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DETHRONING JUPITER:

E. M. FORSTER'S REVISION OF JOHN RUSKIN

by

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to examine the extent to which the British novelist, E. M. Forster (1879-1970), was working in the tradition of the Victorian art critic and social prophet, John Ruskin (1819-1900). As a result of its investigation, the thesis establishes that Forster's novels may be profitably read as humanist revisions of Ruskin's proposals for social amelioration.

The thesis begins with a scrutiny of Forster's unpublished retrospective essay, "Three Generations", which is found to supply a model for dividing Forster's creative life into three major periods. As a preliminary, however, the first chapter of the thesis deals with Forster's life up to 1900, when Forster was living and studying in a society whose culture was still permeated by Ruskin's ideals and principles.

The thesis then moves to consider Forster's "first generation", which begins in 1900 and lasts until the First World War. Forster is shown to recall that at this time he was writing very much under the influence of Ruskin. The study of what happened to Forster's work during this "generation" occupies the greater part of this thesis, and demonstrates how Forster's novels are to be read as a liberal, humanist revision of Ruskin's earlier social critcism.

The thesis then examines Forster's "second generation", when the author revises his own pre-war liberalism in an attempt to adapt it to the conditions of the more relativistic post-war age. Ruskin's work now becomes less important to Forster, but still supplies an important and respected part of the intellectual tradition which Forster shares with the heroes of his fiction.

In Forster's "third generation", the period from the early thirties to 1937 when "Three Generations" was first read at Cambridge, but which may be

extended to include the later years of Forster's life, when society as a whole was becoming increasingly antagonistic to the cultural tradition to which he belonged, he argues for a fresh appreciation of Ruskin.

The thesis shows that other critical studies of Forster have been inadequate and misleading in leaving out of account the role that Ruskin's work had in fashioning Forster's thinking during all three "generations" of his career.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed [redacted]

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	*Albergo Empedocle and other writings.*
AH	*Abinger Harvest and England's Pleasant Land.*
AN	*Aspects of the Novel.*
AS	*Arctic Summer and other Fiction.*
CB	*Commonplace Book.*
GLD	*Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and related writings.*
HD	*The Hill of Devi and other Indian writings.*
HE	*Howards End.*
LTC	*The Life to Come and other stories.*
LJ	*The Longest Journey.*
LN	*The Lucy Novels.*
M	*Maurice.*
MT	*Marianne Thornton.*
PI	*A Passage to India.*
PP	*Pharos and Pharillion.*
RV	*A Room with a View.*
SS	*The New Collected Short Stories.*
TCD	*Two Cheers for Democracy.*
TG	"Three Generations."
WAFT	*Where Angesl Fear to Tread.*

Quotations from Ruskin are taken from *The Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition. 39 vols. Ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. London: George Allen, 1903-12.

INTRODUCTION

Since E. M. Forster's death in 1970 a considerable amount of study has been devoted to establishing the major influences of his work. It is now generally agreed, as K. W. Gransden suggests, that perhaps more than his later relationship with Bloomsbury, it was the earlier influences in Forster's life, which his novels "attempt to explore and, where this seemed to him desirable, to criticise and modify".[1] But while much has been written on Meredith, Arnold, Mill, Butler and the Cambridge figures, Moore and Lowes Dickinson, as major influences on Forster's development as a writer, another major figure from Forster's Victorian upbringing, John Ruskin, has been practically ignored. I agree that Forster's novels do very definitely attempt to explore the ideas he encountered during his development, and believe that it is an unjustifiable omission to overlook the influence of a major Victorian like John Ruskin in any reckoning of those influences.

A comparable case may make it clear. Richard Macksey has noted the importance to Proust's major work, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, of his "six years of apprenticeship to John Ruskin". Yet he notes that "overt references to Ruskin . . . are few and deceptively casual", and that the debt owed to Ruskin "can best be gauged by the reader who comes from an immersion in the novel"[2] to Proust's prefaces and notes to his translations of Ruskin. From this standpoint, Ruskin can be seen to have contributed substantially to the imagery of Proust's novel; particularly "the discussion of Giotto and allegory, . . . and in the

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[1] K. W. Gransden, *E. M. Forster*, Revised ed., Edinburgh, 1970, p. 5.

[2] In Marcel Proust, *On Reading Ruskin: Prefaces to* La Bible d'Amiens *and* Sésame et les Lys *with Selections from the Notes to the Translated Texts*, Translated and ed., Jean Autret, William Burford, and Phillip J. Wolfe. Intro., Richard Macksey, New Haven and London, 1987, p. xv.

evocation of Venice".[3] Forster likewise makes only brief reference to Ruskin in his novels *A Room with a View* and *Howards End*. From these references Gay, who alone has published solely on the Ruskin-Forster connection, has demonstrated that for Forster, like Proust, Ruskin was "an intellectual father figure . . . to be faced and fought by the creative personality of the young writer."[4]

I would like, through a more far-reaching examination of the works of Forster, to develop the idea that he was working in a particularly Ruskinian tradition, especially in the pre-war years. More than an influence, Ruskin provided the terms for a dialogue in which Forster seeks to present his own more modern vision of society and methods of its amelioration. In doing this it may be that I resemble a certain Mr Rankin whose researches into Italian art-history involved the "Robin Hood method of robbing the rich to feed the poor" (*LN*:32), yet it is evident that apart from Gay there has been a noticeable neglect of Ruskin in Forsterian scholarship to date.

Even the most desultory reading of the unpublished work held in the Forster Collection at King's College, Cambridge, reveals Forster's work to be liberally sprinkled with references to Ruskin. Yet the few critics who have not ignored the connection tend to dismiss Ruskin as little more than an object of fun. As a result little, except by Gay, has been written concerning the relationship of Forster and Ruskin. Meyers and Summers, and to a much lesser extent Hoy and Holt,[5] are perhaps the only critics who do more than simply note the presence of Ruskin, and of these Meyers and Summers limit their focus to the examination

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

[4] Penelope Gay, "E. M. Forster and John Ruskin: The Ambivalent Connection," *Southern Review* (Adelaide) 11 (1978), p. 283.

[5] Jeffrey Meyers, *Painting and the Novel*, Manchester, 1975, and C. J. Summers, "The Meaningful Ambiguity of Giotto in *A Room with a View*," *English Literature in Transition* 30 (1987), 165-176, both deal with Ruskin's position of interpreter of medieval art. Lee Elbert Holt, "E. M. Forster and Samuel Butler," *PMLA* 61 (1946), 804-819, at least recognises the similarity between Ruskin and the character of Mr Failing in *The Longest Journey*. While Pat C. Hoy II, "The Narrow Rich Staircase in Forster's *Howards End*," *Twentieth Century*

of the figure of Giotto in Forster with Ruskin a secondary consideration.

There is an unpublished lecture, known under the title "Three Generations",[6] which provides a useful starting point for an examination of Ruskin's influence on Forster. The relevance of this lecture to the work at hand is three-fold; it provides a useful chronology of the changes in Forster's life as a creative writer, and more importantly it contains both an admission of Forster's perceived debt to Ruskin, and a fine example of the depth of this influence.

First, in this lecture Forster conceives of the three generations between the turn of the century and 1937, a period which coincides with his own creative life, as the acts of a play—"the tragedy of the individualist—a tragedy in three acts."

> In the first act the individualist hopes to improve society, in the second he lives to improve himself, in the third act he finds that he's no longer wanted, and has either to merge himself in a movement or to retire. One has to face facts, and it seems to me that my particular job is to retire. (*TG*:287)

Forster attempts to limit the importance of this admission to his work as a whole claiming that the lecture is "a retrospect not a confession" and that his primary aim has been "to analyse the civilisations through which I've lived." (*TG*:287) Yet this conception of the three periods as corresponding to the acts of a play which in turn correspond to divisions in Forster's own life must encourage its application to his work.

In these "three acts" Forster also attempts to define the characteristics of the three divergent generations as found in the works of writers Forster sees as typical of their respective periods. This method of deriving the predominant

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Literature 31 (1985), 221-235, discusses the Ruskin references in *Howards End*.

[6] According to the catalogue to Forster Collection held in the Modern Archives in King's College this lecture was delivered to an audience of undergraduates at a meeting of the Cambridge Majlis, on 7th February 1937, and again to a political discussion group, University College, Nottingham, on 28th January 1939. As this paper forms an important part of this thesis I have included it as an appendix. References to this paper are given as *TG* followed by the page number as it occurs in the appendix.

temper of any period from the works of its leading artist, or author, is itself typical of Ruskin's approach in volume three of *Modern Painters* where Homer and Phidias, Dante and Giotto, and Turner and Scott, represent the temperament of the Classical, Medieval and Modern periods respectively. Forster chooses Meredith as representative of the first generation, Proust for the second, while the third generation remains unrepresented. Of the few critics who have looked at this unpublished paper, Shaheen, whose focus was to demonstrate the "non-committal attitude"[7] which Forster took towards Meredith generally, tends to find Forster's comments on Meredith as a novelist in this lecture facile. Yet the apparent lack of depth with which Forster attempts his portrait of Meredith has one ready explanation—Forster is substituting Meredith for himself. Forster's portrayal of Meredith as a "Victorian liberal, full of hope in the potentiality for improvement in society, confident in the stability both of human personality and of society itself",[8] with a definite distaste for science provides the reader with the portrait of a man who Shaheen feels only represents aspects of Meredith, but who is easily recognisable as Forster himself.

Similarly, the very aspects of Proust which Forster highlights as typical of the second generation—disillusionment, a new respect for science, and disinterested curiosity—are discoverable in Forster's own work from that period. As for Forster's failure to provide an author typical of the third generation, that may find its root in his own inability to produce fiction after *A Passage to India*. True, "Three Generations" may not be a confession but, as Bernard Shaw suggests in his own non-confessional pseudo-autobiography, "if a man is a deep writer all his works are confessions."[9] And in this lecture Forster is intent on discovering in Meredith and Proust the themes and justifications which dominate his own work from the respective periods, and his choice of Proust as embodying the charateristics of the second generation may well be based on his awareness of

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[7] M. Y. Shaheen, "Forster on Meredith," *Review of English Studies* 24 (1973), p. 190.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[9] George Bernard Shaw, *Sixteen Self Sketches*, London, 1949, p. 6.

the debt they shared to Ruskin. Thus the chronological framework which this lecture proposes doubles as a useful, if limited, aid to the understanding of Forster's work.

