35.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 33.

⁶Ibid., p. 106.

Our chief job is to enjoy ourselves and not to lose heart, and to spread culture not because we love our fellow men, but because certain things seem to us unique and priceless, and, as it were, push us out into the world on their service....It is the zest to communicate what has been communicated....¹

Most important of all is Forster's belief in personal relationships. "Temperamentally, I am an individualist. Professionally, I am a writer, and my books emphasize the importance of personal relationships and the private life, for I believe in them."² These opening words from Forster's 1946 broadcast, entitled "The Challenge of Our Times," are a succinct summary of the man and his most compelling interest. For though Forster believes in the past, it is not tradition for its own sake that he cherishes, but tradition for the sake of human beings—tradition as it is continued in the memories and hearts of individuals. Men cut off from the roots of their past are half-men, spiritually maimed. In the same way, Forster believes in places because he believes that attachment to a particular place nourishes the individual spirit and leads to a fuller life. Culture, too, is meaningful to Forster because, as it is assimilated by individuals, it becomes a spiritualizing and humanizing force in their lives. Thus it seems that the past, places, and culture all lead to the individual; and when Forster focuses on an individual, this individual is the center not only of his own private problems, but also of the problems that involve the society of which he is a part.

¹Ibid., pp. 106-107.

²Ibid., p. 55.

To Forster the individual seems a "divine achievement," and he mistrusts anyone or any view which belittles him.¹ He says that if there is a "collision of principles" he would favor the individual at the expense of the community;² and "...If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country."³

Obviously provoked by events within Nazi Germany, Forster says,

The dictator—here can grind down his citizens till they are all alike, but he cannot melt them into a single man....He can order them to merge, he can incite them to mass-antics, but they are obliged to be born separately, and to die separately, and owing to these unavoidable termini, will always be running off the totalitarian rails. The memory of birth and the expectation of death always lurk within the human being, making him separate from his fellows and consequently capable of intercourse with them. Naked I came into the world, naked I shall go out of it! And a very good thing too, for it reminds me that I am naked under my shirt, whatever its colour.⁴

Idkewise in response to the Nazi persecutions of the Jews, Forster considers the individual and his relationship to his ancestry. He says that anti-Semitism is the "most shocking of all things. It is destroying much more than the Jews; it is assailing the human mind at the source, and inviting it to create false categories before exercising judgment."⁵ He says that "community of race is an illusion"

¹Ibid., p. 57.

²Ibid., p. 58.

³Ibid., p. 68.

⁴Ibid., p. 76.

⁵Ibid., p. 14.

and that the only reason any dictators can get by with their pseudo-science of a pure race is that "people like to feel that they are all of a piece...."¹ He wishes that Mendel's name were mentioned as frequently as Freud's or Einstein's, for "as each of us looks back into his or her past, doors open upon darkness."²

Whether there ever was such an entity as a "pure Race" is debatable, but there certainly is not one in Europe today--the internationalism of the Roman Empire and of the Middle Ages have seen to that. Consequently there never can be a pure race in the future. Europe is mongrel forever, and so is America....We don't know what our ancestors were like or what our descendants will be like. We only know that we are all of us mongrels, dark haired and light haired, who must learn not to bite one another.³

The people Forster really admires possess characteristics of a more positive nature; they are "aristocrats." He says he believes in an aristocracy.

Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and through all the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos. Thousands of them perish in obscurity, a few are great names. They are sensitive for others as well as for themselves, they are considerate without being fussy, their pluck is not swankiness but the power to endure, and they can take a joke....Their temple,

¹Ibid., p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 18.

³Ibid., pp. 19-20.

as one of them remarked, is the Holiness of the Heart's affection, and their kingdom, though they never possess it, is the wide-open world.¹

In "What I Believe" Forster reiterates a statement concerning people, which he had previously made in an essay "Liberty in England."

The people I respect most behave as if they were immortal and as if society was eternal. Both assumptions are false: both of them must be accepted as true if we are to go on eating and working and loving, and are to keep open a few breathing holes for the human spirit.²

He says that "What is good in people...is their insistence on creation, their belief in friendship and loyalty for their own sakes...."³

Other qualities which Forster values are revealed through his admiration of specific people. For example, he says that T. E. Lawrence was courageous, generous, and compassionate;⁴ that Voltaire was truthful, tolerant, and sympathetic;⁵ and that Emperor Babur, who founded the Moghul Empire, was alert, sensitive, and honest.⁶

Babur! he had all that one seeks in a friend. His energy and ambition were touched with sensitiveness; he could act, feel, observe, and remember; though not critical of his senses, he was aware of their workings, thus fulfilling the whole nature of man...to his honesty, and energy, and sensitiveness, Babur added a warm heart....⁷

¹Ibid., pp. 73-74.

²Ibid., p. 72.

³Ibid., p. 72.

⁴Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 137.

⁵Forster, Two Cheers, p. 167.

⁶Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 286.

⁷Ibid., p. 284.

"The undeveloped heart" is one of the prime defects of Englishmen, says Forster. In "Notes on the English Character," he defends the English against charges of having a "cold heart," saying that if the English character were really cold, Englishmen could not have produced some of the world's greatest poetry; but he attacks the public school which sends boys forth into the world with "well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts."¹

And it is this undeveloped heart that is largely responsible for the difficulties of Englishmen abroad. An undeveloped heart--not a cold one. The difference is important....For it is not that the Englishman can't feel--it is that he is afraid to feel. He has been taught at his public school that feeling is bad form. He must not express great joy or sorrow....He must bottle up his emotions, or let them out only on a very special occasion.²

Forster does not believe that the Englishman is guilty of hypocrisy, rather that he is guilty of "muddle-headedness." He says that Englishmen are slow even to do wrong: "whereas people in other lands do wrong quickly." He is concerned about the undeveloped heart, and underdeveloped spiritual life, "muddle-headedness," and complacency.

Though he withholds the third cheer, Forster gives two cheers for democracy because it recognizes that society is made up of all types of individuals and because it assumes that the individual is important. Even permitting criticism of itself,

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²Ibid.

democracy allows the individuals more freedoms than any other form of government.

So Two Cheers for Democracy: one because it admits variety and two because it permits criticism. Two cheers are quite enough: there is no occasion to give three. Only Love the Beloved Republic¹ deserves that.²

This possible achievement of "Love the Beloved Republic" gains sustenance from Forster's belief that through greater self-knowledge human nature can improve. He believes that "Human life is still active, still carrying about with it unexplored riches and unused methods of release."³

This release could come, according to Forster, if man could achieve his two basic wishes: the desire to be free and the desire to love.⁴ Forster says that throughout the years man has been a "coward, afraid of the universe outside him and of the herd wherein he took refuge"; that he "has dallied with the idea of a social conscience, and has disguised the fear of the herd as loyalty towards the group."⁵ Man needs a new perspective, a greater knowledge of self, so that he can be an "individual" capable of making his own decisions according to his own "considered standards."⁶ Having thus attained

¹Forster uses "Love the Beloved Republic" to indicate the society which would be possible if love could be the dominant force in public life. This "Beloved Republic" originates in the writings of Swinburne.

²Forster, Two Cheers, p. 70.

³Ibid., p. xii. ⁴Ibid., p. 11.

⁵Ibid., p. 10. ⁶Ibid., p. 9.

freedom, he will be able to achieve his second wish, "love":
attachment to life through action which is an affirmation of self.

Believing in "tolerance, good temper and sympathy," Forster, in an essay entitled "Tolerance,"¹ discusses their importance to the problems of reconstruction.

This is the only force which will enable different races and classes and interests to settle down together to the work of reconstruction....It is just a makeshift, suitable for an overcrowded and overheated planet....And yet it entails imagination. For you have all the time to be putting yourself in someone else's place. Which is a desirable spiritual exercise.

Tolerance is not the same as weakness. Putting up with people does not mean giving in to them. This complicates the problem. But the rebuilding of civilisation is bound to be complicated. I only feel certain that unless the Lord builds the house, they will labour in vain who build it. Perhaps, when the house is completed, love will enter it, and the greatest force in our private lives will also rule in public life.²

Forster's hope for a better future is, therefore, based on his belief that the individual can progress psychologically through greater self-knowledge and on his trust that universal tolerance could lead to love. Perhaps if these dreams were actualities, the policy achieved could be known as "Love the Beloved Republic," and Forster would consider it deserving of three cheers.

¹Ibid., p. 44. Forster mentions in this essay and in the essay, "What I Believe," that Erasmus and Montaigne are his law-givers.

²Ibid., p. 48.

Forster, however, is much concerned with the present, with human life in the contemporary world; therefore, one further comment of this essayist, lecturer, short story writer, and novelist seems uniquely appropriate.

Failure or success seems to have been allotted to men by their stars. But they retain the power of wriggling, of fighting with their star or against it, and in the whole universe the only interesting movement is this wriggle.¹

¹Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 57.

PART II

FORSTER THE NOVELIST

CHAPTER IV

ATTAINMENT OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Forster, the novelist, displays an intense interest in these "wiggles" of the individual for or against his star and paints powerful images of his struggles. Helen Schlegel in Howards End, a novel which will be discussed in the next chapter, seems to speak for Forster when she says that a man or woman needs first to be able to say, "I am I."¹ In A Room with a View², his third novel, Forster exemplifies, through the problems of two leading characters, two of the universal needs he sets forth in his essays as innate desires of every human being: the desire to be free and the desire to love.³ These ideas are an integral part of the story and are revealed in certain scenes which therefore will be the focal point of this discussion.

Superficially, A Room with a View seems to be a light, airy travel tale, held together by a love story which illustrates the old adage that true love never runs smoothly but does, eventually, triumph. The author tells an interesting story with a great

¹E. M. Forster, Howards End (New York: Vintage Book, 1958), p. 238.

²E. M. Forster, A Room with a View (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).

³See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," p. 33.

simplicity which necessitates a second examination for comprehension of the masked philosophy. By use of a deceptive informality of tone in narration, Forster never overtly draws attention to the fact that he is in reality presenting a chronicle of the young characters' struggles to attain self-knowledge and to relate themselves to life. Actually the title, A Room with a View, conveys the central idea of the novel, that it is only when the individual begins to perceive his own identity, and thus is set free to think and act in a way which is an affirmation of self, does his fulfillment become a possibility not completely dependent upon chance.

Lucy Honeychurch, an English girl of an upper middle class rural family, travels to Italy under the chaperonage of a spinster cousin, Miss Charlotte Bartlett. Lucy has an unaffected charm and a naturalness of manner, which, combined with a nebulous beauty, typify English young womanhood. She is eager to see Italy because she is young and intelligent, not because she is in revolt against her own hereditary world. The two ladies are disappointed when they arrive at the pension in Florence because all the other guests are so very English and because their rooms open upon the courtyard, although they had been promised rooms with a view of the River Arno and of the Italian hills. Mr. Emerson, an elderly pensioner, over-hearing their complaint, suggests that he and his son, a young man in his twenties, exchange rooms with the ladies. Their rooms have a view which they do not value, and they would be glad to make the exchange. Eventually the exchange is made through the intervention of Mr. Beebe, a minister, although Miss Bartlett is still suspicious

of the arrangement. Lucy finds that the Emersons, while unfailingly offering kindnesses, are not "accepted" by the other English guests. Mr. Emerson values truth, friendship, true perception, and love; but since he does not value the false machinery of "civilization," he offends by saying exactly what he means. Mr. Beebe, the most nearly tolerant of the English guests, tells Lucy, "It is so difficult—at least, I find it difficult—to understand people who speak the truth." George Emerson, the son, is tall, handsome, intelligent, and strong; but he talks little and appears sad. Reared by his father to be trustworthy, kind, and without affectation, George, nevertheless, troubles his father because he is restrained and without spirit. Mr. Emerson had thought that if his son were not bound intellectually, he would be happy; but he now realizes that his son has another great need, the need to relate himself to life. This need might be realized through service but; in this story, the opportunity for attachment to life is offered by romantic love. Meeting then in Italy are two young people: the girl is not free; she is plagued both by a chaperone and by the restraints of her own conventionality which are a part of her heritage from the "herd" in which her forefathers took refuge;¹ the young man is freed for action, understanding something of humanity and universal problems, but is seemingly defeated spiritually by their immensities.

Forster in this novel suggests Lucy's problem, presents George's problem and an immediate solution for it, then spends

¹See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," p. 33.

the remainder of the novel developing Lucy's ultimate revolt, which, under the questioning and prodding of the elder Mr. Emerson, brings about the eventual marriage of George and Lucy. It is interesting to note that George's problem, making an attachment to life, could have been achieved sooner if it had not been necessary for Lucy to muddle her way through to self-knowledge before she was capable of forming a truly rewarding attachment.

Having carefully built George's need to say "Yes" to life, the author, in the following scene, early in the novel, dramatizes George's rebirth and suggests Lucy's potentialities for spiritual growth.

Lucy, feeling restless in the late afternoon of a rainy spring day, asserts her independence of spirit by leaving the pension alone to take a walk. She buys photographic reproductions of famous paintings at a small shop. Upon leaving the shop, she inadvertently witnesses at close range an argument between two Italians, climaxed by murder. Just as she is about to faint, she sees George Emerson across the spot where the stabbed man had been. George rushes to her and catches her as she falls.

"Oh, what have I done?"

"You fainted."

"I—I am very sorry."

"How are you now?"

"Perfectly well—absolutely well." And she began to nod and smile.

"Then let us come home. There's no point in our stopping."

He held out his hand to pull her up. She pretended not to see it. The cries from the fountain—they never ceased—rang emptily. The whole world seemed pale and void of its original meaning.

"How very kind you have been! I might have hurt myself falling. But now I am well. I can go alone, thank you."

His hand was still extended.

"Oh, my photographs!" she exclaimed suddenly.

"What photographs?"

"I bought some photographs at Alinari's. I must have dropped them out there in the square." She looked at him cautiously. "Would you add to your kindness by fetching them?"

When George goes to get the pictures, Lucy starts to walk home alone, but George persuades her to wait. Lucy feels that she, as well as the dying Italian, has crossed a spiritual boundary.

He returned, and she talked of the murder. Oddly enough, it was an easy topic. She spoke of the Italian character; she became almost garrulous over the incident that had made her faint five minutes before. Being strong physically, she soon overcame the horror of the blood. She rose without his assistance, and though wings seemed to flutter inside her, she walked firmly enough towards the Arno. There a cabman signalled to them; they refused him.

Lucy's conversation about the character of Italians is interrupted when she notices a movement of George's arm.

He had thrown something into the stream.

"What did you throw in?"

"Things I didn't want," he said crossly.

"Mr. Emerson?"

"Well?"

"Where are the photographs?"

He was silent.

"I believe it was my photographs that you threw away."

"I didn't know what to do with them," he cried, and his voice was that of an anxious boy. Her heart warmed towards him for the first time. "They were covered with blood. There! I'm glad I've told you, and all the time we were making conversation I was wondering what to do with them." He pointed downstream. "They've gone." The river swirled under the bridge. "I did mind them so, and one is so foolish, it seemed better that they should go out to sea—I don't know; I may just mean that they frightened me." Then the boy verged into a man.

"For something tremendous has happened; I must face it without getting muddled. It isn't exactly that a man has died."

[George is trying to understand what he has experienced, and Lucy is thinking about George and how he does not fit into any conventional character pattern.]

"Well, thank you so much," she repeated. "How quickly these accidents do happen, and then one returns to the old life?"

"I don't."

Anxiety moved her to question him.

His answer was puzzling: "I shall probably want to live."

"But why, Mr. Emerson? What do you mean?"

"I shall want to live, I say."

Leaning her elbows on the parapet, she contemplated the River Arno, whose roar was suggesting some unexpected melody to her ears.¹

This bath of blood evidently symbolizes George's rebirth.² Here for the first time he feels a desire to relate himself to life. He instinctively recognizes that the bloodied photographs which trouble him merit a suitable end, for he does not dispose of them until he is crossing the bridge above the rushing waters of the River Arno. This swirling river represents that turbulent stream of mankind which continues without known end. George's action suggests symbolically the possibilities of his participating in the life from which he has always stood apart. Although he may not realize at the moment that he is capable of forming an attachment

¹Forster, A Room with a View, pp. 71-76.

²Forster also uses this symbol of rebirth in the life of Stephen Wonham in The Longest Journey, which is discussed in this chapter. See page 55.

to life through Lucy, he does get an intense emotional impact from the combination of circumstances, for he says, "I shall probably want to live."

While George's reaction is rather direct—he is not "bound" intellectually—Lucy's reaction is diversified: the world seems to have lost its original meaning; she feels she has crossed a "spiritual boundary"; she sees George as an individual; she hears, in the roar of the Arno, "an unexpected melody." Yet most of the time she chatters in a superficial manner, obviously anticipating no connection to be made with her daily life. It is significant that this "unexpected melody" which she hears comes from the stream of life. Previously Lucy has displayed only one quality which would distinguish her from any other well-bred girl: her piano-playing is characterized by an undercurrent of emotion. This suggestion of emotional depth has seemed to be a thing apart; now there is the possibility that her aesthetic response to music could be paralleled by an equally rewarding response to life.

This scene dramatizes the artistic fusion of ideas with an incident, for it illustrates certain aspects of Forster's beliefs about the needs of the individual, presents memorable action, and establishes the direction in which his story and his ideas will move.

Lucy's visit in Italy ends abruptly when Charlotte, who fears the influence of the Emersons, learns of another precipitous meeting between George and Lucy. Charlotte and Lucy go to Rome and eventually to England. Several months pass and Lucy becomes

engaged to Cecil Vyse, a socially acceptable, well-to-do young man, who devotes himself to an appreciation of the arts. Lucy becomes restive in her engagement because Cecil seems incapable of recognizing her right to individuality. The coincidence of George Emerson's re-entry into her life further disquiets Lucy, for his intellectual honesty and freedom from affectation accentuate Cecil's superficiality.

One afternoon when all the young people except Cecil wish to play tennis, he insists that they listen to his reading excerpts from a recent Italian novel which he is to criticize. This novel, written by Charlotte Bartlett's confidante at the Florence pension, incorporates a murder and a love story which is obviously built around the few meetings of George and Lucy. Charlotte had betrayed Lucy's secrets. The revival of these memories goads George into proposing to Lucy, but she refuses.

Late in the evening of this same day, Lucy and Cecil meet in the dining room of her mother's home, and Lucy tells Cecil she wishes to be released from her engagement. He grants the request, but, finding her now more attractive than previously, asks for an explanation. This explanation not only involves Lucy's own need for individuality but also forces her into an analysis of Cecil's character.

"Because"—a phrase came to her, and she accepted it—"you're the sort who can't know any one intimately."

A horrified look came into his eyes.

"I don't mean exactly that. But you will question me, though I beg you not to, and I must

say something. It is that, more or less. When we were only acquaintances, you let me be myself, but now you're always protecting me." Her voice swelled. "I won't be protected. I will choose for myself what is lady-like and right. To shield me is an insult. Can't I be trusted to face the truth but I must get it second-hand through you? A woman's place! You despise my mother—I know you do—because she's conventional and bothers over puddings; but, oh goodness!"—she rose to her feet—"conventional, Cecil, you're that, for you may understand beautiful things, but you don't know how to use them; and you wrap yourself up in art and books and music, and would try to wrap up me. I won't be stifled, not by the most glorious music, for people are more glorious, and you hide them from me. That's why I break off my engagement. You were all right as long as you kept to things, but when you came to people—" She stopped.

There was a pause. Then Cecil said with great emotion:

"It is true."

[They discuss the differences in attitudes and say good-night.]

"Thank you. Good-night again. God bless you, Lucy!"

"Good-bye, Cecil."

She watched him steal up-stairs, while the shadows from the banisters passed over her face like the beat of wings. On the landing he paused strong in his renunciation, and gave her a look of memorable beauty. For all his culture. Cecil was an ascetic at heart, and nothing in his love became him like the leaving of it.¹

Here Forster again conveys his ideas dramatically. The actions of the characters are in keeping with the ideas they express and give a rhythm to the scene. Lucy is intense, forced by circumstances to speak now or give up forever; Cecil is restrained, even

¹Forster, A Room with a View, pp. 262-265.

parting from his love with great dignity. The image of Cecil as he ascends the stairs is a beautiful picture entirely in keeping with the character of the man himself.

This scene, important to the plot because it re-establishes the possibility of a romance between Lucy and George, is also important to this study because it is an example of recurring ideas functioning through a specific scene. Principally, it is a forward step in Lucy's fight to be free intellectually, but it also is linked to Forster's idea that the individual is a "divine achievement" to be defended from anyone who belittles him.¹ Lucy wishes to think for herself, to be an individual person; she does not want to get life "second-hand." These ideas are not brought in awkwardly to give the author a chance to express himself through the words of a leading character; they have evolved from the plot and are in keeping with the development of the character who is speaking.

Another major idea of Forster's is in evidence here--his concept that culture is meaningful only when it enables its possessor to see life as a whole.² Cecil knows "things"; he does not understand people; therefore his culture is arid, meaningless.

The happy ending of the story does not come until the elder Mr. Emerson forces Lucy through the rigors of self-examination. Finally, she is able to recognize her own identity; and only then

¹See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," p. 29.

²See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," p. 27.

is she free to act, to join with George in forming their mutual attachment to life through romantic love. Through the use of pictorial scenes Forster made these ideas—which were actually expressed later in his essays—live.

No such benevolent figure as the elder Mr. Emerson nurtures the growth of Rickie Elliot, the lame hero of The Longest Journey.¹ This novel, published in 1907, is a complicated novel which rewards with its penetrating psychological insights and maddens by its overuse of contrived action combined with the continual reporting of events which must be incorporated into the fabric of the story.² Forster, in this novel, seems to be saying that reality is to be found within one's self and that unless one's actions are an affirmation of self, the self through its actions contributes to its own destruction.

Rickie is another person who needs to achieve freedom (self-identification) and love (attachment to life); but, while he perceives intellectually that this search for reality, truth of self, is the most important search of his life, he is never able to part the final curtain which will reveal to him unconditionally the area wherein this reality is to be found. His actions are determined with insufficient self-understanding and result in the loss of integrity. Rickie's crippled foot seems symbolic of a crippled

¹E. M. Forster, The Longest Journey (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).