Of the three generations with which Forster deals, this thesis is primarily concerned with the first, the period from 1900 to the Great War. It is this pre-war period, "defined as 'Hope without Faith,'" that best characterises Forster's work as a liberal individualist. Forster recalls the prevailing attitude among his circle during this period: "We thought that evolution, speeded up here and there by the efforts of individuals, would gradually make the world better". (*TG*:273-4) Added to this hope for the future was that liberal substitute for religious faith for which Forster has become famous; a belief in the value of personal relationships.

> Though one shouldn't use the word "faith" about this early period, we had of course our tenets, our gadgets, our nostrums with which we hoped to improve society. The chief of this was our belief in personal-relationships, and I want to say something about it.
>
> Personal relationships have of course existed as long as people existed, and you may wonder if I refer to them in connection with any particular period. They [*sic*] point is that at the beginning of the century, they were exalted into something political, and it was felt that if they were solved the problems of civilisation would be solved too . . .. We deified personal relationships and expected them to function outside their appropriate sphere. By this time I was writing novels and I remember a sentence in one of them: personal relationships are the only things that matter, for ever and ever. I still believe this as regards the private life. (*TG*:274-5)

An important aspect of this early liberal movement, perhaps its one on-going success, was the progress achieved in the area of sex. The Suffragette Movement sprang, in Forster's view, "out of our belief in the individual and out of our refusal to divide the community into masculine and feminine. (Would that we had gone further, and refused to divide it into rich and poor)." (*TG*:276) Here Forster acknowledges the failing of his liberalism, that he was "completely ignoring the economic factor"—a mistake he sees as "typical of the period." (*TG*:275)

It is this distinction between personal relationships, including the associated issue of sexual politics, and the economic element which Forster feared was neglected, which will shape our discussion of Forster's pre-war work. Issues of sex will be delt with in chapters two and three, and the problem of harmonising spiritual freedom with economic planning for the working classes in chapters four and five. The final chapter of this work will provide a brief examination of both the second period of Forster's writing career in which he attempts to come to terms with the more relativistic post-war mood, which includes *A Passage to India*, and the final period in which Forster had given up writing fiction and had turned to non-fiction as the vehicle for his individualist propaganda.

All this is however but a framework for the real purpose of this thesis—the discussion of the obvious but complex influence which Ruskin had upon Forster. This influence is admitted explicitly by Forster in "Three Generations" where speaking of liberalism during the first generation he remarks that while it worked towards the improvement of society, the liberal element was noticeably "gloomy".

> We weren't gay about it—that's an odd thing as I look back. We were distinctly gloomy. All thoughtful people tended to gloom—it was part of their prerogative, it was a tradition stretching back to Ruskin & Carlyle. The prophet would sit oppressed by the woes of the world and the follies of mankind, while his womenfolk busied them noiselessly about the house, taking care not [to] disturb him, lest they drew the divine bolt upon themselves. (*TG*:274)

But "Three Generations" provides us not only with an admission of Ruskin's importance to Forster, but also significant evidence to suggest the depth of the Ruskin relationship, and Forster's habit of defining the terms of his discussions in a particularly Ruskinian idiom.

The reference here to the "womenfolk" is more an allusion to Carlyle than Ruskin, to the notorious wretchedness of Carlyle's married life and his ill-treatment of his wife. But apart from this instance it is Ruskin rather than Carlyle

who is the inspiration for much of what Forster has to say in this lecture.[10] The structure itself bears witness to this. By dividing his creative life into these three generations Forster is sub-consciously evoking Ruskin and the central chapters of the third volume of *Modern Painters* in which Ruskin himself divides all history into three periods, Classical, Medieval, and Modern. Moreover, as noted above, he adopts Ruskin's bias towards a mono-typical critique of the characteristic artist of each period through which he may gauge its prevailing temper. In the adaptation of this typically Götzist rhetorical device, Forster has also appropriated much of what Ruskin had to say about his own present to explain the years through which he had lived.

Forster's claim that the motto "Hope without Faith" should characterise the mood of his pre-war generation might lead us straight to Ruskin's chapter "Of Modern Landscape" in which he makes a similar claim for his own generation:

> There never yet was a generation of men (savage or civilized) who, taken as a body, so wofully fulfilled the words "having no hope, and without God in the world," as the present civilized European race. (v:322)

The motto for Ruskin's generation may well read "without Hope or Faith", the "darkness of heart" he perceived as typical of his age being due primarily to a "want of faith" (v:322). Forster, the humanist, attempts to update Ruskin's vision. Whereas for Ruskin the want of faith precluded hope, for Forster the absence of faith only encourages him in his liberalist hopes for the future of society. Yet for both Ruskin and Forster it was probably this loss of the certainties which attended religious faith that led to gloom.

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[10] Compare, for instance, Forster's notion of the "prophet . . . oppressed . . . by the follies of mankind" in "Three Generations" quoted above with the adaptation from Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* with which he closes the sixth chapter in *Howards End*: "Ruskin had visited Torcello by this time, and was ordering his gondoliers to take him to Murano. It occurred to him, as he glided over the whispering lagoons, that the power of Nature could not be shortened by the folly, nor her beauty altogether saddened by the misery, of such as Leonard." (*HE*:53)

Ruskin saw the loss of faith as affecting the men of his age as follows:

> nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery; the worst in reckless defiance; the plurality, in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to their hands. Most of our scientific men are in this last class . . .. (v:322-323)

A comparison with Forster's three generations of this division of "unbelievers" into the "best", the "plurality" and the "worst" leads to a striking correlation. The best of Ruskin's generation are in "doubt and misery" while Forster's first generation is characterised by its gloom. Ruskin's plurality similarly answers to Forster's second generation. This generation is defined by "disinterested curiosity".

> The disillusioned enquirer has one great advantage over the idealist: he doesn't want to prove anything, and is likelier to get at the truth. His disadvantage is that he may grow weary and stop, whereas the idealist pounds ahead. But until he grows weary he is the better enquirer, indeed the man who is disillusioned and yet retains vitality, represents, in my judgement, a very high type of man. The age we are examining tended towards the type. It wasn't interested in social or political work, it was interested in the truth, it had got the scientific spirit . . .. (*TG*:281-2)

The apposition of Forster's type with the "plodding hesitation" of Ruskin's "scientific men" is undeniable.

Finally, those whom Ruskin judges to be the "worst", those "in reckless defiance" fit closely with Forster's type of the third generation, a type characterised as having "Faith without Hope"—

> faith that though the world must go wrong it will never the less go right; the religious feeling. "Nothing can save us but a miracle," writes a young friend of mine, a young left-wing novelist, and adds: "Very well then, I demand a miracle." (*TG*:285)

Forster doesn't go so far as to accuse his third generation of recklessness, but certainly he emphasises their defiance; "the courage, the indifference to death—

they're grand".

Forster's dependence upon the Ruskinian tradition therefore goes much further than a gloomy hope of social progress: the division of his life into generations and the definitions of those periods all appear to come directly from Ruskin, though always flavoured to modern taste by Forster's humanism. Indeed, more than belonging to this tradition, Forster's own type can be seen to have been anticipated by Ruskin, in that same chapter from *Modern Painters*.

In "Of Modern Landscape" Ruskin's purpose is to demonstrate the effect on art, landscape art, of the loss of faith, and he believes the art resulting from this loss to be characterised by its "*cloudiness*" in stark contrast to the "*stability, definiteness,* and *luminousness*" (v:317) that characterised medieval art. He asserts that if "a general and characteristic name were needed for modern art, none better could be invented than 'the service of clouds.'" (v:318) From this point, using Aristophanes as his authority, Ruskin goes on to warn his audience of this predilection towards cloudiness declaring that "whoso believes in their divinity must first disbelieve in Jupiter," and will find the "quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith" succeeded by "easily encouraged doubt" and the "desire 'to speak ingeniously concerning smoke.'" Ruskin believes this process was best articulated by Aristophanes in the phrase the "dethroning of Jupiter," and the "coronation of the whirlwind". (v:318)

Of course by the beginning of Forster's first generation in 1900 "Jupiter", as orthodox religion, has been to a large degree usurped by humanism—a process accelerated by the first war. Ruskin's death in the same year did not however lessen his hold on the public imagination, and the years of Forster's first generation coincide with the growth of what Butler would have termed Ruskin's "vicarious existence"—in which the "power to influence vitiates death."[11] Apart from the obvious fame of such works on art and architecture as,

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[11] Samuel Butler, *Erewhon Revisited*, London, 1901; rpt. 1927, p. 135. Forster, who had read Butler extensively, appears to have been only to well aware of the power of "vicarious

The Stones of Venice, *Modern Painters* and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, by 1910 Ruskin's works on Political Economy had, as Lee reminds us, made him a best-seller. *Unto this Last* had sold 100,000 copies, *A Joy Forever* and *The Two Paths*, 75,000 each, and *Munera Pulveris* and *Time and Tide*, 35-50,000 each.[12] In many ways Ruskin had assumed the mantle of "Jupiter" to the new generation. Forster, who sought to crown the whirlwind of individualism and deify personal relationships, must have found the morality of Ruskinism oppressive. Yet while dethroning this relic of the Victorian age, Ruskin was inescapably there in Forster's thinking as an influence that had bent itself to uncover the truth of many of the problems that still remained unsolved in Forster's society, the role of women in society, the divisions of the rich and poor, and the preservation of the threatened countryside. Recalling Gransden's notion of the importance of early influences on Forster, it is perhaps appropriate to preface any discussion of Ruskin's influence on Forster's novels with an examination of Forster's life and writings during the period prior to Ruskin's death in 1900.

existence" as will be demonstrated later with regard to Mrs Moore in *A Passage to India*.

[12] Alan Lee, "Ruskin and Political Economy: *Unto this last*," in Robert Hewison, ed., *New Approaches to Ruskin*, London, Boston and Henley, 1981, p. 83.