²The title The Longest Journey is taken from a poem by Shelley who says that "the longest journey" is the journey taken "With one sad friend, perhaps a jealous foe."

self-love which, because of its faltering strength, does not give him courage to act according to his own precepts and therefore causes him ultimately to seek reality in others rather than within himself. Rickie never attains the freedom that comes from self-knowledge. Rickie's struggles which lead to annihilation contrast sharply with the slowly ascending figure of Stephen Wonham, his illegitimate half-brother, whose physical perfection, healthy emotions, and great integrity of thought and action lead to understanding and to the abundant life. Stephen actually becomes a symbolic reaffirmation of life itself. Two scenes from this novel portray Forster's ideas in action.

When the story opens, Rickie is a student at Cambridge. He has a good mind; but he is self-conscious about his crippled foot, which is a characteristic of the Elliot family and a direct inheritance from his father whom he disliked. Mr. Elliot was a sarcastic man, who loved neither his wife nor his son. Rickie loved his mother because she was kind, sympathetic, and beautiful; however, both she and her husband died when Rickie was fifteen. At Cambridge Rickie has made friends with a group of young intellectuals; and his best friend is Stewart Ansell, a student of philosophy. When presented to Agnes Pembroke, an attractive young woman and a family friend of the Elliots, Ansell ignores the introduction. He later explains to Rickie that he could not acknowledge her presence because she had no reality. Agnes' engagement to Gerald Dawes, an athlete, ends when Gerald is killed

in a football game. Rickie, who has cherished the memory of the transformed beauty of Agnes' face ever since he once saw her in Gerald's arms, falls in love with her himself; they eventually become engaged although Rickie feels himself to be unworthy. Ansell is adamant in his opposition to the engagement. He tells Rickie that Agnes is insincere, untruthful, and artificial, that if Rickie married her his life will be unreal. Shortly after the engagement is announced, Rickie and Agnes visit Mrs. Failing, Rickie's Aunt Emily, at her home in Cadover. In a moment of irritation Aunt Emily, who always enjoys seeing people squirm, reveals to Rickie and Agnes that Stephen Wonham, the unpolished, outspoken young man whom she has reared, is Rickie's illegitimate half-brother. Rickie, shocked by the disclosure, assumes that Stephen is his father's son. Actually the mother's secret love story is the only real love story of the novel. Stephen, therefore, is the untutored, natively intelligent, earthy product of this attachment.

In the following crucial scene, the author forcefully reveals Agnes' superficiality, chronicles Rickie's inadequate struggle for truth, and shows how his actions become a negation of his true self. Rickie approaches the threshold of self-knowledge and seems intellectually to wish to act in harmony with that knowledge, but he lacks the courage which could be his if he had confidence in himself, or if he truly understood his own weaknesses and his own needs. Just at the moment of decision, Rickie's purposefulness wavers, his perception clouds, and he seeks the reality of Agnes rather than the reality within his own mind and

spirit. From this moment on, Rickie gets his world "second-hand."¹

Rickie is sitting at a desk in an upstairs room writing a letter to Ansell to tell him about Stephen when Agnes enters with the news that Mrs. Failing is not going to inform Stephen of his parentage; Rickie says that he will tell Stephen.

"We tell him?" cried the girl, white with horror. "Tell him now, when everything has been comfortably arranged?"

"You see, darling"—he took hold of her hand—"what one must do is to think the thing out and settle what's right. I'm still all trembling and stupid. I see it mixed up with other things. I want you to help me. It seems to me that here and there in life we meet with a person or incident that is symbolical. It's nothing in itself, yet for the moment it stands for some eternal principle. We accept it, at whatever costs, and we have accepted life. But if we are frightened and reject it, the moment, so to speak passes; the symbol is never offered again. Once before a symbol² was offered to me—I shall not tell you how; but I did accept it, and cherished it through much anxiety and repulsion, and in the end I am rewarded. There will be no reward this time. I think, from such a man—the son of such a man. But I want to do what is right...and leaving ideals aside, I couldn't meet him and keep silent. It isn't in me. I should blurt it out."

"But you won't meet him!" she cried. "It's all been arranged. We've sent him to the sea. Isn't it splendid? He's gone. My own boy won't be fantastic, will he?"

[Agnes attempts to cheer Rickie.]

"What's that?"

¹This is exactly what Lucy rejects in A Room with a View. See previous discussion, p. 46.

²Rickie is referring to his glimpse of Agnes in Gerald Dawes' arms.

It was Stephen calling up from the drive. He had come back. Agnes threw out her hand in despair [sic].
 "Elliot!" the voice called.

They were facing each other, silent and motionless. Then Rickie advanced to the window. The girl darted in front of him. He thought he had never seen her so beautiful. She was stopping his advance quite frankly, with widespread arms.

"Elliot!"

He moved forward--into what? He pretended to himself he would rather see his brother before he answered; that it was easier to acknowledge him thus. But at the back of his soul he knew that the woman had conquered, and that he was moving forward to acknowledge her. "If he calls me again--" he thought.

"Elliot!"

"Well, if he calls me once again, I will answer him vile as he is."

He did not call again.¹

[Agnes convinces Rickie that Ansell does not need to know of Stephen's parentage; so Rickie tears up the letter.]

Forster's beliefs--that a man or woman should be able to say "I am I," that actions should be an affirmation of self, that the individual should protect himself from all that belittles him--are violated by Rickie in this scene. Even when he is attempting to think for himself, Rickie is confused. He has held precious the memory of the illumined beauty of Agnes when he accidentally saw her in Gerald's arms, and he feels that his betrothal to Agnes is a reward for cherishing this symbol of love. Also he says that he knows there would be no "reward" for acknowledging Stephen because he is his father's son and no good could come from him, but Rickie errs again; this man is his mother's son. More important, there would be a reward for the acknowledgment no

¹Forster, The Longest Journey, pp. 158-9, 160.

matter whose son Stephen is, because Rickie would be being true to the reality within himself. Through weakness, Rickie denies his brother,¹ denies his own reality, and accepts the reality of Agnes. His reward is not the expected abundant love—for he is incapable of awakening Agnes' emotions—but rather the loss of his own integrity. Hence his life becomes "the longest journey."

Forster intensifies the foregoing scene by giving a visual image which is almost perceptible on the printed page: an indecisive, lame-footed young man must choose between a girl with outstretched arms and his brother who stands under the open window. The author combines ideas, action, and irony to create a scene of power.

Rickie marries Agnes and begins teaching at Sawston under the supervision of his dominating brother-in-law. Rickie writes short stories in his free time, but they do not sell. He attempts to find some area of mutuality with Agnes, but does not succeed. A crippled baby which is born to them dies. Agnes, interested in protecting Rickie's inheritance from Aunt Emily, manages by unscrupulous means to get Stephen dispossessed. Stephen, having learned from Aunt Emily that he is Rickie's half-brother, goes joyfully to tell Rickie the news. He is turned away by Agnes, who, with Rickie's assent, offers Stephen a bribe to keep still about the relationship. Stephen refuses the money, but, a week later, returns drunk and angry and destroys much of the furniture

¹Forster's essay entitled "Jane Austen" which appears in Abinger Harvest discusses the importance of family relationships. Forster undoubtedly regards Rickie's failure to acknowledge his brother as a very serious error.

in Rickie's living quarters. In the interim, Rickie has learned that Stephen is his mother's son, and so when Stephen's anger is spent, Rickie puts him to bed.

The morning after this episode Rickie, through loyalty to his mother's memory, goes to Stephen's door, willing to acknowledge him as his brother. His kindness is mixed with pity.

But within stood a man who probably owned the world.

Rickie scarcely knew him; last night he had seemed so colourless, so negligible. In a few hours he had recaptured motion and passion and the imprint of the sunlight and the wind. He stood, not consciously heroic, with arms that dangled from broad stooping shoulders, and feet that played with a hassock on the carpet. But his hair was beautiful against the grey sky, and his eyes, recalling the sky unclouded, shot past the intruder as if to some worthier vision. So intent was their gaze that Rickie himself glanced backwards, only to see the neat passage and the banisters at the top of the stairs. Then the lips beat together twice, and out burst a torrent of amazing words.

"Add it all up, and let me know how much. I'd sooner have died. It never took me that way before. I must have broken pounds' worth. If you'll not tell the police, I promise you shan't lose, Mr. Elliot, I swear. But it may be months before I send it. Everything is to be new. You've not to be a penny out of pocket, do you see?"

[Rickie asks Stephen to stay and to share his life, and he offers Stephen their mother's photograph.]

"I can't follow—because—to share your life? Did you know I called here last Sunday week?"

"Yes. But then I only knew half. I thought you were my father's son."

Stephen's anger and bewilderment were increasing. He stuttered. "What—what's the odds if you did?"

"I hated my father," said Rickie. "I loved my mother." And never had the phrases seemed so destitute of meaning.

"Last Sunday week," interrupted Stephen, his voice suddenly rising, "I came to call on you. Not as this or that's son. Not to fall on your neck. Nor to live here. Nor--damn your dirty little mind! I meant to say I didn't come for money. Sorry. Sorry. I simply came as I was, and I haven't altered since."

"Yes--yet our mother--for me she has risen from the dead since then--I know I was wrong--"

"And where do I come in?" He kicked the hassock. "I haven't risen from the dead. I haven't altered since last Sunday week. I'm--" He stuttered again. He could not quite explain what he was.... "You've hurt something most badly in me that I didn't know was there."

[Rickle attempts to get Stephen to stay.]

With a rare flash of insight he turned on Rickle. "I see your game. You don't care about me drinking, or to shake my hand. It's someone else you want to cure--as it were, that old photograph. You talk to me but all the time you look at the photograph." He snatched it up. "I've my own ideas of good manners, and to look friends between the eyes is one of them; and this"--he tore the photograph across--" and this"--he tore it again--" and these --" He flung the pieces at the man, who had sunk into a chair. "For my part, I'm off."¹

Stephen--unconventional, at times almost uncivilized--keeps his values straight. He is the positive expression of Forster's belief that an individual must know himself and that he must demonstrate faith in himself by his actions. Stephen does not sell his identity, nor does he barter it for brotherly acceptance. His sturdy heritage, evidenced by his muscular body, his alert mind, and his indomitable spirit, has been protected throughout an uncertain childhood by his intimate contact with the earth, the sea, and the night sky. He acts directly to protect that "something in me that

¹Forster, The Longest Journey, pp. 285, 287, 289.

I didn't know was there." He stands vibrant with life while Rickie, showered with the torn fragments of a faded photograph, slumps in a chair.

Rickie decides to forsake Agnes and go with Stephen; and although Stephen warns him, "Don't hang clothes on me which don't belong," Rickie sees in Stephen the symbol of his mother and attempts to make Stephen's actions conform to what he thinks they should. Rickie dies of injuries received in pushing the drunken Stephen from the path of an oncoming train. As he dies, he whispers to his aunt that her philosophy of life is the correct one: little things are important in life; people aren't important at all. Stephen, by virtue of his honest, forceful nature, which through intuitive self-knowledge seeks the reality within, is able to accept Rickie's final self-sacrifice and to produce a reformed synthesis which is still himself. Here again, Forster used the bath of blood to signify rebirth.

Whether or not the individual achieves self-knowledge and affirmative action, Forster realizes that it is necessary for him to live in a world of people and recommends "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy"¹ as qualities which the world most needs. While A Room with a View and The Longest Journey are primarily concerned with the problems of the individual, Howards End and A Passage to India consider problems of the individual in society.

¹See Chapter III, "Major Ideas."