CHAPTER ONE

The first intimations of an interplay between Ruskin and the young Forster appear in Forster's "Normandy Journal".[1] Forster toured Normandy with his mother in April 1895, and throughout the trip "diligently" kept, as Stape remarks, "his first travel diary, making Ruskin-like observations and composing an appendix on hotels and sights *à la* Baedeker, complete with stars."[2] The young Forster's preoccupation with the problems of restoration led to the use of many easily recognisable Ruskinisms. The influence of the master's own antagonism towards restoration is manifest in comments like that knowingly made of the cathedral at St Lô, "it has been 'restored'", and of the church at Rouen, "they are I believe going to restore the statues of the west façade. They want it, but I hope they will not be spoiled". The culmination of this mimicry is inspired by the repairs to the castle at Falaise; "they are actually repairing it! . . . The promenade might be bearable if it was not executed in shining red brick, like the sea wall at Eastbourne".

Also characteristic of Ruskin's attempt to "trace the lines of . . . [Venice] before it be forever lost" (ix:17) in the pages of his *The Stones of Venice* is the concern with the measurement of architectural features. This inclination is also imitated by the aspiring Forster who, for instance, carefully includes measurements of the towers of the Rouen church. The systematic approach to the details of his trip led Furbank to note its "methodic style" on the inside cover of the notebook in which the observations were made. However, on the whole, what "method" he may have possessed is more probably derived from Baedeker than

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[1] An autograph manuscript of observations made on this tour between April 11-27 is held in the Modern Archives at King's College, Cambridge.

[2] J. H. Stape, *An E. M. Forster Chronology*, London, 1993, p. 4.

Ruskin, as will become evident when discussing *The Lucy Novels.*

Baedeker's influence, as duly noted by Stape above, is also noticeable for being the first suggestion of a theme which recurred throughout Forster's creative life. He later composed his own Baedeker references for the imaginary Monteriano in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Baedeker's guidebooks, or the lack of them, feature in *A Room with a View*,[3] and Forster was to satisfy his long-held desire to imitate Baedeker by producing his own *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (1922). The constant effort towards the fulfilment of his desire to emulate Baedeker reflects a stubbornness in Forster's work, a disinclination to let go of an incident or theme which once suggests itself to him until he has made something of it in his work. Like many another novelist Forster admits this tendency in a memoir written in the early 1920s, "My Books and I", and as if to prove the point, it appears again little changed in the introduction to the Oxford University Press World's Classics edition of *The Longest Journey* in 1960 (reprinted in the Abinger edition of the novel):

> *The Longest Journey* is the last of my books that has come upon me without my knowledge. Elsewhere I have had to look into the lumber-room of my past, and have found in it things that were mine and useful . . . (*LJ*:306)

There is little doubt that Ruskin, like Baedeker, haunted this "lumber-room" and the early interest in Ruskin which is manifest in his travel diary was to prove useful to Forster, in his later novels, and in at least one short-story.

Forster confirms this youthful infatuation with Ruskin in the

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[3] One incident from Forster's diary involving a Baedeker seems to have provided the basis for Lucy and Miss Lavish losing their way in *A Room with a View*. In the novel they stumble blindly through the backstreets of Florence in search of the church of Santa Croce Lavish refusing to seek help from their Baedeker until finally they drifted "into another piazza, large and dusty, on the further side of which rose a black-and-white façade of surpassing ugliness. Miss Lavish spoke to it dramatically. It was Santa Croce. The adventure was over." (*RV*:18) Forster while in St Etienne records a similar occasion when "I tried with my map, & continually lost my way, which angered my mother . . .. Then I floundered about in the back streets with the Baedeker, & . . . I lost my way again, & we wandered into a modern church where some fine singing was going on, & then into a large square. A building at the end seemed strangely familiar to us. We looked, & it was our own hotel!"

"Bloomsbury"[4] memoir read to the Memoir Club 17 November 1920 in which Forster gives an account of his first encounters with members of the Bloomsbury Group. Forster relates his encounter with Roger Fry as follows:

> The nineteenth century had not yet closed, and Professor Waldstein, still far from being Sir Charles Walston, was lecturing in the Casts Museum at Cambridge. His main theme . . . need not detain us now. We are only concerned with his peroration. He had, he said, a very good piece of news for us. He had persuaded a friend of his, a most able and excessively brilliant young man, to come up and give some lectures on Venetian Art. It was, at first hearing, a most attractive proposition, but when he went on to say that he could not possibly ask Mr Roger Fry (for that was his young friend's name) to lecture without a fee, there was a slight movement of disillusionment in the audience. Most of us were boys of 19—few girls existed as yet—most of us were poor, and for my own part I felt strongly that art is all right as long as you can get it for nothing, a feeling that has often recurred in later years and kept me out of a good many galleries and some drawing rooms.

Yet Forster goes on to explain that "there was also a contrary feeling—one mustn't be mean—and also a feeling of curiosity, and furthermore a proprietary feeling for I had read the *Stones of Venice* at school". The pride with which Forster distinguishes himself from those students who are merely "poor" through his reading of Ruskin is obvious here.

Thus the reading of *The Stones of Venice* led Forster to attend that series of lectures given by Roger Fry on Venetian Art during May and June of 1898 and it is most likely these lectures that provided Forster with his first prolonged exposure to an attitude to art directly opposed to Ruskin's strictly moral interpretations. Fry's own awakening to the perceived shortcomings of Ruskin a decade earlier is described by Spalding, who informs us that Fry

> had begun to read Ruskin at the age of sixteen and he remained infused with passionate enthusiasm for his lay preacher on art until his first visit to Italy in 1891, when he discovered that he

[4] This memoir, held in the Modern Archives at King's College, recounts Forster's first meeting with various menbers of Bloomsbury.

disagreed with much that Ruskin had written.[5]

I shall have more to say about the contents of this lecture series in the following chapter, here it will suffice to add that Fry can be seen to be most studiously undermining the credibility of Ruskin's pronouncements on art.

What effect these lectures had on Forster is difficult to know, yet from his own admission Fry had left "so definite an impression" upon him that Forster longed to "create an impression" in return. He believes himself to have failed. Yet in the article "On Grinds", which appeared in the *Cambridge Review*, 1 February 1900, Forster has something new to say about his earlier attempts to emulate Ruskin. This article is a humorous attempt to classify the student body according to the path they take on their "grinds". Forster's preference is clearly observable and prefigures Rickie Elliott from *The Longest Journey*:

> the real person of soul is to be found on the Madingley Road. This indeed is a particularly interesting highway. Those who tread it are either obviously unenterprising and fat, turning back at the base of the hill, or else in search of the beautiful. Of these a part ascend the hill and quote Ruskin, or if they have got past him, write an account of the view themselves, beginning "With what varied emotions did I behold this striking scene," and introducing Ely Cathedral, and Girton, which lies like a pink slug on the left. Here, too, Wordsworth's three sonnets on King's may be quoted, especially the one beginning "What awful perspective." The other part pursue the lower road to thrid the sombre boskage of Madingley, and a happy few find the little chalk pit this side of the village where they may wander among the firs and undergrowth, folded off from the outer world. (*AE*:46)

Ignorant of both Forster's earlier emulation of Ruskin's architectural writing, and of Forster's attendance at the Fry lectures, it is possible to see in this reference nothing more than a gentle gibe at the Ruskin imitators amongst the undergraduate body. To an informed reader it must however indicate self-reproach on Forster's part for having himself been an imitator, coupled with not a little self-congratulation at having "got past" this recognised master of prose, and

[5] Frances Spalding, *Roger Fry: Art and Life*, London and New York, 1980, p. 20.

at least a suggestion of Fry's influence in this progression.

This feeling of having got past Ruskin did not prevent Forster from purchasing *The Stones of Venice* for himself[6] with the money he received from the half-share of the College Prize for his essay on "The Novelists of the 18th Century, and their influence on those of the 19th". Thus Forster's position at the turn of the century in many ways resembled the hero of Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, where the young Charles Ryder had likewise "nursed a love of architecture" and "though in opinion I had made that easy leap, characteristic of my generation, from the puritanism of Ruskin to the puritanism of Roger Fry, my sentiments at heart were insular and medieval."[7]

In the years that follow, Forster's earlier interest in Gothic, evident in his "Normandy Journal", appears to have been replaced by loathing. A visit to York on 21 April 1904 moves Forster to the following entry in his "Notebook Journal":

> All today at the Minster, trying to lash myself into enthusiasm over Gothic. It means so little to me. . . . York is a great cow, and all the trickiness & beauties of the architecture move me no more than do the muscles & limbs of a dull animal or man. The Chapter House has 237 head or grotesque groups around the arcading. Very wonderful: & stained glass besides: but let no one talk of classical chilliness after 237 Gothic jokes. . . . Perhaps only Xtians can understand Gothic architecture . . ..

Yet in 1906 Forster, while demonstrating definite anti-medieval sentiments in his novels, reveals a reawakening of his medieval sensibilities in a letter to E. J. Dent dated 3 October:

> You would hardly know me, so violently has Chartres gothicised me. In the presence of Blois or Chambord I say "Tut! Tut! Toys

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[6] See letters 31 and 32 in *The Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, 2vols. Ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank, London, 1983-5, vol.1, p. 37.

[7] Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*, London, 1960, p. 94. It is also worthy of note that Ryder's undergraduate rooms sported "a screen, painted by Roger Fry" as well as "Roger Fry's *Vision and Design*, the Medici Press edition of *A Shropshire Lad*, *Eminent Victorians*," and Clive Bell's *Art*. p. 36. All of which reflect definite Forsterian tastes.

> of kings and their mistresses! Where is colour, mystery and the promise of eternity? Where the mediaeval survey of man—erroneous if you like but a survey—?" In or outside Chartres you can find every human passion. Huysman[s], amid much nonsense, does make this point—that the middle ages did not shirk things.[8]

Waugh's characterisation of Ryder certainly fits what we know of Forster's personal history and this comparison anticipates what Langbaum in his excellent article "The Victorian Idea of Culture" sees as a more general "century-long migration of English liberal intellectuals from Clapham to Bloomsbury."[9] The thrust of Langbaum's assertion is that whereas the "early nineteenth century upper-middle-class elite believed in piety, reform of church and state, moral action and laissez-faire economics"—all those things which Forster was to accuse his own Thornton relatives of holding dear[10]—"their early-twentieth-century descendants . . . as represented by the so-called Bloomsbury Group . . ., disbelieved in religion and moral action, and did believe . . . in a regulated economy, and in the refinement of sensibility."[11]

For Waugh Ruskin exemplified the neo-medieval movement which upheld the notion of a moral significance in art, and was a champion of Gothic architecture as portrayed in *The Stones of Venice* in particular. In an extension of this view Langbaum, though not mentioning Ruskin *per se*, would have seen him as typical of the repressive nature of Victorianism in his attempt to re-apply outdated Christian attitudes, which he found embodied in Gothic architecture, to society. Forster's use of Ruskin in his work during the first period of his career follows this progression from the first to the later interpretation of Ruskin's significance. Thus the figure of Ruskin develops from a comic medievalist to something of graver importance as Forster comes to understand the consequences

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[8] Lago and Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 85.