CHAPTER V

THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY

Howards End, Forster's fourth novel, is the imaginative expression of many of the ideas which he sets forth in his essays. Through a study of personal relationships--intra-family, inter-family, individual to individual; and personal response--individual to place, to culture, to the past, to the outer life, to the inner life, and to time--this novel brings out a subtle main theme: that only through the exercising of the sense of proportion can modern life become meaningful. Forster develops this idea through the lives of the characters within this novel and conveys this premise through their personal relations.

Forster implies that the practical world must modify its concepts that all change is progress, that all bigness is superior, and that outer life is the center of reality. He also seems to say that the past by itself is not strong enough to fight for recognition of its own significance, that culture should lead to understanding, that the idealists must supply proportion to life--for they alone see life as a whole--and that only through this sense of proportion can the essence of the past be preserved, can bigness be made to leave space for the individual soul, and the outer life gain true

reality by connecting it with the life of the spirit.¹ As Margaret Schlegel is the character within this novel who is able to encompass all these complexities, recognize each individual as having human value, and give forth "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy,"² the focal study for this novel will be those scenes which reveal Margaret's philosophy.

Howards End, a modest, formerly rural, ancestral home used to represent England in the early 1900's, is the control—the most nearly constant factor—against which Forster presents the world in flux. There are three main sets of characters in this novel. Margaret and Helen Schlegel, young, wealthy, and orphaned, represent, with their younger brother Tibby, varying degrees of the life of the spirit. Margaret believes in the life of the spirit, has the idealist's sympathy for the downtrodden, and acknowledges a debt to the inherited wealth which provides her with the opportunities she enjoys; Helen also believes in the life of the spirit, is more incensed at the inequality which the lack of money makes for others, and is ruled by emotions more than is her sister. Tibby, an intellectual, pursues culture as an end in itself, takes little note of the human beings who people the world, and accepts his privileges without giving credit to the money which is their source. The Wilcox family, which constitutes the second group of characters, includes Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wilcox and their young adult children, Charles, Paul, and Eris.

¹See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," pp. 23-27.

²See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," pp. 34.

Mr. Wilcox is a successful business man who believes the really important things in life are contracts, committee meetings, motor cars, bigness, and expansion. He ignores the life of the spirit. Mrs. Wilcox represents rural England, the past, and intuitive knowledge. Howards End, her life-long home, is her spirit and her sustenance. She is kind, loving, gracious, a true aristocrat though of yeoman ancestry. The Wilcox children, who are all cruder manifestations of their father, display no spiritual heritage from their mother. The third family, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bast, are of the lowest fringe of the lower middle class. He is a clerk, and she is a woman of uncertain past. Leonard Bast, who is incomprehensible to his wife, has aspirations for a better life and feels that in Literature and Art he may suddenly open doors which will help him to achieve this vague something which he seeks. His yearnings are those of the romantic. The interweavings of the lives and the interactions which result from the contacts of these three sets of characters, as portrayed against a background of England during a period of rapid industrial changes, provide the material for this novel.

Margaret and Helen Schlegel first met Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox in Heidelberg. The Wilcoxes invited both Margaret and Helen to visit Howards End, but when the time of the scheduled visit arrived, Margaret could not go because of the illness of her younger brother; so Helen went alone. Helen fell in love with the overt masculinity of Mr. Wilcox and the younger members of the family, became engaged to Paul, and then broke her engagement the next morning when she saw that he panicked in fear that she would reveal the engagement to

his family. Mrs. Wilcox's innate tact protected the remnants of human dignity in a scene which resulted from an inadvertant disclosure. Disillusioned by her glimpse behind the masculine facade, Helen returned to London in considerable distress, declaring to her sister that while the Wilcox family seemed very competent, there was no inner substance to their lives, and that from now on personal relations would, for her, remain the real life.

When the Wilcox family temporarily leases an apartment in London, it just happens to be in the new ornate building across the street from the Schlegel's family residence. Mrs. Wilcox, discovering their proximity, leaves her calling card at their door. Margaret sends a brief message saying she believes it best if the two families do not meet again. Mrs. Wilcox immediately returns a note saying that Margaret should not have sent such a letter, that the purpose of her own call had been to say that Paul had gone abroad. Margaret is ashamed, grabs a shawl, dashes across the street, and hurries up to Mrs. Wilcox's apartment to apologize for her rudeness. Margaret is taken into the presence of Mrs. Wilcox, who explains that she is sitting up in bed writing letters because she is resting from a strenuous week of activity. Amicable relations being reestablished with Mrs. Wilcox, and the curious rapport which the two women had previously felt reasserting itself, Margaret, after a brief visit, prepares to go.

In this scene, Mrs. Wilcox, representative of the past, of rural England and tradition, of intuitive breeding and inarticulate knowledge, finds comfort in the philosophy of "proportion" which

Margaret espouses, because such a philosophy must inevitably recognize the importance of the past and its traditions.

"Good-bye, Miss Schlegel, good-bye. Thank you for coming. You have cheered me up."

"I'm so glad!"

"I—I wonder whether you ever think about yourself."

"I think of nothing else," said Margaret, blushing, but letting her hand remain in that of the invalid.

"I wonder. I wondered at Heidelberg."

"I'm sure!"

"I almost think—"

"Yes?" asked Margaret, for there was a long pause—a pause that was somehow akin to the flicker of the fire, the quiver of the reading-lamp upon their hands, the white blur from the window; a pause of shifting and eternal shadows.

"I almost think you forget you're a girl."

Margaret was startled and a little annoyed. "I'm twenty-nine," she remarked. "That's not so wildly girlish."

Mrs. Wilcox smiled.

"What makes you say that? Do you mean that I have been gauche and rude?"

A shake of the head. "I only meant that I am fifty-one, and that to me both of you—Read it all in some book or other; I cannot put things clearly."

"Oh, I've got it—inexperience. I'm no better than Helen, you mean, and yet I presume to advise her."

"Yes. You have got it. Inexperience is the word."

"Inexperience," repeated Margaret, in serious yet buoyant tones. "Of course, I have everything to learn—absolutely everything—just as much as Helen. Life's very difficult and full of surprises. At all events, I've got as far as that. To be humble and kind, to go straight ahead, to love people rather than pity them, to remember the submerged—well, one can't do all these things at once, worse luck, because they're so contradictory. It's then that proportion comes in—to live by proportion. Don't begin with proportion. Only prigs do that. Let proportion come in as a last resource, when the better things have failed, and a deadlock—Gracious me, I've started preaching!"

"Indeed, you put the difficulties of life splendidly," said Mrs. Wilcox, withdrawing her hand into the deeper shadows. "It is just what I should have liked to say about them myself."¹

"Proportion," as Margaret uses the word, necessitates the use of "tolerance, good temper and sympathy" in addition to the employment of culture which alone, according to Forster, enables one to see life as a whole. The ideas which emerge from this scene and from this novel are closely connected to the beliefs Forster expresses in his essays.

Mrs. Wilcox and Margaret, seemingly only re-establishing an amicable relationship, emerge with a much stronger bond, the bond of spiritual affinity. Upon this affinity is built both the action and the spirit of the remainder of the novel. And the description which purports only to make real the fact that a weary woman is resting in bed conveys through nuances a far greater meaning. For example, a pause is described as "somehow akin to the flicker of fire..." and Mrs. Wilcox's releasing herself from the handclasp is described as "withdrawing her hand into the deeper shadows." These brief passages suggest that while the figure of Margaret, characterized by her zestful speech, is emerging, the figure of Mrs. Wilcox, lover of the land, the past, and the inarticulate exponent of intuitive knowledge, is retreating from that same complicated world which Margaret faces with such great energy. These two principal female characters meet, commune, discover real

¹Forster, Howards End, pp. 72-73.

areas of previously-felt mutuality, and Margaret goes forth as the representative of them both. This selection illustrates the artistry with which Forster can create a scene that not only is a vital portion of the novel but also is an expression of ideas which are an important part of his own philosophy.

The exemplification of Margaret's philosophy, "to live by proportion," becomes the basis of a much later scene. During the two years which have elapsed, Mrs. Wilcox has died; Mr. Wilcox has expanded his business and has become much richer; and Leonard Bast, who first came accidentally into the Schlegels' lives, has been in infrequent contact with these young ladies. Mr. Wilcox, who became interested in Margaret when she was attempting to find a new home for her family because an apartment building was to be built on the site of her home of thirty years, has proposed, and Margaret has accepted him. However, the wedding must wait until after the country wedding of his daughter, Evie.

After Evie's wedding, Margaret and Henry are walking in the garden when three additional guests appear. Henry is tired; so Margaret goes to greet the new arrivals. She is greatly surprised to see Helen, who had declined the wedding invitation, standing at the entrance with the Basts. Helen is excited, explaining in shrill tones that she found the Basts dispossessed and starving, and that she has brought them here by train for Henry to get Mr. Bast a job. Helen says Henry is responsible for Leonard's unemployment because it was his statement about the financial condition of Bast's former employer which caused the Schlegels to tell Bast to change jobs.

His new company has reduced its staff and dismissed him. After the explanation is made, Margaret and Helen discuss the situation. Margaret's part in the dialogue shows her regard for each human being as a person of innate value and dignity, her loyalty to her future husband, and her sense of proportion which alone brings hope to the individuals in her world.

She said: "Helen, I like Mr. Bast. I agree that he's worth helping. I agree that we are directly responsible."

"No, indirectly. Via Mr. Wilcox."

"Let me tell you once for all that if you take up that attitude, I'll do nothing. No doubt you're right logically, and are entitled to say a great many scathing things about Henry. Only, I won't have it. So choose."

Helen looked at the sunset.

"If you promise to take them quietly to the George, I will speak to Henry about them--in my own way, mind; there is to be none of this absurd screaming about justice. I have no use for justice. If it was only a question of money, we could do it ourselves. But he wants work, and that we can't give him, but possibly Henry can."

"It's his duty to," grumbled Helen.

"Nor am I concerned with duty. I'm concerned with the characters of the various people whom we know, and how, things being as they are, things may be a little better. Mr. Wilcox hates being asked favours; all business men do. But I am going to ask him, at the risk of a rebuff, because I want to make things a little better."

"Very well. I promise. You take it very calmly."

"Take them off to the George, then, and I'll try. Poor creatures! but they look tired." As they parted, she added: "I haven't nearly done with you, though, Helen. You have been most self-indulgent. I can't get over it. You have less restraint rather than more as you grow older. Think it over and alter yourself, or we shan't have happy lives."¹

¹Ibid., p. 228.

Although this dialogue is but a portion of a melodramatic incident in the plot, this limited exchange between the two sisters is important because in a few words it shows Margaret's philosophy of proportion being tested during a time of stress, reinforces Forster's avowed belief in the importance of "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy," displays his attitude toward "causes," and foreshadows coming action within the story.

Margaret here is actually practicing her philosophy that life should be lived by proportion. She is willing to intercede with Henry for the Basts, who she feels have been wronged, provided she does not have to wrong Henry by condemning him and by demanding restitution. Margaret is not so carried away by her sense of doing good that she fails to register the needs and peculiarities of the various persons involved. She will treat them all as human beings and will conduct her efforts on the basis of personal relations. She refuses to be intimidated by Helen's militant demands, even though these demands are called "responsibility," "justice," and "duty." Margaret mistrusts these high-sounding words—even as Forster mistrusts causes—because their champions lose sight of the individuals involved and frequently by their methods deny to some the very quality which they indorse.¹ Margaret's censure of Helen's "self-indulgence" in bringing the Basts into the midst of the wedding festivities, her concern about Helen's increasing lack of self-restraint, and her prophecy of unhappiness for the family unless

¹Forster, Two Cheers, p. 46.