[9] In Robert Langbaum, *The Word from Below: Essays in Modern Literature and Culture*, Madison & London, 1987, p. 78.

[10] See Forster's description of the Thornton family in his essay "Battersea Rise" published in *Abinger Harvest.*

which neo-medievalism held for society, particularly for women's role in society.

While Forster was thus coming to terms with the Gothicism and moral considerations of *The Stones of Venice*, he had discovered another of Ruskin's definitive works, *Modern Painters*, which demonstrates Ruskin's concern with the natural world and his commitment to a meticulous representation of nature. The first reference to *Modern Painters* is a pair of entries in his journal for year 1898.[12] The first, dated 12 August reads; "Wonderful sunset; sun going down behind a flock of golden cumuli clouds." The following entry (13 August) is by way of explanation; "Lovely mackerel sky which partly makes up for the heat. Am looking at *Modern Painters* which makes me rather cloudy."[13] These references indicate that Forster has been struck by an aspect of Ruskin far removed from his medievalism, though the tendency to emulation is still as strong and, despite Forster's claim in "On Grinds" quoted above, is something which he never in effect gets past.

These references come at a time when Forster was hard at work on his submission for the C. U. Member's Prize for the year 1898-99.[14] The preface to Forster's essay, "The Relation of Dryden to Milton and Pope", reveals that he had "utilized" his reading of Ruskin for this essay. Although Forster claims that "The Introduction and Conclusion also were written without any conscious help" these sections of the essay stand as testimony to Ruskin's influence, and perhaps also to that of Fry:

> Of all the periods through which mankind has passed, few have been less understood than the Classical Renaissance. We are apt to think of it as a clearly defined epoch when the world started out of medievalism and reverted to Classical

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[11] Langbaum, *op cit.*, p. 78.

[12] A Collin's Portable Diary for 1898, kept in the Modern Archives at King's College.

[13] The section of *Modern Painters* most likely to have induced this reaction in Forster the chapter, "Of Cloud Beauty", in the fifth volume, though the central chapters of the third volume (as discussed in the Introduction) also mention clouds in passing.

[14] The date for the submission of this essay, now held in the Modern archives at King's College, was 10 November 1898.

> models for Art, Literature and Thought, and instinctively coloured the unfortunate expression with the age of ruffs and weeping cherubs.
>
> Few remember that the history of the Renaissance is the history of civilization from the twelfth century onwards, that all we love and venerate as Gothic draws its vital power from the ancient world, that the Renaissance of Italian painting begins with the Madonna of Cimabue, while the Last Judgement of Michael Angelo is but the end.

The clearly defined division of the Renaissance from the medieval period in terms of the vitality of the religion which informed the art is typical of Ruskin's work, and Forster's rejection of this notion is in reality a refusal to accept these moral considerations in art. The period encompassed by Cimabue and Michelangelo does however approximate the period which Ruskin considers to be "the central epoch of the life of Venice" (ix:44) and consequently of Gothic in its purist form and divided markedly from the degradation that followed. In what is most likely a reaction against Ruskin due to Fry's emphasis on secular valuations in art, Forster seems to be deliberately negating the Christian element while emphasising the ancient roots of Ruskin's description of Gothic in *The Stones of Venice*. Ruskin reminds his readers that

> All European architecture, bad and good, old and new, is derived from Greece through Rome, and coloured and perfected from the East. The history of architecture is nothing but the tracing of the various modes and directions of this derivation. (ix:34)

The Greek, Roman and Arab spirit which underlies Ruskin's notion of Gothic architecture would account for Forster's belief that "Gothic draws its vital power from the ancient world". And of course Forster's use of "vital power" is but an adaptation of Ruskin's "*vital* religion" (ix:31) and taken with Ruskin's assertion that "the history of Gothic architecture is the history of the refinement and spiritualisation of Northern work under its influence" (ix:40) one can begin to see the underlying similarity of thought, as well as expression, in Forster and Ruskin.

Forster continues his introduction again substituting Ruskin's Christian spirit with his pagan alternative:

> This spirit of the ancient world has animated all art worth the name, and the more men sought for the spirit, the nobler and purer the works they produced. But when they left the spirit for the substance and loved the temple's architrave more than the God it held and the form of the Greek play more than the everlasting truths it teaches, they fell and their works though they surpass previous ages in many ways have lost for ever the purity and the grace that was before the fall.

The "fall" from "spirit" to "substance" described by Forster is unmistakably that very "fall" occasioned by the loss of faith which provides the basis of Ruskin's work on Venice. Forster has merely adapted it to the notion of how Milton, Dryden and Pope represent stages of the "fall in English Literature".

The debt which Forster owes *The Stones of Venice* is evident, and his remarks represent a quite concise summary of all that Ruskin had to say of the "False Ideal" in *Modern Painters*, where the sacrifice of sincerity of faith and truth for beauty and form spells a similar "fall" in art in general. Moreover in Forster's substitution of pagan faith for Ruskin's Christian model there appears a consciousness of the sincerity of Greek faith which Ruskin develops at length in *Modern Painters* but which was missing from *The Stones of Venice*. The supplanting of Christianity with a pagan, essentially Panic, doctrine was to evolve from the obvious adaptation of Ruskin noted above into the basic premise behind Forster's short stories.

Of a paper which might have shed some light on the influence derived from Ruskin, "The Greek Feeling for Nature" read to the Classical Society on 1 March 1899, nothing remains but an entry by Forster in his journal dated 23 February 1899 which records "am collecting for my paper, which is The Greek feeling for Nature. No information anywhere."[15] It is not too unlikely that Forster found a ready source of information in Ruskin's chapters "Of The Pathetic Fallacy" and "Of Classical Landscape" from *Modern Painters*, and Forster's next essay reveals that he had been reading around those chapters at that time.

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[15] A Collin's Portable Diary for 1899, similar to that used for 1898, and also held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

In this essay, "The Novelists of the 18th Century and Their Influence on Those of the 19th" from October 1899, Forster again cites Ruskin under "Authorities consulted" and makes two direct, rather captious, references to him. The first of these references appears to relate back to *The Stones of Venice* and Forster's interest in Gothic architecture:

> To rail at it [the 18th century] like Ruskin because it did not build a gothic cathedral . . . is to expose our own narrowness and inability to sympathise with what we do not understand.

This is most probably a reference to *The Stones of Venice,* but it is certainly Ruskin's comments on Scott in *Modern Painters* which provide the basis for Forster's second reference to Ruskin:

> He [Scott] loved mystery and the supernatural: the charm of the wild places, of mountains lakes and moors was upon him, and he half believed in the unseen powers with which he filled them. He has no boundaries: all is vague and undefined: the supernatural itself is uncertain.

Forster adds in a note to this passage that "Ruskin blames Scott for this want of faith. 'He only believes in a water witch—and only half believes in that.'" In this Forster appears to be misquoting, and misinterpreting, what amounts to an apology on Ruskin's behalf for Scott's lack of faith in comparison with the Classical and Medieval artist. Ruskin excuses Scott as typical of his age:

> the most startling feature of the age being its faithlessness, it is necessary that its greatest man should be faithless. Nothing is more notable or sorrowful in Scott's mind than its incapacity of steady belief in anything. He cannot even resolve hardily to believe in a ghost, or a water-spirit; always explains them away in an apologetic manner, not believing, all the while, even in his own explanation. (v:336)

Taken by themselves, these essays are hardly conclusive of any direct influence on Forster in terms of his notion of the sincerity of Greek faith attributable to his close reading of those chapters of *Modern Painters* in which Ruskin develops his views of the subject. Yet taken with later evidence they attest to a debt which is developed in Forster's novels, where the belief in the

sincerity of the Greek way of life is closely associated with the development of Forster's views on Political Economy. Thus Forster's reading as a student has led him into an ambiguous relationship with Ruskin, at once critical of his morality and medievalism and the Christian faith on which they depend while finding in him an affirmation of Forster's own belief in the sincerity of Greek faith. This duality coincides nicely with the twin aspects of the social amelioration that Forster spoke of in "Three Generations"—the efforts of liberalism to break down barriers both of sex and economics.

Before proceeding to an examination of the development of these themes in the pre-war period, there is another of Forster's retrospectives which tends to confirm all I've said of Ruskin as an important influence during this period and onwards. Among Forster's papers there appear two versions, the later much expanded,[16] of Forster's recollections of the relationship between himself and the poet-scholar A. E. Housman. In the 1928 version Forster recalls the influence of Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, how

> they accompanied my own development from subconscious to conscious; the football, the cherries and poplars, the red coats and beer and darnel, the simplicity controlled by a scholarship whose strength I took years to realise, the homesickness and bed-sickness, the yearning for masculine death—all mingled with my own late adolescence and turned inward upon me.

This positive acknowledgment of the poetry's influence clearly attests to the homosexual nature of the "sweet intoxicants" that the poetry "served out" to Forster in his adolescence and the years to 1907 when Forster had his long-held

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[16] The catalogue for the Forster Collection refers to an autograph manuscript of "EMF'S discovery of Housman's poetry in his youth, and his encounters with Housman the man. Probably an uncompleted Memoir Club paper began after Housman's appalling reception of *The Eternal Moment*" and most likely written around May or June 1928. It also suggests that the expanded version was written *circa* 1950 for the Memoir Club. Halls in "The Forster Collections at King's: A Survey," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 31 (1985), p. 155, and Gardner in "'One Fraction of a Summer Field': Forster and A. E. Housman," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 31 (1985), p. 162, prefer a date "circa 1937" or at least "between the end of 1936 and the beginning of World War II" for the later version. The tone in which Forster introduces his review "Ancient and Modern" (1936) into the later memoir suggests, however, that quite a number of years had passed since the writing of that piece.

suspicion of Housman's sexuality confirmed. He recalls that while—'stopping in Hampshire with Professor Phillimore, I ventured to say that the poems concealed an experience, and his agreement made me certain that they did, and that the poet had fallen in love with a man"—this admission is of importance later when I will discuss the relative importance of Carpenter and Housman with regard to the characterisation of Forster's heroes; however, the value of the connection must be limited by Forster's qualification that though Housman "was my natural food",

> He has not influenced my conduct or lent himself to quotation in the presence of Nature. Ruskin, Wordsworth S. Butler have done much more for me, indeed Housman has in no sense ever done anything . . ..

Though Housman is so obviously important to his personal development, so important that a further study of the relationship may well prove of value, Forster prefers to offer tribute to the influence of Butler, Wordsworth and Ruskin on his adolescent self. The probable cause of this diffidence is the aversion Forster felt towards Housman the man for the terrible snub Forster's presentation of a copy of *The Eternal Moment* received at the hands of the poet. In the later version of this memoir Forster admits to having "somewhat warmly and a little sentimentally" written to Housman, and undoubtedly the sting of Housman's reply provoked Forster to the unflattering portrait of Housman he provides both in that memoir and in his review of two books concerning Housman, "Ancient and Modern".[17] In this review Forster exacts some satisfaction from his presentation of Housman as "an unhappy fellow and not a very amiable one," and that "to his acquaintance he could be sardonic and (what was still more disconcerting) petty."[18]

Whatever attitude we may take to the Forster-Housman connection,

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[17] E. M. Forster, "Ancient and Modern," *The Listener*, 11 November 1936, p. 921-2. This is a review of both Housman's posthumous *More Poems* and A. S. F. Gow's biography *A. E. Housman*.

[18] *Ibid*, p.921.

nevertheless the point remains that Forster believed Butler, Ruskin, and Wordsworth to be influential, at least in terms of "conduct"[19] and "quotation in the presence of Nature". Forster's debt to Butler has been remarked upon by various critics. Holt in particular makes the point that Forster and Butler sought to bring to bear on human conduct a very similar set of scruples. Such can be observed in a comparison of Forster's "aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky" (*TCD*:70) who embody mankind's reserves of "good will" and "good temper" (*TCD*:72) from "What I Believe" (1939), with Butler's high Ydgrunites of *Erewhon*. Indeed Forster's description of this caste in "A Book That Influenced Me" (1944) is but a reiteration of his own "aristocracy":

> These people were conventional in the right way: they hadn't too many ideals, and they were always willing to drop a couple to oblige a friend. In the high Ydgrunites we come to what Butler thought desirable. . . . Grace and graciousness, good temper, good looks, good health and good sense; tolerance, intelligence, and willingness to abandon any moral standard at a pinch. That is what he admired. (*TCD*:214)

That is what Forster admired also, and thus he is able to say of Butler, like Housman, that he "was the food for which I was waiting." (*TCD*:214)

Butler's influence on Forster in terms of "conduct" is easily established. The influence of Wordsworth, as found in the undergraduate essay, "On Grinds", and through numerous references to him in Forster's *Commonplace Book* and elsewhere appears to be similarly pervasive. But Ruskin's influence has yet to be traced. These early references seem to indicate that he merely lent himself to "quotation", but an entry in Forster's *Commonplace Book* for 1948 suggests that it was far deeper:

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[19] Gardner, *op cit.*, p. 167, believes that "only Housman" would have "recognised the true aim of this apparently random addition, and the full force of the word 'conduct'", in Forster's reference from "Note on the Way" (1934): And I would no more consult him [Arnold] about conduct than I would a great poet who is actually alive: Professor A. E. Housman." (*AH*:72) Yet the emphasis on conduct in these two memoirs (which Housman would never have known of) implies that the sting in the tail of Forster's reference was more likely to be remarked by Forster's circle of intimates than by the poet himself.

> Skip him [Ruskin] when he is noble pathetic or indignant; his sensitiveness to scenery and to *some sides* of human conduct is remarkable. (*CB*:181)

The appreciation of Ruskin in terms of "human conduct" and "scenery" closely echoes the reference in the early Housman record, and suggests that Ruskin's influence on Forster during his formative years as a novelist concerned more than the imitation of Ruskin's descriptions of nature implied by Forster in "On Grinds". And we may conclude this chapter of Forster's life, to 1900, pondering the significance of another of Forster's remarks from the Housman memoir: "Did I long to be a ploughboy's or a soldier's comrade because of reading him [Housman]? I think not." If not, it must yet be asked what it was that Forster longed to be on reading Butler or Ruskin?

CHAPTER TWO

In "Old Lucy"[1] Forster describes Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence* (1875-77) as an "invaluable and exasperating book." (*LN*:22) These epithets are equally applicable to the figure of Ruskin himself in Forster's pre-war novels, particularly those which deal with women's role in society, where there is a observable progression from Ruskin as merely "exasperating" to Forster's recognition of Ruskin and his views on the subject of women's place in society as "invaluable". This chapter aims to highlight this changing perception of Ruskin and must begin with Forster's earliest attempts at novel writing which contain the first hints at an interest in personal relationships and in the position of women in society, themes which would occupy so much of his published work up until the war.

In reviewing the "Lucy" fragments, Elizabeth Ellem has suggested that the earlier "Old Lucy" demonstrates a "naive and solemn pontificating on the different natures and roles of men and women", something which is "mercifully absent in 'New Lucy', though the attitude of mind is still there."[2] This suggestion is taken by Brown[3] as evidence to support his notion that Forster owes a great debt to Edward Carpenter's work for providing him with a set of positive values from which Forster was able to construct his modern vision of male-female relationships exemplified by the Emersons in *A Room with a View*. Brown proposes that in Carpenter,

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[1] Two early manuscript versions of *A Room with a View*, known by their editorial names as "Old Lucy" and "New Lucy" are published in the Abinger edition as *The Lucy Novels*, Ed. Oliver Stallybrass, London, 1977.

[2] Elizabeth Ellem, "E. M. Forster: The Lucy and New Lucy Novels," *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 May 1971, p. 625.

[3] Tony Brown, "Edward Carpenter, Forster and the Evolution of *A Room with a View*," *English Literature in Transition* 30 (1987), p. 285.

> Forster not only found an author writing in a specifically English context, reacting to the English suburban respectability which Forster knew all too well, but one whose attitudes to sexual matters, including homosexuality, Forster would have found sympathetic, and it would seem to be Carpenter's ideas which contribute most to the doctrines which Mr Emerson expresses in the published version of the novel.[4]

While Brown's view of Carpenter here is doubtlessly true, to suggest that the development of Emerson as a social philosopher, of George, his son, as a working-class hero, and of Forster's attitudes to women in society were due entirely, or even largely, to Forster's reading of Carpenter's *Love's Coming of Age*, re-issued in 1906, denies a more gradual development which had its roots in Forster's earliest work, the unfinished novel *Nottingham Lace*.[5] A comparison of this work with Forster's later novels indicates a similarity of theme and a continuity contrary to Brown's idea of a sudden development. Indeed the progression is demonstrably associated with the progression of Forster's perception of Ruskin mentioned above. This is not to say that Carpenter did not influence Forster in a number of the instances that Brown points to, but rather that any such influence only confirmed Forster in a course, the ultimate direction of which had been initiated in his very early work.

Nottingham Lace, written between 1899 and 1902, predates the Italian trip where Forster first began his revisions of Ruskin apropos women's role in society and provides a preface to the discussion of that relationship. It was Forster's first attempt at a novel and was finally rejected in favour of a new novel during Forster's trip to Italy. Yet *Nottingham Lace* contains a number of striking similarities to the new novel which was to become *A Room with a View*. Furbank rightly suggests that the plot of *Nottingham Lace* was in effect "a first sketch for the rescue of Lucy by the Emersons".[6] As in the later novel, Forster offers the reader a young, undeveloped and inexperienced protagonist, who, like Lucy in

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[5] Published in E. M. Forster, *Arctic Summer and other fiction*, Ed. Elizabeth Heine and Oliver Stallybrass, London, 1980.

the Italian section of *A Room with a View*, is under the supervision of a guardian—in this case an uncle and an aunt. The main action involves Edgar, the hero, and his struggle to express his individuality and expand beyond the social constraints as enforced by his guardians. In this struggle he is aided, again, like Lucy, by a rather non-conforming young man who acts both as a touchstone to his thoughts of rebellion, and as an ally throughout the ensuing struggle. What results is a comedy of manners in which Forster's main concerns are with the repressive nature of propriety and decorum and the demands that polite society places upon the individual to conform. Forster quite early in the work warns against breaking the bounds of required behaviour:

> Society is strong and terrible and can take terrible revenge for . . . playful insults. (*AS*:30)

Edgar's guardians, the Manchetts, are themselves victims to conformity; driven by the constant fear of losing their position, they think, act and speak precisely in the manner expected of them. Forster explains their vulnerability:

> They were not very clever, they were not very rich. They were unable even to simulate an interest in literature or art. They had no heroic band of friends, no powerful connections. They were not even very good. If they resisted they might be overwhelmed at once. (*AS*:30-31)

Their response is to entrust the development of their two sons and nephew, Edgar, to the one institution guaranteed to ensure them a place in middle class society, the Public School System, the aim of which is to fashion its charges after the Victorian middle-class model.

Forster's condemnation of this system can be found in numerous works beside this novel. It is present in *The Longest Journey* and in another unfinished novel, *Arctic Summer*, and what is perhaps the definitive treatment can be found in his essay "Notes on the English Character" (1926) published in *Abinger Harvest*. Edgar, who is shy, sensitive, and frail (not unlike the young Forster), is

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[6] P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 2 vols, London, 1977, vol.1, p 74.

not suited to the rigours of the public school (again like Forster and his later creation, Rickie Elliott), and is thrown back upon his guardians who treat him with contempt and cruelty for not shaping up as society demanded. Into this typically Forsterian setting is introduced a young man named Trent, a new master at the local public school, who first sets about insulting Mrs Manchett and then deliberately compromises her husband. His vulgarity is apparent, and Forster introduces him as

> "vulgar", "ill-bred", ""a rough diamond", "one of nature's gentlemen"—the various phrases had been applied to him by acquaintances of various malignity—but he did not see why or how he should alter. When occasion demanded however he could suppress the more offensive manifestations, such as lounging, laughing a certain laugh, making jokes of a certain calibre, bantering his hostess and being over-assiduous in his attempts to make her guests eat. (*AS*:17)

Trent also acts as guide to Edgar and in this role has been compared by McDowell[7] to any number of Forster's later characters: Gino Carella, Caroline Abbott, Stewart Ansell, and even Margaret Schlegel. McDowell qualifies his comparison by noting that Trent differs from all these characters in one important aspect, in "his unabashed assertion of his vulgarity", particularly "as it upsets the decorum of Mrs Manchett and her associates." In saying this McDowell appears oblivious to the striking similarities between the characterisation of Trent and George Emerson. Indeed, as an "outrager" of social proprieties, Trent prefigures both Emersons but particularly George. Little in Forster's experience of pension life could be more "unabashed" and aimed at the upsetting of "decorum" than George's remark to Charlotte Bartlett:

> "My Father . . . is in his bath, so you cannot thank him personally. But any message given by you to me will be given by me to him as soon as he comes out."
>
> Miss Bartlett was unequal to the bath. All her barbed civilities came forth wrong end first. (*RV*:11)

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[7] F. P. W. McDowell, "Publishable and worth it," in O. M. Brack Jr., ed., *Twilight of Dawn: Studies in English Literature in Transition*, Tuscon, 1987, p. 193.