Helen develops more self-discipline are really a plea to Helen, attempting to show her the necessity of learning "to live by proportion." Helen's later actions support the correctness of Margaret's judgment. While this scene between Margaret and Helen is artistically of no great appeal to the reader, it is important to this study because it shows a necessary scene within the novel functioning to express ideas which Forster also expresses in his essays.

A Passage to India, Forster's fifth and last novel, which was published in 1924, is a vibrant testimony to the importance—even the international importance—of understanding in personal relations and a documentary study of the multitudinous difficulties which obstruct the achievement of understanding between the English and the Indians during the tenure of British rule in India. Although Forster is aware of the two most obvious barriers—that the English are the rulers and the Indians the ruled, and that the English are white-skinned and the Indians brown-skinned—he evidently believes that these barriers could be surmounted if the more significant problems which involve the personal relationships of the Anglo-Indians, that is, the resident English, and the Indians could be solved. The insurmountable differences as presented here are those of temperament and training, with the emphasis on the temperament of the Indians and the training of the English. The Indians are impetuous, sensitive, exuberant, irresponsible—and desirous of affection more than justice. The English are dependable, truthful, practical, and—after a few contacts with the exuberant

irresponsibility of the Indians--unresponsive. A possible passage to India which Forster apparently suggests is the one available if "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy" could become the keynote in personal relations. The main criticism aimed by Forster at his fellow countrymen is the same criticism which he makes of the public school in his "Notes on the English Character." In that essay he says that the English public school sends forth men "with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts."¹ Forster is concerned here with the undeveloped heart.

The Indians who have attended universities in England have happy memories of the many kindnesses shown to them by the English, and even the Indians who have never left India reminisce about occasional contacts with newly-arrived English who have extended simple courtesies which the Indians cherish as memories; yet the more sophisticated Indians know that within a year the new arrival will become a typical Anglo-Indian, burlesque, authoritarian, a cold dispenser of justice. However, this is not a simple tract against the English in India; it is more objective than that; this novel shows in juxtaposition the characters of men of both countries, giving the reader as ample an opportunity to see the difficulties of living with the Indians as he has for noting the under-development of the British heart. Not to be ignored as a continual irritant in this story of personal relations between individuals of different color, nationality, education, religion, economics, politics, and

¹Forster, Abinger Harvest, p. 5.

culture is the blazing sun, which occasionally shares its domination of the seemingly limitless, rough, predominantly flat terrain with the vast night sky. Forster takes further recognition of the geographical characteristics of the country by having the three sections of his book, "Mosque," "Caves," and "Temple," represent "the three seasons of the Cold Weather, the Hot Weather, and the Rains, which divide the Indian year."¹

Forster uses the newly-arrived English and the young, not-yet-thoroughly-disillusioned Mohammedan, Dr. Aziz, as sources of contact between the Anglo-Indians and the Indians. Dr. Aziz, a young widower, is a physician and surgeon of great skill. He typifies the kind of Indian with whom it is important that the English make friends if their rule in India is to continue and if the dual occupancy of that country is to be harmonious. Dr. Aziz is at the beginning of the fullness of his mature years of professional power; and, because of his status within his group, his attitude toward the English will be reflected in the attitudes of his friends. He can be an important ally or an effective enemy. Having devoted his earliest adult years to his professional training and to his young family, he enters the novel with a minimum of accumulated prejudice against the English and a maximum potential for friendship.

In the first of two scenes which will be used from this novel to illustrate the importance which Forster places in personal

¹J. K. Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group (New York: The Noonday Press, 1954), p. 234.

relations, Dr. Aziz shows a great desire for understanding and exhibits an exuberance and child-like impetuosity when his religion is treated with a simple manifestation of respect, and his own essential dignity as a human being is recognized by a kindly manner. The tone of his personal relations with the English will have a profound effect upon his political opinions.

Chandrapore, on the banks of the Ganges, follows the river for two miles. The river front is filthy, and the streets are crowded with humanity and cluttered with its rubbish. The better houses are inland, and on slightly higher ground stand the red-brick bungalows of the British Civil Station. Across a twenty-mile expanse of flat land rise the Marabar Hills, which contain some unusual caves. It is early evening, and Dr. Aziz is at Hamidullah's house for dinner. The conversation of the host and another guest, Mahmud Ali, concerns the character of Englishmen and whether it is possible for an Indian to be friends with an Englishman. Just as dinner is finally served, Aziz receives a message from Dr. Callendar, the civil surgeon, telling Aziz to report at once to Dr. Callendar's bungalow. Aziz feels affronted, as he believes the command is unjustly infringing upon his personal life. He alights from the tonga before he arrives at the doctor's door, because he remembers hearing of an incident in which an Indian arriving at an Englishman's home by tonga was berated for not arriving by a means more suited to the station of an Indian. The doctor is not at home, nor has he left a message. Mrs. Callendar and another English lady

appropriate Dr. Aziz's tonga without even recognizing his presence.

He starts to walk home.

He was an athletic little man, daintily put together, but really very strong. Nevertheless walking fatigued him, as it fatigues everyone in India except the new-comer. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. A series of these little surprises exhausts; and he was wearing pumps, a poor preparation for any country. At the edge of the civil station he turned into a mosque to rest.

He had always liked this mosque. It was gracious, and the arrangement pleased him...Here was Islam, his own country, more than a Faith, more than a battle-cry, more, much more...Islam, an attitude towards life both exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home.

His seat was the low wall that bounded the courtyard on the left. The ground fell away beneath him towards the city, visible as a blur of trees, and in the stillness he heard many small sounds...But the mosque—that alone signified, and he returned to it from the complex appeal of the night, and decked it with meanings the builder had never intended. Some day he too would build a mosque, smaller than this but in perfect taste, so that all who passed by should experience the happiness he felt now. And near it, under a low dome, should be his tomb, with a Persian inscription:

Alas, without me for thousands of years
The Rose will blossom and the Spring will bloom
But those who have secretly understood my
heart—
They will approach and visit the grave where
I lie.

He had seen the quatrain on the tomb of a Deccan king, and regarded it as profound philosophy—he always held pathos to be profound. The secret understanding of the heart! He repeated the phrase with tears in his eyes, and as he did so one of the pillars of the mosque seemed to quiver. It swayed in the gloom and detached itself. Belief in ghosts ran in his blood, but he sat firm. Another pillar moved, a third, and then an Englishwoman stepped out into the moonlight. Suddenly he was furiously angry and shouted: "Madam! Madam! Madam!"

"Oh! Oh!" the woman gasped.

"Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all; you should have taken off your shoes, this is a holy place for Moslems."

"I have taken them off."

"You have?"

"I left them at the entrance."

"Then I ask your pardon."

Still startled, the woman moved out, keeping the ablution-tank between them. He called after her, "I am truly sorry for speaking."

"Yes, I was right, was I not? If I remove my shoes, I am allowed?"

"Of course, but so few ladies take the trouble, especially if thinking no one is there to see."

"That makes no difference. God is here."

"Madam?"

"Please let me go."

"Oh, can I do you some service now or at any time?"

"No, thank you, really none—good night."

"May I know your name?"

She was now in the shadow of the gateway, so that he could not see her face, but she saw his, and said with a change of voice, "Mrs. Moore."

"Mrs. ———" Advancing, he found that she was old. A fabric bigger than the mosque fell to pieces, and he did not know whether he was glad or sorry. She was older than Hamidullah Begum, with a red face and white hair. Her voice had deceived him.

"Mrs. Moore, I am afraid I startled you. I shall tell my community—our friends—about you. That God is here—very good, very fine indeed. I think you are newly arrived in India.

"Yes—how did you know?"

"By the way you address me. No, but can I call you a carriage?"¹

Mrs. Moore explains that she only came from the club house, that a play which she had previously seen in London was being staged and so she had decided to take a walk. Dr. Aziz warns her of the dangers of walking alone at night, and then questions her about

¹E. M. Forster, A Passage to India (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924), pp. 19, 20, 21.

being in India. Mrs. Moore discloses that she is here to visit her son, the City Magistrate, and that she has two other children at home in England. She has been twice widowed; the children in England are children of her second marriage. Dr. Aziz, a widower, also has two sons and a daughter, and he is delighted at the coincidence.

They were both silent for a little, thinking of their respective families. She sighed and rose to go.

"Would you care to see over the Minto Hospital one morning?" he enquired. "I have nothing else to offer at Chandrapore."

"Thank you, I have seen it already, or I should have liked to come with you very much."

"I suppose the Civil Surgeon took you."

"Yes, and Mrs. Callendar."

His voice altered. "Ah! A very charming lady."

"Possibly, when one knows her better."

"What? What? You didn't like her?"

"She was certainly intending to be kind, but I did not find her exactly charming."

He burst out with: "She has just taken my toga without my permission--do you call that being charming?--and Major Callendar interrupts me night after night from where I am dining with my friends and I go at once, breaking up a most pleasant entertainment, and he is not there and not even a message. Is this charming, pray? But what does it matter? I can do nothing and he knows it. I am just a subordinate, my time is of no value, the verandah is good enough for an Indian, yes, yes, let him stand, and Mrs. Callendar takes my carriage and cuts me dead...."

She listened.

He was excited partly by his wrongs, but much more by the knowledge that someone sympathized with them. It was this that led him to repeat, exaggerate, contradict. She had proven her sympathy by criticizing her fellow-countrywoman to him, but even earlier he had known. The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up, and though his words were querulous his heart began to glow secretly. Presently it burst into speech.

"You understand me, you know what others feel. Oh, if others resembled you!"

Rather surprised, she replied: "I don't think I understand people very well, I only know whether I like or dislike them."

"Then you are an Oriental."

She accepted his escort back to the club, and said at the gate that she wished she was a member, so that she could have asked him in.

"Indians are not allowed into the Chandrapore Club even as guests," he said simply. He did not expatiate on his wrongs now, being happy. As he strolled downhill beneath the lovely moon, and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as much as anyone owned it. What did it matter if a few flabby Hindus had preceded him there, and a few chilly English succeeded?¹

This scene shows "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy" as the basis for the establishment of a bond between two individuals of dissimilar age, sex, nationality, and creed, and suggests the strain to which this bond will be subjected. Dr. Aziz, sensitive, educated, a man of science, yearns most deeply for a need of the spirit: "the secret understanding of the heart." The constant need of impulsive, intense Dr. Aziz is for the reassurance that he possesses the friendship of another. The quick irritation which he displays when he is suddenly interrupted in a sanctuary of his own faith, on Indian soil, and the equally quick forgiveness which follows suggest a ready source for difficulties with the phlegmatic English. The newly-arrived Englishwoman seems slightly surprised that her habitual courtesy has been received with such vehemence. Yet her years and her maternal warmth contribute to her acceptance of Dr. Aziz as an individual person and allow for

¹Ibid., pp. 22, 23.

only an almost imperceptible disturbance in her preconceived ideas of India and Indians. Yet the questions remain: Will she continue to be able to give this unaffected courtesy? Will the other English and Indians present too many difficulties for the continuation of this friendship? Can Azin be satisfied with the undemonstrative brand of friendship which is regarded as typically English? All these ideas are implicit in this scene which is artistically so successful that it is a world of its own created on the printed page. The background is India; the problems are those of the Indians and the Anglo-Indians; the ideas are Forster's; but the product is art.