Within the confines of pension society, which itself can be seen as a microcosm of English middle class society, George and his father are also regarded as "ill-bred", an epithet repeated three times in demonstrating the pension assessment of the pair. It is also evident from a passage in "New Lucy" that Forster's early conception of George was similar to Trent:

> G. takes his fun riotously, going mad & breaking the furniture. Bear fights with Cecil who is annoyed at being found in an ignominious position by Lucy. Lucy is stiff too fearing George might set upon her, for the country side still rang with how young Mr Emerson had forgotten himself \during some fun/ & flung a sofa cushion at the head of a young lady he did not know. (*LN*:92)

George and Trent also demand comparison in terms of their socio-economic placement by Forster. In "New Lucy" George is referred to as being "sprung . . . from the plough" (*LN*:107), though he had also been to Cambridge, while in *A Room with a View* he is a generation further removed from his labouring roots—his father was the "son of a labourer . . .. A mechanic of some sort himself when he was young". (*RV*:52) Miss Bartlett even attempts to legitimise her bias against George by allowing herself the fantasy that he works as a porter on the "South-Eastern" railway. (*RV*:65) Trent is also of common stock and had come to Sawstone by way of Cambridge, and he admits to fearing the consequences of his ancestry becoming common knowledge—his father, like Ansell's in *The Longest Journey*, was a draper.

George and Trent also share a degree of similarity in their physical make-up. Trent is known to be good at rugger, implying a certain physical prowess which will later be shared by the athletic Gerald in *The Longest Journey*, whom Forster describes as "a young man who had the figure of a Greek athlete and the face of an English one. . . . Just where he began to be beautiful the clothes started." (*LJ*:35) Lucy's impression of George also implies physical beauty while again suggesting a working-class heritage:

> For a young man his face was rugged, and—until the shadows fell upon it—hard. Enshadowed, it sprang into tenderness. She

saw him once again at Rome, on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, carrying a burden of acorns. Healthy and muscular . . .. (*RV*:24)

It is Brown's belief that George represents Forster's adaptation of Carpenter's "muscular young working men of *Towards Democracy*",[8] and is comparable also with the "sensitive young men whose lower-class origins have made them the natural allies of women" in *Love's Coming-of-Age*.[9] But Trent predates Forster's first corroborated reading of Carpenter in 1907[10] by a number of years so it must be asked whether Trent and George, as well as Stephen Wonham and Alec Scudder, do not represent Forster's personal preference for working-class lovers, a case perhaps of what Aldous Huxley in *Point Counter-Point* (1928) describes as "High brows, low loins".[11] This in turn may have connections with Housman's poetry which, as suggested in the previous chapter, accompanied Forster's development from a subconscious to a conscious awareness of his own homosexuality: the ploughboys and soldiers of Housman's poetry having acted upon Forster's subconscious re-emerge as the working class hero found in most of his later work.

While emphasising, and exulting in Trent's vulgarity, Forster already in *Nottingham Lace* recognises that, even if working class men can overcome their disadvantage, their sister's prospects are far dimmer. Trent, prefiguring Mr Emerson's role as social philosopher, demonstrates an awareness of the distinction which society makes between man and woman, a concern which Forster is to develop from *The Lucy Novels* through to *Howards End*:

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[8] Brown, *op cit.*, p. 289.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 291.

[10] Brown, *Ibid.*, p. 279, acknowledges that the "first extant reference by Forster to Carpenter is the appearance of 'E. Carpenter' in a list of authors in the margin of Forster's diary in December 1907, a list which, as Robert K. Martin has argued seems to represent an attempt to identify a homosexual literary tradition." It is not impossible that Forster had been introduced to Carpenter's work through Lowes Dickinson at a much earlier date, yet this date of 1907 is interesting as it is the year in which Forster had his suspicions of Housman's homosexuality confirmed, an event which was of great significance to Forster, and may have led him to further his readings of other homosexual writers.

[11] Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter-Point*, London, 1954, p. 301.

> "It [working class origins] isn't little," he burst out; "it's hell for the women of the family"—and then he launched into two orations, one against the rules of society, the other against the imperfect education of women. (*AS*:34)

Thus Brown's suggestion that Forster had adapted sympathy for women from Carpenter is also anticipated in *Nottingham Lace*. Of course, Forster's views on society and women are far from developed in this attempt at a novel, yet a similar concern was to be continued in "Old Lucy" and there is a conscious development at work which only finds its fullest expression in *Howards End*.

Forster had gone to Italy unable to make anything of *Nottingham Lace*, and judging from the letters of Forster and his mother, it was in Italy, and especially in the hotels, pensions and art galleries he visited, that Forster was provided with a number of incidents and characters—with an attitude, which provided the basis of a new novel. Forster complains in a letter to Dickinson, "But oh what a viewpoint is the English hotel or Pension!" (*RV*:ix), and again,

> I wish I didn't see everything with this horrible foreground of enthusiastic ladies, but it is impossible to get away from it.[12]

Furbank[13] assures us that one of these "enthusiastic ladies" was to become Miss Bartlett and another Miss Lavish, both of *A Room with a View* and both of whom highlight the plight of women in a society which demands conformity to the social and moral codes of the drawing room, the former broken into submission, and the latter provoked to reckless defiance.

But at the time of writing to Dickinson Forster was simply annoyed at these ladies, and was yet to understand their position fully as victims of a repression not dissimilar to that which he had suffered at school. Indeed, between *Nottingham Lace* and *A Room with a View* the one simple and vital difference is that woman has superseded man as the focus of the novel, Edgar has made way for Lucy, and the repressive nature of the public school with its insistence on

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[12] *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, 2 vols, Ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank, London, 1983, vol.1, p. 52.

good form has accordingly been replaced with that of the drawing room which seeks to protect women, as Brown rightly suggests, "from the cruder realities of the outer world by an elaborate screen of decorum and propriety."[14]

Thus from Trent's first "orations" on the imperfect education of women, and through his experiences in Italy resulting in a greater emphasis on women in his work, Forster was to expand his ideas on women's role in society, though in *The Lucy Novels* some of the distinctions he draws, particularly in "Old Lucy", have, as we have seen, raised the ire of Elizabeth Ellem. Brown believes that the absence of such "naive" distinctions in the final version of *A Room with a View* suggest Carpenter's influence had helped Forster towards a more sophisticated understanding of woman's issues, but it must be remembered that *Nottingham Lace* and *The Lucy Novels* all belong to the years 1898-1903 and should be viewed collectively as a working out of his response to newly perceived injustices. In reality, what these distinctions between men and women in Forster's work indicate is that from a very early stage he had recognised a double standard in the prevailing attitudes to the sexes and sought to clarify his understanding of the problems through his art, so that by the time he wrote *A Room with a View* and *Howards End* he had progressed from his, at times unsophisticated, early opinions to an incisive understanding of the issues based on the differences between men and women perceived as, for the most part, differences imposed by society. As Forster's realisation of the divisions in society became more sophisticated so too the role of Ruskin in his novels also broadened and deepened; it is therefore virtually impossible to trace the development of the gender theme without including an examination of Ruskin's role in Forster's fiction. The Italian trip influenced Forster both in his work on women's issues and in his relationship with John Ruskin and to this we now turn our attention.

In establishing links between Forster and Ruskin, recent critics such as

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[13] Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 86.

[14] Brown, *op cit.*, p. 282.

Meyers and Summers,[15] have, as noted in the introduction, tended to concentrate on *A Room with a View* and Ruskin's influence on Forster's representation of the figure of Giotto there. However, the link thus established is bound to be understated due to the tendency of critics to attribute the influence on Forster variously between any number of alternative commentators on Giotto including Symonds, Berenson and Browning. Reference to Ruskin, and to his *Mornings in Florence* in particular, abounds in what remains of Forster's early notes and drafts for *A Room with a View*. A comparison of these manuscripts with the later novel establishes three things: first, the deletion of much direct reference to Ruskin and his work; second, the development of Giotto as a central figure in place of Ruskin; and third, the development of medievalism and neo-medieval morality as basic to Victorianism. Taken together these three things point to a trend in Forster to regard Giotto as representative of Ruskin who in turn is seen as typifying the Victorian world-view which Forster is aiming to modify.

Among these early notes, known as "Old Lucy",[16] there is a description of the heroine, Lucy, visiting the church of Santa Croce, an incident which was to find its way into the published version of the novel and from the changes the passage undergoes in draft much can be inferred.

> she found herself in an enormous ice cold barn, full of red nosed people carrying red books in their hands. She had Ruskin's 'Mornings in Florence' with her, and Santa Croce was her first experience of that invaluable and exasperating book. She began by finding a sepulchral slab, the book informing her that if she did not like it she was to leave Florence at once. She liked it very much, till a bowed backed sacristan who had observed her heretical conduct stole up to her and told her in broken English that she was looking at the wrong slab. He led her to the right one which was trimmed with a wreath of attentive tourists, and she did not like it so well. Moreover she was now saddled by [*sic*] the bowed-backed sacristan who did his best to spoil the

[15] Jeffrey Meyers, *Painting and the Novel*, Manchester, 1975, and C. J. Summers, "The Meaningful Ambiguity of Giotto in *A Room with a View*," *English Literature in Transition* 30 (1987), 165-76.

[16] These notes were written after December 1903 but according to Stallybrass represent a "fair copy" of earlier work. (*LN*:14)

> remainder of her morning. Ruskin too got wilder and wilder. He fulminated against butcher's [*sic*] shops, cab stands, microscope evenings for children & circulating libraries; abused Mr Spurgeon, the serene Mr Murray, the rapturous Crowe and the cautious Cavalcaselle; confessed with sorrow that he was the only person who could tell anyone anything about art, and bade her go buy buns or worse if she did not believe him. (*LN*:22)

Stallybrass dismisses this attack upon Ruskin as "amusingly exaggerated", conceding that

> Spurgeon, Murray, Crowe and Cavalcaselle do indeed all come under fire in *Mornings in Florence*, but not in the chapter on Santa Croce; the same is true of "microscope evenings for children", the only item on Forster's list against which Ruskin may be said to have "fulminated", here or elsewhere (though there is a snide aside on circulating libraries in *Sesame and Lilies*). (*LN*:27-8)

In this dismissal Stallybrass makes the mistake of supposing there to be only one chapter in *Mornings in Florence* concerned with Santa Croce. Although the first morning is titled "Santa Croce", the third morning, "Before the Soldan", also deals primarily with the art found within the walls of Santa Croce and Ruskin's attack on Spurgeon *et al* is found in this third chapter. Furthermore, though "fulminate" may be too strong a term, cabstands (xxiii:413-4), butcher shops (xxiii:323), and circulating libraries (xxiii:387) do all come under fire at within the work in general. Forster concludes his attack on Ruskin with a close yet deliberately exaggerated paraphrase of Ruskin's claim, made "with far more sorrow than pride", that he is the only one who can tell anyone the "real worth" (xxiii:410) of any painting. The accuracy with which Forster parodies Ruskin implies a knowledge far more extensive and particular than Stallybrass seems prepared to allow. Moreover, the interest shown in Ruskin by Forster, which this parody reveals, demands further examination.

One possibility is that the attack on Ruskin was prompted by Forster's irritation with Ruskin's presumption of infallibility as critic and guide. We have already seen a movement away from Ruskin's method of interpreting art through moral considerations in Forster's reactions while an undergraduate to *The Stones*

of Venice and *Modern Painters*. Moreover, the change in tone from *Giotto and his Works in Padua* (1854), of which Forster had received a copy from his aunt Laura Forster as noted in "In My Library",[17] to *Mornings in Florence* may well have come as a surprise to Forster. Although in the earlier work Ruskin had asked that we "ought to measure the value of art less by its executive than by its moral power" (xxiv:28), during his trip to Italy in 1874, from which sprung *Mornings in Florence*, Ruskin's "eyes were opened, as they had never been so fully before, to the genius of Giotto, and he entered into a communion of spirit with St. Francis which deeply coloured his later writings." (xxiii:xxxviii) In Letter 76 of *Fors Clavigera*, written from Venice and dated 4th March, 1877, Ruskin himself acknowledges that while working on Giotto's frescoes, "I discovered the fallacy under which I had been tormented for sixteen years,—the fallacy that Religious artists were weaker than Irreligious." (xxix:91) This led to his work, including *Mornings in Florence*, becoming "much more distinctly Christian in tone, during its last two years" (xxix:86), a change most noticable when compared with the preface to *A Crown of Wild Olive* (1866) of which I will have more to say later. His sympathy with Giotto led him to a far more relentless assertion of art as serving morality which lends to his pronouncements a spurious authority which Forster could not fail to find irritating. Hence Lucy's admiration of the wrong sepulchral slab becomes "heretical" and Ruskin's criticisms are perceived as "fulminations" in an ecclesiastical sense. Certainly Ruskin's inadequacies as guide, as well as Forster's knowledge of Ruskin, become apparent as the episode proceeds.

> Those who trusted to Baedeker began in an orderly manner with the right aisle, worked up it into the right transept, where they disappeared into a door leading to the sacristy and . . . chapel, to emerge presently & inspect in turn the chapels to the right of the choir, the choir, the chapels to the left of the choir, the left transept and finally came down the left aisle and departed exhausted & frozen into the warmer air outside. A Baedeker

[17] Forster informs us that he had from his aunt "Ruskin's *Praeterita*, and Ruskin's *Giotto*—? fine example in pigskin, introducing the legendary O of Giotto and her own initials." (*TCD*:296)

> transit lasted any time between two hours and a half and ten minutes, and as Lucy was sitting in the left aisle, she was near the end of it and the objects of interest near her <were neglected and despised> received less than their due proportion of attention. But those who trusted to Ruskin's Mornings in Florence visited her early, for the tomb of Carlo Marsupinni, under which she sat, <was> \is/ selected by the great purist as a foil to the excellencies of the sepulchral near the door.
>
> "You see," said a young wife, "the drapery on this tomb looks as if you could pick it up, and therefore <Ruskin says> it must be bad. I wonder why."
>
> "So do I," replied her husband, and they passed on to execute the somewhat mazy movements that the arrangement of their book dictated. But most of the visitors were better trained, and abused without restraint the vanity the vulgarity, the meaness [*sic*], the heartlessness of the tomb. (*LN*:23-4)

Forster's choice of "orderly" and "mazy" to describe the respective arrangements of Baedeker and Ruskin reveals his concern with Ruskin's unreliability, and the doubt shown by the "young wife" and her husband as to whether or not the tomb in question is as vulgar as Ruskin would have it hints at a discontent with Ruskin's contempt for the Renaissance. Forster now proceeds to introduce a character through which he completes his exposure of Ruskin. This character—Mr Arthur—requires something of an introduction.

The "very first notes" for *A Room with a View* include a list of characters, one of whom is given as "H. O. M.", which Stallybrass explains as

> Forster's friend H. O. Meredith, to whom *A Room with a View* was to be dedicated, and whose situation at this time (that of an "arts" student wishing to switch to economics) was similar to that of Arthur or Mr Arthur or Tancred, as the somewhat unheroic hero is variously called. (*LN*:3)

While the connection between Forster's hero and Meredith cannot be dismissed, the young Englishman whom Lucy meets in Santa Croce could as easily be Forster himself. According to Lago and Furbank, one purpose behind Forster's trip to Italy was that he "should study Italian art and architecture, to equip

himself as a university-extension lecturer." [18] And Furbank later describes Forster (in the spring of 1904) as "profiting from his Italian tour," in that "he had begun to do some extension lecturing for the Cambridge Local Lectures Board."[19] From the titles of the lectures in this course it is clear that Forster's interest was, like that of Arthur, in the Italian Renaissance[20] and it is not unlikely that he should have felt some agitation at Ruskin's dismissal of much Renaissance art as "vulgar and mean". (xxiii:310)

This interest in the Renaissance was probably fostered by his attendance at Fry's lectures on Venetian art as an undergraduate. As noted above in the Introduction, it is Gay's opinion, that Ruskin's role in Forster's work was that of a father figure who had to be overcome by the younger writer. This notion is even more relevant to Fry's situation. So greatly had Ruskin influenced the British public's taste with regard to art, that Fry spent a good deal of energy in combating the view that art, or the "imaginative life", serves morality—"the view taken by moralists like Ruskin".[21] It is also likely that it was this struggle against the spectre of Ruskin's moral considerations in art which provoked Fry's remark to Lytton Strachey dated 2 April 1927, in reply to an offer of a set of *The Stones of Venice*, which is worthy of repetition here:

> As to Ruskin, what shall I say? I am pleased at your thinking of me, but I'm too overcrowded in this house to be able to keep such a mass of incontinent verbiage . . . it seems to me to be the maundering of a very foolish man who was too lazy to think and too credulous to doubt the value of his mental overflow—rather like those Freudian children who preserve their excreta. It makes Proust a greater mystery than ever. What did he make of it when

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[18] Lago and Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 41.

[19] Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 110.

[20] The headings for these lectures as given by Furbank, p. 110; *The Birth of Florentine Civilisation*, *The Times of Dante*, *Florence in the Trecento*, *The Medici*, *The Renaissance at Florence* and *The Fall of the Republic*, suggest that Forster was particularly interested in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

[21] Roger Fry, "An Essay in Aesthetics" first published in the *New Quarterly*, April 1909, reprinted in *Vision and Design*, London, 1929, p. 21.

he spent two years, or was it three, on the study of Ruskin?[22]

Though there are no direct references to Ruskin in what survives of his Cambridge University Extension Lectures on Venetian Art of the 15th century,[23] there are a number, not so virulent as that made to Strachey quoted above, in a similar lecture series on early Florentine painting from the same period. Moreover in the syllabus for a lecture series on "Venetian Art", given in 1898, Fry takes pains to have his students question Ruskin's estimations: "Say what you think of Mr Ruskin's views on Carpaccio?", and "Is Mr Ruskin's estimate of Tintoretto, or Vasari's the more just?"[24] In such a climate it is impossible that Forster was not influenced by Fry with regard to his attitude to Ruskin.

The positive attitude to the Renaissance displayed by Mr Arthur in the scene in Santa Croce are suggest that the young Forster, raised on Ruskin's theories of art, did have those ideas tempered by his acquaintance with Fry. One can certainly detect Fry's bias lurking behind the ironic reference to Ruskin in Arthur's question to Lucy "What do you think of this vile degraded tomb of the early Renaissance? You have sat by it all too long." Lucy, who appears a little confused by Ruskin's "mazy" directions, and, one thinks, even mazier aesthetic judgments, replies not a little peevishly, "I've hardly looked at it though." She then takes her opportunity to cut her exasperating guide, and, ignoring Ruskin's pronouncements on the tomb of Carlo Marsupinni which Arthur had just ironically alluded to, continues:

> "Tell me," said Lucy abruptly, "about this tomb, and why it is good. For I know it is good."
>
> He looked at her . . . and began an exposition of the tomb

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[22] Roger Fry, *Letters of Roger Fry*, 2 vols, Ed. Denys Sutton, London, 1972, vol. 2, p. 600.

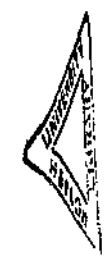
[23] The manuscripts of these lectures, first given in 1894 and presumably similar to those lectures which Forster attended in 1898, are kept in the Fry Collection in the Modern Archives of King's College, Cambridge. So, too, are the manuscripts of the series on Florentine art also referred to above.