The second scene which will be used to show how important Forster considers personal relations is located at the Marabar Caves. The reader witnesses the cessation of an English woman's ability to make spiritual contact with other human beings or with her God. The monotonous echo of the cave objectifies the monotonous futility which during the last few weeks has been growing within her own soul. The solution to the problem of the Indians and the Anglo-Indians is beyond her intellectual grasp, and spiritually she seems beyond the geographical boundaries of her God. The press of the bodies and the stifling air of the cave seem to cut off her contact with life. Her actual physical death, which is the implicit forecast of this scene and which takes place within a few weeks following this death of her power to sustain personal relationships, seems to be a symbolic corollary to Forster's great belief in the importance of personal relations. The ability to establish fruitful

personal relations which a sympathetic friend brings life; therefore, the termination of this ability brings death. It even seems that this aged woman, Mrs. Moore, is a prophetic figure, that she is "Mother England," forecasting her country's future loss of power in India if England too is unable to give sustenance to these all-important relationships.

The reader feels that Mrs. Moore expects to give something of herself when she arrives in India, that she has a kindly interest in the problems of the country and the people, and that, in a way unclear to her, possibly through words of wisdom to her son, she expects to alleviate some of the tensions arising between Indians and English. Although she has a family in England which is very dear to her, she is also concerned with the welfare of her family here in India; yet the more she threads her way through the difficult personal relations in this land, the more fatigued she becomes. It is almost as if she finds relationships as Forster describes the soil: "...it fatigues everyone in India except the new-comer. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. A series of these little surprises exhausts..."¹

Mrs. Moore has had such a series. Even in the mosque, although her manner did not change, the author comments that there

¹Ibid., p. 18.

was a change of voice when she saw Dr. Aziz's face. She is surprised at the attitude of her son, Rommy Heaslop, toward the remarks made by Dr. Aziz about the Callendars. She can reconstruct the conversation and see that it could be considered offensive; yet it had not previously occurred to her to consider it thus, and she does believe that Rommy completely misses the spirit of the man. Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested, the young woman Mrs. Moore has brought with her to India, are both disappointed that the "Bridge Party," a party given for the English and the educated Indians by the head of the civil station, is not more satisfactory. The deference which the Indian ladies show nullifies all attempts at conversational exchange. A gracious invitation to visit an Indian home does not materialize, nor is the omission explained. A tea given by Mr. Fielding, the English principal of the local college, for Mrs. Moore, Miss Heaslop, Dr. Aziz, and Professor Godbole ends unpleasantly because of Rommy's inconsiderate interruption and rude manner. Because of the repeated failures of previous social encounters, neither Mrs. Moore nor Miss Quested looks forward with any great pleasure to a tour of the Marabar Caves as Dr. Aziz's guests. Dr. Aziz extends the invitation in a moment of enthusiasm and immediately regrets his impulsiveness. The twenty-mile journey is to be made by train. Dr. Aziz borrows servants from all of his friends; Fielding promises Heaslop to guard the women, and Professor Godbole, a Hindu and an authority on the caves, promises to accompany the group and explain the formations. Godbole prays too long, however; and he and Fielding, consequently,

miss the train. The two English ladies go along with Dr. Azis and his numerous native servants. Dr. Azis has arranged for an elephant to transport his English guests from train stop to the vicinity of the caves. He also has food served immediately upon the arrival because he has been warned "that English people never stop eating;" and he does not wish to be remiss. After food and a pleasant conversation, the tour begins.

The first cave was tolerably convenient. They skirted the puddle of water, and then climbed up over some unattractive stones, the sun crashing on their backs. Bending their heads, they disappeared one by one into the interior of the hills. The small black hole gaped where their varied forms and colours had momentarily functioned. They were sucked in like water down a drain. Bland and bald rose the precipices; bland and glutinous the sky that connected the precipices; solid and white, a Brahminy kite flapped between the rocks with a clumsiness that seemed intentional. Before man, with his itch for the scenery, had been born, the planet must have looked thus. The kite flapped away....Before birds, perhaps....And then the hole belched and humanity returned.

A Marabar cave had been horrid as far as Mrs. Moore was concerned, for she had nearly fainted in it, and had some difficulty in preventing herself from saying so as soon as she got into the air again. It was natural enough: she had always suffered from faintness, and the cave had become too full, because all their retinue followed them. Cramped with villagers and servants, the circular chamber began to smell. She lost Azis and Adela in the dark, didn't know who touched her, couldn't breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her mouth like a pad. She tried to regain the entrance tunnel, but an influx of villagers swept her back. She hit her head. For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not only did the crush and stench alarm her; there was also a terrifying echo.

Professor Godbole had never mentioned an echo; it never impressed him, perhaps. There are some exquisite echoes in India; there is the whisper round the dome at Bijapur; there are the long, solid sentences that voyage through the air at Mandu, and return unbroken to their creator. The echo in a Marabar cave is not like these, it is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said, the monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof. "Boum" is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or "bou-oum," or "ou-boum,"—utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce "boum." Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently.

After Mrs. Moore all the others poured out. She had given the signal for the reflux. Aziz and Adela both emerged smiling and she did not want him to think his treat was a failure, so smiled too. As each person emerged she looked for a villain, but none was there, and she realized that she had been among the mildest individuals, whose only desire was to honour her, and that the naked pad was a poor little baby, astride its mother's hip. Nothing evil had been in the cave, but she had not enjoyed herself; no, she had not enjoyed herself, and she decided not to visit a second one.¹

After privately urging Miss Quested to continue the tour of the caves without her and suggesting to Dr. Aziz that he not take so many people into the caves, Mrs. Moore sinks into a deck chair to write a letter to her children in England to await the return of Adela and Aziz.

The crush and the smells she could forget, but the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life. Coming at a moment when she chanced

¹Ibid. pp. 146, 147, 148.

to be fatigued, it had managed to murmur, "Pathos, piety, courage—they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value." If one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same—"ou-boum." If one had spoken with the tongues of angels and pleaded for all the unhappiness and misunderstanding in the world, past, present, and to come, for all the misery men must undergo whatever their opinion and position, and however much they dodge or bluff—it would amount to the same, the serpent would descend and return to the ceiling. Devils are of the North, and poems can be written about them, but no one could romanticize the Marabar because it robbed infinity and eternity of their vastness, the only quality that accomodates them to mankind.

She tried to go on with her letter, reminding herself that she was only an elderly woman who had got up too early in the morning and journeyed too far, that the despair creeping over her was merely her despair, her personal weakness, and that even if she got a sunstroke and went mad the rest of the world would go on. But suddenly, at the edge of her mind, Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from "Let there be light" to "It is finished" only amounted to "boum." Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul, the mood of the last two months took definite form at last, and she realized that she didn't want to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God. She sat motionless with horror, and when old Mohammed Latif came up to her, thought he would notice a difference. For a time she thought, "I am going to be ill," to comfort herself, then she surrendered to the vision. She lost all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air's.¹

Thus Mrs. Moore, who came to India quietly confident that there were answers to the problems of the English and the Indians,

¹Ibid., pp. 149, 150.

finds the country too vast and the continual incidents contributing to these problems too stifling both for her intellect and her emotions. The naked babe who shuts off her air and the echo which negates all she has believed symbolize her own frustration and emptiness. Even "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy" that are warmed by maternal instincts cannot, through one isolated instance, solve the problems of the English and the Indians. This possible passage to India needs more universal application and still poses the unanswered "how?" The Indians want love, affection, acceptance --acceptance of their own inadequacies and even acceptance after the discovery is made of their own turbulent natures; and when one is vulnerable, as Mrs. Moore is, the problem is capable of destroying the one who tries to help. Most Anglo-Indians, having less heart than Mrs. Moore, quickly become arid men; Mrs. Moore, endowed with more heart but not enough, being, in her words, "only an elderly woman who had got up too early in the morning and journeyed too far," is destroyed. Mrs. Moore, "Mother England," in losing her ability to establish and maintain fruitful personal relationships, foreshadows her own death, even as she prophesies the same fate for the English government in India.

Yet Mrs. Moore's experience in the caves is not confined to the theme of personal relations as expressed at story level or as implied at the international level within this novel. She has universal significance, sometimes being called a "Magna Mater figure, older than English and Indian and the strife between

them."¹ Mrs. Moore came to India believing "God is love," found the caves representative of evil (that is, the negation of love and personal relations), and through an inexplicable association in the minds of the characters of this novel becomes a harmonious force which aids in erasing their differences at the Festival of Krishna, believed by the pantheistic Hindus to be Lord of the Universe. The idea being expressed by Forster is that evil can be overcome only by "the human spirit in cooperation with the life-giving forces of nature."²

These scenes from A Passage to India and Howards End dramatize the problems of the individual in society and show that Forster is fully aware of the exceedingly complex nature of human life. Certainly through his own novels Forster is attempting to present "a perception of truth."³

¹Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 408.

²Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group, p. 261.

³See Chapter I, "Literary Criticism of the Novel," p. 5.

CHAPTER VI

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

Scenes so far analyzed were chosen primarily because they illustrate certain of Forster's major ideas about the individual and about his problems in society. Scenes to be presented here are selected because of their artistic merit. Each of these scenes has the qualities of beauty and universality which Forster—in his essays—says are characteristic of great literature.¹ Only one of the four scenes verbalizes social criticism; yet each affords to anyone who wishes to draw his own conclusion effective contrasts to the superficial aspects of human life.

While the dramatic action, pictorial beauty, and symbolism are, naturally, presented differently in each individual scene, and while the ideas convey meaning according to the content of the scene, two attitudes are implicit in the over-all impression gained from each of these scenes. The first of these ultimate impressions is that of limitlessness as the characters convey a feeling of oneness with the experiences of untold generations of the past and as they represent a vibrant connection with the future and emphasize the common humanity of all individuals. The second

¹See Chapter II, "Art and the Artist," pp. 16-18.

of these impressions is that human life gains grandeur not only because of this longitudinal link with humanity but also because of a mystical, lateral connection with the Infinite. In these scenes, each of which takes place under the open sky, the author generates a feeling of closeness to the Source of Life.

The first illustration, chosen from A Room with a View, involves George Emerson, Lucy Honeychurch, and Miss Honeychurch's chaperone, Miss Bartlett. The action of this scene precipitates Miss Bartlett's decision to take Lucy from Florence; and later when this action is incorporated into the novel written by Miss Bartlett's friend and read aloud in the presence of George and Lucy, it causes George to propose to Lucy, and Lucy to break her engagement to Cecil Vyse.

In this scene from the early part of the novel, Lucy is seeking to rejoin her hosts, Mr. Eager and Mr. Beebe, clergymen, who have taken an ill-assorted group from the pension up into the Italian hills to see the beauty of the Italian countryside in the springtime. Having difficulty in finding these gentlemen, but remembering where the carriage was left, Lucy goes to ask the Italian driver for help. He seems to understand her request and by his actions indicates his willingness to act as her guide.

A one word caption, "Fertility," might be used to describe the following scene.

He only stopped once, to pick her some great blue violets. She thanked him with real pleasure. In the company of this common man the world was beautiful and direct. For the first time she felt

the influence of Spring. His arm swept the horizon gracefully; violets, like other things, existed in great profusion there; would she like to see them?

"Ma bogni uomini."

He bowed. Certainly. Good men first, violets afterwards. They proceeded briskly through the undergrowth, which became thicker and thicker. They were nearing the edge of the promontory, and the view was stealing round them, but the brown network of the bushes shattered it into countless pieces. He was occupied in his cigar, and in holding back the pliant boughs. She was rejoicing in her escape from dullness. Not a step, not a twig, was unimportant to her.

"What is that?"

There was a voice in the wood, in the distance behind them. The voice of Mr. Eager? He shrugged his shoulders. An Italian's ignorance is sometimes more remarkable than his knowledge. She could not make him understand that perhaps they had missed the clergymen. The view was forming at last; she could discern the river, the golden plain, other hills.

"Eccolo!" he exclaimed.

At the same moment the ground gave way, and with a cry she fell out of the wood. Light and beauty enveloped her. She had fallen on to a little open terrace, which was covered with violets from end to end.

"Courage!" cried her companion, now standing some six feet above. "Courage and love."

She did not answer. From her feet the ground sloped sharply into view, and violets ran down in rivulets and streams and cataracts, irrigating the hillside with blue, eddying round the tree stems, collecting into pools in the hollows, covering the grass with spots of azure foam. But never again were they in such profusion; this terrace was the wall-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth.

Standing at its brink, like a swimmer who prepares, was the good man. But he was not the good man that she had expected, and he was alone.

George had turned at the sound of her arrival. For a moment he contemplated her, as one who had fallen out of heaven. He saw radiant joy in her face, he saw the flowers beat against her dress in blue waves. The bushes above them closed. He stepped quickly forward and kissed her.

Before she could speak, almost before she could feel, a voice called, "Lucy! Lucy! Lucy!" The silence of life had been broken by Miss Bartlett, who stood brown against the view.¹

¹Forster, A Room with a View, pp. 108, 109-110.

Nature, fertile in its springtime, expresses a richness and abundance by giving forth the profusion of beauty which is described by the author; man, represented here by George Emerson, likewise fertile in the springtime of his youth, finds himself one with the beauty which surrounds him and expresses the abundance of his own nature by acknowledging his desire to love. Certainly this symbolism, given here dramatically and expressing an intuitive spirituality, builds the feeling that all individuals share both a common humanity and a closeness to the Infinite.

Miss Bartlett and the superficial qualities of life which she represents, and even the driver-turned-guide, who is in rapport with his surroundings and who, therefore, intentionally misleads Lucy, are soon lost in the maze of memory; yet the picture of George and Lucy's meeting on the Italian promontory remains. Skillfully the author leads the way to paint his picture. He builds with detail--the Italian's cigar, the pliant boughs which must be held back; he builds with color and symbolism--the brown undergrowth of old bushes and the rivulets, streams, and cataracts of violets; he builds with surprise--the sudden, overwhelming drama of the open vista and the good young man. George, standing on the brink even as a swimmer might stand, is a swimmer ready to plunge into the stream of life. The violets in their formations, eddying, pooling, and swirling, connote life-giving water, for the author says "...this terrace was the well-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth."¹ George and Lucy, in mystic rapport

¹Forster, A Room with a View, p. 110.

with their surroundings, represent the primal source of human life. Aesthetically, dramatically, and symbolically, the author through the use of simple words creates a scene which cannot be forgotten and which, although it was built with words, cannot be completely explained through the use of words. While seemingly giving complete attention to the details of the story, Forster creates a scene of universal significance.¹

A second scene of great beauty is from Where Angels Fear To Tread, Forster's first novel, which contrasts the small town culture of Sawston, England, with the culture of Monteriano, Italy. Lilia Herriton, the thirty-three-year-old widow of Charles Herriton and mother of his ten-year old daughter, travels to Italy, chaperoned by Caroline Abbott, a steady, refined young woman ten years younger than the impulsive, mediocre Lilia. Lilia, who in the years since her husband's death has been dominated by his mother, welcomes the change. Lilia's daughter remains in England with her paternal grandmother, who hopes to rear the girl in the Herriton tradition. In Italy Lilia meets, thinks she loves, and marries an impecunious, crude, handsome, stocky Italian, ten years her junior, who is attracted to Lilia by her fair skin, her blonde hair, and her money. Caroline feels responsible for the marriage because she herself, influenced by the beauty and seeming informality of Italy, encouraged Lilia in her revolt against the domination of her late husband's family. The marriage, destined for failure, gives the author

¹This is the quality which Forster calls "prophecy." See Chapter I, "Literary Criticism of the Novel," p. 9.

ample opportunity to contrast the cultures of England and Italy. Whereas Lilia's stupidity has an international tinge, Mrs. Herriton's rigid class feeling, false pride, and insincerity are definitely Sawston English. The exceedingly limited religious concepts of her daughter Harriet, and the observer-of-life culture of her son Philip,¹ both testify to the unhealthy mental atmosphere of their home. Gino exemplifies the warm-hearted, careless, impersonally passionate Italian and also the despotic Italian male. The deepest love of Gino's life is the intense regard he has for his son, born to Lilia just before she dies. This baby becomes a source of contention. Mrs. Herriton attempts to ignore the existence of the baby;² but when she learns that Caroline Abbott thinks she should want it, she attempts, through her lawyers, to gain possession from Gino. As he refuses to part with his son for the financial consideration which the lawyers offer, Mrs. Herriton dispatches both Philip and Harriet to Italy with orders to bring the baby to England. Mrs. Herriton knows that if Philip fails, nothing will stop Harriet, for she will not adopt a new idea or revise an old one. Caroline Abbott goes alone to Italy to get the child for herself or to help

¹Philip Herriton is very similar to Cecil Vyse, who appears in A Room with a View. Both reveal Forster's belief that to be meaningful culture should enable the individual to see life as a whole.

²J. K. Johnstone in The Bloomsbury Group (p. 167) points out that this denial of blood brings serious consequences to the Herriton family.

Chapter IV, "The Attainment of Self-Knowledge and Affirmative Action," also discusses this question when Rickie Elliot in The Longest Journey denies his brother. See p. 51.

the Herritons, whichever she decides is better for the baby.

The following scene comes immediately after Caroline has comprehended the depth of Gino's paternal love. This realization causes her to cease contending for the child. The author here offers a human standard against which worldly values may be measured.

"May I help you to wash him?" she asked humbly.

He gave her his son without speaking, and they knelt side by side, tucking up their sleeves. The child had stopped crying, and his arms and legs were agitated by some overpowering joy. Miss Abbott had a woman's pleasure in cleaning anything--more especially when the thing was human. She understood little babies from long experience in a district, and Gino soon ceased to give her directions, and only gave her thanks.

"It is very kind of you," he murmured, "especially in your beautiful dress. He is nearly clean already. Why, I take the whole morning! There is so much more of a baby than one expects. And Perfetta¹ washes him just as she washes clothes. Then he screams for hours. My wife is to have a light hand. Ah, how he kicks! Has he splashed you? I am very sorry."

"I am ready for a soft towel now," said Miss Abbott, who was strangely exalted by the service.

"Certainly! Certainly!" He strode in a knowing way to a cupboard. But he had no idea where the soft towel was. Generally he dabbed the baby on the first dry thing he found.

"And if you had any powder."

He struck his forehead despairingly. Apparently the stock of powder was just exhausted.

She sacrificed her own clean handkerchief. He put a chair for her on the loggia, which faced westward, and was still pleasant and cool. There she sat, with twenty miles of view behind her, and he placed the dripping baby on her knees. It shone now with health and beauty: it seemed to reflect light, like a copper vessel. Just such a baby Bellini sets languid on his mother's lap, or Signorelli flings wriggling on pavements of marble, or Lorenzo di Credi, more reverent but less divine, lays carefully among flowers, with his head upon a wisp of golden straw. For a time Gino

¹Perfetta is Gino's housekeeper who also helps take care of the baby.

contemplated them standing. Then, to get a better view, he knelt by the side of the chair, with his hands clasped before him.¹

Symbolically the scene could be called "The Eternal Trinity." Quite possibly, it represents a Christian Trinity because there is the Virgin, the Babe, and the father figure; but the picture does not seem to be limited to the confines of one religion—it represents the miracle of all human life, irrespective of religion. These three are a supreme achievement of Nature. The young woman, the nude babe, and the young man are a part of that same Majesty and Simplicity which is evidenced by the hills, the trees, and the sky which extends in limitless space beyond them. The author, who has previously seemed in such a great hurry, summarizing, complicating, and compounding facts, suddenly changes his pace and writes with great ease a scene which has the effect of a lyrical interlude. The young man and woman work together bathing the baby; and, in this act of purification, they also remove those barriers of culture, of custom, and of superficial refinement which label the young man "Italian" and the girl "English." Together they perform the ever-new, age-old ritual; and when their task is completed, they cease movement, and the picture they present suddenly extends beyond the limits of their story and becomes a universal symbol of human life.

The third scene is from The Longest Journey. The characters

¹Forster, Where Angels Fear To Tread, pp. 140, 141.

involved here are Rickie Elliot, the lame young man who twice mistakes the nature of reality, and Stephen Wonham, Rickie's illegitimate half-brother, who is precious to Rickie now that he knows that Stephen is his mother's son. This scene takes place late in the story as Rickie is going to Cadover to visit his aunt, Mrs. Failing, while Stephen is going to Cadover to visit friends. Most of the journey is by train, but Stephen hires a carriage for the last few miles as he wishes to drive through the country and see familiar sights. The young men talk of life and marriage. As night surrounds them and they approach the village of Cadover, they come to a stream in which Stephen has frequently bathed. The horse stops to drink, and Stephen decides to go wading.

The following scene, dramatic and sensitive, foreshadows Rickie's annihilation and Stephen's continuation. This scene pictorializes man's hope for immortality, presenting symbolically his yearnings for continuation.

Rickie watched the black earth unite to the black sky. But the sky overhead grew clearer, and in it twinkled the Plough and the central stars. He thought of his brother's future and of his own past, and of how much truth might lie in that antithesis of Ansell's: "A man wants to love mankind, a woman wants to love one man." At all events, he and his wife had illustrated it, and perhaps the conflict, so tragic in their own case, was elsewhere the salt of the world. Meanwhile Stephen called from the water for matches: there was some trick with paper which Mr. Failing had showed him, and which he would show Rickie now, instead of talking nonsense. Bending down, he illuminated the dimpled surface of the ford. "Quite a current," he said, and his face flickered out in the darkness. "Yes, give me loose paper, quick! Crumple it into a ball."

Rickie obeyed, though intent on the transfigured face. He believed that a new spirit dwelt there, expelling the crudities of youth. He saw steadier eyes, and the sign of manhood set like a bar of gold upon steadier lips. Some faces are knit by beauty, or by intellect, or by a great passion: had Stephen's waited for the touch of years?

But they played as boys who continued the nonsense of the railway carriage. The paper caught fire from the match, and spread into a rose of flame. "Now gently with me," said Stephen, and they laid it flower-like on the stream. Gravel and tremulous weeds leapt into sight, and then the flower sailed into deep water, and up leapt the two arches of a bridge. "It'll strike!" they cried; "no, it won't; it's chosen the left," and one arch became a fairy tunnel, dropping diamonds. Then it vanished for Rickie; but Stephen, who knelt in the water, declared that it was still afloat, far through the arch, burning as if it would burn forever.¹

Again when Forster slows his pace and seems to be giving exclusive attention to the action of the moment, he builds a scene of universal significance. He commands complete attention and therefore makes his reader vulnerable to the full impact of the scene. Rickie watches the "black earth unite to the black sky," notices the stars as they twinkle, and studies Stephen's transfigured face as it is illuminated by the match in the darkness. Forster uses the symbolism of water both as the life-giving source and as the vast stream of human life, and he uses the lighted paper as the Torch of Truth. Stephen, who wades out into the stream and kneels down in these moving waters of life, becomes joyful because he believes that the lighted torch which he cast onto the dark waters, and which he continues to watch, is going to burn on forever; while

¹Forster, The Longest Journey, pp. 303, 309.

Rickie, who helped launch the torch, but who remains on the bank, can follow its course only through the first arch when, for him, the light ceases. As Stephen strains to follow the light which goes farther and farther, it seems that this light, on its precarious journey through the surging darkness, must be the Torch of Truth, promising immortality to those men who have contributed to human life by finding and nourishing truth in their own lives. Then having built an aesthetic, symbolic scene of men, darkness, arches, and light, Forster keeps the picture poised for one dramatic moment; and it becomes a symbol of assurance to all men who hope that their truth shall live after them.

Another scene of great beauty which follows a reestablishment of friendship between Fielding and Aziz concludes Forster's fifth novel, A Passage to India. When Mrs. Moore found in the caves the negation of all she had believed, she withdrew from the tour and insisted that Dr. Aziz and Miss Quested continue without her. In one of the next caves, Miss Quested became confused and accused Dr. Aziz of molesting her. This ended the party and divided Chandrapore into unfriendly camps: the English and the Indian. Fielding did not believe Aziz guilty; so he aided the Indians. Aziz was brought to trial, but at the height of the proceedings, Miss Quested dismissed her charge—suddenly she knew, even as Mrs. Moore had known, that Aziz was not guilty. The natives outside the courtroom continued their chant, "Esmiss Esmoor, Esmiss Esmoor." Following the trial, the English received word that Mrs. Moore, who had been on her way to England, had died at sea. Fielding's insistence that Aziz make

no financial demands upon Miss Quested caused a break in their friendship. When Aziz received word that Fielding had returned to England and married, he assumed that Fielding had married Miss Quested and had gained the money which Aziz did not demand as recompense for defilement of character.

Aziz left Chandrapore and went into the Mau, a predominantly Hindu district infrequently visited by the English; and Professor Godbole became head of a non-existent school in the Mau. Fielding, who had really married Mrs. Moore's daughter, Stella, when he went to England, has now returned to India with his wife and Ralph Moore, his brother-in-law. In his new capacity of government inspector of Indian schools, Fielding with his family visits the Mau. Fielding and Aziz have not met for two years, and Fielding's letters to Aziz have gone unanswered. Aziz is adamant in his refusal to be friends with Fielding—even though he discovers he had misunderstood about the marriage—until he meets Ralph Moore, who is so very much like the late Mrs. Moore that Aziz feels a new surge of kindness and asks Ralph to row with him out onto the water to witness the Hindu festival of Krishna. Fielding and his wife are already on the water. In the strong winds and drenching rains the two boats collide, and after "the funny shipwreck there had been no more nonsense or bitterness, and they went back laughingly to their old relationship as if nothing had happened."¹ So Mrs. Moore's influence in conjunction with the Hindu festival reunites the central figures in the story,

¹Forster, A Passage to India, p. 317.

finally triumphing over the evil in the caves.

Yet as Forster unites his characters on these outer reaches of human experience, he still knows that men are "born separately and die separately"¹ and consequently must live their individual lives. This final vibrant scene, which unfolds the concluding moments of the story and actually prophesies England's loss of power in India, transcends this limitation, and presents a picture that gives a greater truth: To travel alone is man's destiny.

In this scene which takes place the day following the festival, Fielding and Aziz are returning from a horseback ride in the Mau jungles.

All the way back to Mau they wrangled about politics. Each had hardened since Chandrapore, and a good knock about proved enjoyable. They trusted each other, although they were going to part, perhaps because they were going to part. Fielding had "no further use for politeness," he said, meaning that the British Empire really can't be abolished because it's rude. Aziz retorted, "Very well, and we have no use for you," and glared at him with abstract hate. Fielding said "Away from us, Indians go to seed at once....Look at you, forgetting your medicine and going back to charms. Look at your poems."—"Jolly good poems, I'm getting published Bombay side." --"Yes, and what do they say? Free our women and India will be free. Try it, my lad. Free your own lady in the first place, and see who'll wash Ahmed, Karim and Jamila's faces. A nice situation!"

Aziz grew more excited. He rose in his stirrups and pulled at his horse's head in the hope it would rear. Then he should feel in a battle. He cried: "Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons. We wanted to know you ten years back—now it's too late. If we see you and sit on your committees, it's for political reasons, don't you make any mistake." His horse did rear. "Clear out, clear out, I say. Why are we put to so much suffering? We used to blame you, now we blame

¹See Chapter III, "Major Ideas," p. 29.

ourselves, we grow wiser. Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war—aha, aha! Then is our time." He paused, and the scenery, though it smiled, fell like a gravestone on any human hope.... They splashed through butterflies and frogs; great trees with leaves like plates rose among the brushwood. The divisions of daily life were returning, the shrine had almost shut.

"Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?" jeered Fielding, drawing rein.

"No, the Afghans. My own ancestors."

"Oh, your Hindu friends will like that, won't they?"

"It will be arranged—a conference of Oriental statesmen."

"It will indeed be arranged."

"Old story of 'We will rob every man and rape every woman from Peshawar to Calcutta,' I suppose, which you get some nobody to repeat and then quote every week in the Pioneer in order to frighten us into retaining you! We know!" Still he couldn't quite fit in Afghans at Mau, and, finding he was in a corner, made his horse rear again until he remembered that he had, or ought to have, a mother land. Then he shouted: "India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat! She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps! Fielding mocked again. And Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, not knowing what to do, and cried: "Down with the English anyhow. That's certain. Clear out, you fallows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's fifty-five hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then"—he rode against him furiously—"and then," he continued, half kissing him, "you and I shall be friends."

"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."¹

Dramatic action, beauty, and symbolism are fused into one clean-cut thrust in this final scene. Superficially, the basis for the conflict is political, but there would be other barriers even if both men were English or both were Indian. Ostensibly the action is provided by the horses; yet the real power arises from the differences in the natures of the two men: Aziz is excitable, causes his horse to rear, hates, and loves in the same moment. Fielding is controlled, reins his horse, jeers, wants friendship and the status quo. Beauty is motion: the rearing horse, the half-kiss bestowed by Aziz as he rides furiously against Fielding, the swerving horses. Motion is symbolic—Aziz's horse reacts to the turbulent spirit of his rider. Fielding's horse, as well as his emotions, is checked by a disciplined rein. Men are symbolic. Aziz is a man, an Indian, and India. Fielding is a man, an Englishman, and England. Then as the horses, the earth, and the rocks force separation of these two who would like to be friends, each becomes a universal symbol—man forever separated from man by the very nature of human life. Yet even here, the butterflies, the frogs, and the great trees give evidence of the bounty of the Ultimate Source and re-emphasize a mystical, lateral connection between man and his God.

¹Forster, A Passage to India, pp. 320, 321-322.

CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this study to examine Forster's theory of fiction as it appeared in Aspects of the Novel for the light it threw upon his own earlier practice, to classify his major ideas which were set forth in the two volumes of his essays, and to analyze certain significant scenes from the novels in order to show how certain of these ideas were incarnated in an artistic form.

In Aspects of the Novel Forster named "The Story; People; The Plot; Fantasy; Prophecy; Pattern and Rhythm" as the component forces with which the novelist builds, but he emphasized that the function of the novel should be to enable people to look at themselves in a new way, that it should provide an expansion of experience, an opening out—not a rounding off.¹

In his two volumes of essays, Abinger Harvest and Two Cheers for Democracy, Forster was deeply concerned with the individual's need for self-knowledge and affirmative action, for "tolerance, good temper, and sympathy" in personal relations, with the meaning of culture and its place in the life of the individual, and with man's desire to understand something of his place in the universe. These ideas have been shown to permeate his novels.

¹Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 169.

Specific scenes have shown Forster's power of probing hidden life at its source.¹ In Where Angels Fear To Tread, Forster contrasted the culture of suburban England with the centuries-old culture of Monteriano, Italy. In The Longest Journey, Forster studied the nature of reality, and in Room with a View, he demonstrated the necessity for self-knowledge and attachment to life. Howards End embodied the need for the maintaining of a sense of proportion in a changing culture, and A Passage to India, which ostensibly studied the problems of the Anglo-Indians and the Indians, really became an examination of man's problems in the universe.

Although critics acknowledge that Forster writes novels of ideas, they sometimes question the adequacy of his methods in projecting these ideas. Certainly Forster's plots do not by their structure convey his meanings, because the very complicated action, particularly in his early novels, does seem to be "a sort of obstacle race which his characters must undergo."² Failing to find an integration between plot and idea, the critics examine Forster's use of symbols, but here again they find weaknesses. Walter Allen says, "The greatest weakness in Forster is simply and all the time the inadequacy of his symbolism."³ Allen is especially critical of Forster's symbolic use of characters. He says that Gino in Where Angels Fear To Tread

¹Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 45.

²Walter Allen, The English Novel, p. 404.

³Ibid., p. 405.

is inadequate as a symbol of good-and-evil, that Stephen Wonham in The Longest Journey is likewise inadequate in a similar role, and that the Schlegels, the Wilcozes, and Leonard Bast in Howards End are not "big enough for the part they must play" as representatives of different groups in England during a period of industrial expansion. Only in the characterization of Mrs. Moore in A Passage to India does Allen believe that Forster succeeds in making the symbolic use of character "work." Furthermore, Lord David Cecil says that Forster fails when he attempts through the use of "Pan or Ceres or Krishna" to symbolize "the healing spiritual force of the natural universe."¹ While these two critics are especially blunt in their statements concerning the flaws of Forster's writing, they do typify the kind of disparagement directed at his novels by those who find them an inadequate medium for the portrayal of his ideas. Commenting in a much more moderate vein, Austin Warren says that Forster's "... 'double vision' allows him that modulation from crisp comedy to a delicate pathos, the passage from prose to poetry and back again, which is his prime quality. But the gift has its perils; and he does not always succeed in keeping the two worlds in proper focus."²

The present study, concerned primarily with the interrelationship of Forster's ideas, indicates that he conveys his major ideas

¹David Cecil, "E. M. Forster," Atlantic Monthly, CLXXVIII (January, 1949), p. 65.

²Austin Warren, Rage for Order (Chicago: The University Press, 1948), p. 140.

through dramatization. These focal scenes radiate, casting their light backward and forward, bringing Forster's ideas most clearly into focus. And although the critics may be justified in commenting on the inadequacy of his characterization of key figures or his shortcomings in the use of planned symbolism, his ideas live through the subtle artistry of vivid dramatization, in which the scene itself seems to be a unifying symbol. These scenes provide for the expansion of human experience which Forster says should be the goal of the novel. .

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