[24] These questions are taken from the published syllabus of "a course of Twelve Lectures on Venetian art, by R. E. Fry, B. A., King's College, Cambridge" given in London in 1898, and where expected to be completed by students at the end of the lecture series. No works by Ruskin appear on the prescribed reading list, so students must have been required to make judgement on Ruskin according to information supplied second-hand by Fry.

> of Carlo Marsupinni. Thence he passed to the work of Desiderio da Settignano generally, contrasted it with the tomb by Rossellino opposite, showed its influence on Mino da Fiesole, compared it with Benedetto da Maiano and Donatello. Many of these Florentine craftsmen were new names to Lucy, yet he had the power of making each distinct from the first and throughout his discourse he never rambled, but connected all his remarks with the tomb at which she was looking. (*LN*:26)

This portrait of Mr Arthur deserves comparison with Forster's recollections in his "Bloomsbury Memoir" of Fry's method of lecturing. Forster recounts that

> Mr Fry's pedimentality was indubitable. Seldom have I felt in safer lectures, got more from them, or enjoyed them more. The Vivari, the Bellini, arranged themselves in parallel or converging lines, Squarcione and the Paduans sent in their arrows sideways, Giovanni the German, bulky rather than weighty, did not deny his contribution, and down as far as Titian all the pictures fitted in to a picture which one could carry away comfortably in one's mind.



In the chapters of the manuscript "Old Lucy" which follow, this Mr Arthur, or Arthur, or Tancred as he is also known, displays definite pro-Ruskinian traits, and tends to become distanced from the Fry-like character of the Santa Croce scene as noted above. In a scene in which Tancred attends a men's tea-party at which Forster makes fun of the art reattribution game, Tancred suddenly succumbs to the patently Ruskinian attitude that, "today he felt that the professors of the beautiful had severed themselves irrevocably from all beauty." (*LN*:33) Turning to *Modern Painters*, we find in the chapter "Of Modern Landscape", which obviously impressed Forster as an undergraduate, the following observation:

> All the Renaissance principles of art tended, as I have before often explained, to the setting of Beauty above Truth, and seeking for it always at the expense of truth. And the proper punishment of such pursuit—the punishment which all laws of the universe rendered inevitable—was, that those who thus pursued beauty should wholly lose sight of beauty. (v:324)

Such punishment has befallen those players of the reattribution game whom Tancred encounters. And interestingly, this game, and Forster's exposition of it,

seems to demonstrate an anti-Fry feeling to parallel Tancred's pro-Ruskin sentiment. Stallybrass implies that "the fun made of the reattribution game" can perhaps be traced back to an "unironic entry in Forster's diary for 21 October 1901" which reads in part:

> The show picture is a woman's head, attributed to Piero della Francesca. It isn't as good as the Nat. Gall. one, and some attribute it to Pollaiuolo. I rather think Fry tacks it on to Baldovinetti. (*LN*:34)

Forster therefore was well aware of Fry's place in the game which he was to parody.

A second version of the scene has Arthur as the hero, and his feelings are even more opposed to the unsympathetic nature of modern art, which attempted to remove sentiment from its valuations. Arthur, Forster informs us,

> longed to be more emotional and more sympathetic: to see more, and more largely, of the splendid people <who> with whom he should live so short a time. Art was not helping him: it was always supposed to help, but it was not helping. (*LN*:37)

Pondering such uncertainties Arthur comes across the stabbing of a young Italian, also to make it into the final version of the novel, and from this needless death comes to understand that an over-development of the aesthetic sense, or deference to Art, is antagonistic to Life. George and Lucy must also discover this lesson in *A Room with a View*. In this mood Arthur finds new value in Tolstoy's *What is Art?* which he had flung "out of the carriage window just before . . . the Italian frontier" after reading only "the first few pages". (*LN*:47) The newly perceived value of Tolstoy's book, for Arthur, is that

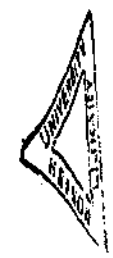
> 'Art has nothing to do with beauty. Its one true object is to promote <true> human intercourse and bring about the brotherhood of Man.' Then it goes on to prove that <Modern> \most/ Art <fails> \has failed/ utterly—\& that modern art/ does not even try—and makes all those who love it more & more exclusive and unsympathetic & proud. (*LN*:47)

Arthur therefore throws over his ideas of being an artist, and the last we hear

from him he plans to "go straight to London and begin to work at Political Economy of all things in the world." (*LN*:81) Although Stallybrass, as noted above, believes this character to be based on Meredith, no one could have moved from art or art criticism to Political Economy during this period without recalling the similar change of emphasis in Ruskin's work, a progression mirrored in another of Forster's Ruskinesque characters (of whom I shall have more to say in chapter five), Tony Failing. Forster describes Failing as having

> loved poetry and music and pictures, and everything tempted him to live in a kind of cultured paradise, with the door shut upon squalor. But to have more decent people in the world—he sacrificed everything to that. He would have 'smashed the whole beauty-shop' if it would help him. (*LJ*:174)

The connection between Mr Failing and Mr Arthur, and between both and Ruskin is unmistakable. For all Forster's exasperation with Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, it is well to remember, as Furbank reminds us, and as was made manifest in the previous chapter—that Forster was "brought up on Ruskin"—and though impressed by Fry's ability as a lecturer would still have found Fry's aesthetics "baffling". Indeed, Forster's exasperation at Ruskin's maziness would have carried over to Fry who, according to Furbank, "would make Forster come to exhibitions with him, forcing him to give his opinions on paintings, and then, when Forster nervously did so, throwing up his hands in the wildest astonishment, crying, 'Morgan, can you *really* think that?'"[25] Forster seems well caught between what Waugh (as noted in the first chapter) had described as the "puritanism" of Ruskin and that of Fry, and this scene perhaps demonstrates a turn from the immediate influence of Fry back to a method of interpretation which Forster better understood.



Yet the ambiguity of Forster's characterisation of Fry's aesthetics above is increased by the introduction of Tolstoy's *What is Art?* Fry had criticised Ruskin's assertion that art serves morality in "An Essay on Aesthetics", and it is in this same essay that he also denounces Tolstoy for valuing "the emotions

aroused by art entirely for their reaction upon actual life,"[26] that is, for judging the value of art by strictly moral standards. In saying this, Fry describes Tolstoy's *What is Art?* as a "marvellously original and yet perverse and even exasperating book".[27] Now Fry's essay was first published in 1907, and Forster's "Old Lucy", where he similarly describes Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, was written *circa* 1903, which can only suggest that Forster had early access to Fry's opinions on Tolstoy, perhaps through his Cambridge acquaintances. Yet while adopting Fry's terminology, Forster nevertheless uses Tolstoy's aesthetic as a positive element in opposition to Fry's. In embracing Ruskin and Tolstoy, both Tancred and Mr Arthur, are in an aesthetic sense closer to Forster's final conception of George Emerson, whose role it is to be the reconciler of a number of oppositions, including the medieval and modern, than George from "New Lucy" who seems to lack any moral sensibilities.

Turning to the final version of *A Room with a View*, it is obvious from the Santa Croce scene that much of the direct reference to Ruskin, and particularly his *Mornings in Florence*, has been deleted. Lucy, on entering the church without her Baedeker, is now also without her Ruskin. Indeed, the title of this chapter, "In Santa Croce with no Baedeker" can be seen as a playful allusion to the earlier draft where Lucy indeed visits Santa Croce with no Baedeker, but after her experience of Ruskin, perhaps wishes she had trusted to Baedeker instead. Moreover, the references to Ruskin which remain in this chapter are distanced from the original by having come second-hand through Baedeker. Those references that remain tend to connect Ruskin to the tomb of Galileus de Galileis which he had praised in *Mornings in Florence*, and which had featured in "Old Lucy" but which are also, as Stallybrass notes, "respectfully cited" (*RV*:224) in Baedeker.

In *A Room with a View* Lucy is left to lament that

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[25] Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 206.

[26] Fry, *op cit.*, p. 28.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

> There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful, the one that had been most praised by Mr Ruskin. (*RV*:19-20)

She is therefore thrown into contact with the Emersons, whom she is driven to ask "Do you know which is the tombstone that is praised in Ruskin?" (*RV*:25) And in the final version, Forster has connected two previously separate incidents so that it is "one of the sepulchral slabs so much admired by Mr Ruskin," (*RV*:20) which the baby stumbles upon, bringing Lucy and George together.

This distancing of Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence* from the action is perhaps necessary as a good deal of the dialogue from Lucy and George is derived from that book. Santa Croce, for instance, is thought by Lucy to be "a wonderful building. But how like a barn!" (*RV*:19) This notion, which survives from "Old Lucy", is echoed by the narrator:

> Santa Croce, which, though it is like a barn, has harvested many beautiful things inside its walls. (*RV*:25)

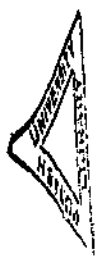
Without a knowledge of Ruskin, and *Mornings in Florence*, it would be easy to read Lucy's comment here as Beauman does in her biography of Forster:

> in the crucial scene in Santa Croce . . . Lucy first senses her Baedeker-induced values being called into question. "'Of course, it must be a wonderful building'", she thinks ('must' because Ruskin says so, and she has been told so), and then, her real self peeping through, "'but how like a barn! And how very cold!'".[28]

Lucy's "real self" in this case is no more than an echo of Ruskin, who in *Mornings in Florence* informs the reader that the "church of Santa Croce has no vaultings at all, but the roof of a farm-house barn". (xxiii:302)

Similarly, most of the references to Giotto in this chapter indicate a continuing recollection of Ruskin in Forster's work. It seems more than coincidental that with the decentring of Ruskin and *Mornings in Florence* there should be a development of Giotto, the main subject of Ruskin's work, as a

central figure in the Santa Croce scene. The earliest reference to Giotto comes in the scene from "Old Lucy" already discussed, yet at this point Giotto appears unconnected with the attack upon Ruskin. It is an Italian guide who first offers to show Lucy the Giottos, and though he relates the story of Cimabue's discovery of Giotto the shepherd boy, itself a favourite of Ruskin's—"Giotto scolare di Cimabue. He kep sheps sulle montagne. A day con un piccolo pezzo di creta make picture of shep" (*LN*:24)—there is little to suggest Ruskin in this. In fact, in this version Lucy leaves Santa Croce without seeing the Giottos, having been repulsed by "an old beggar lady whining for alms" (*LN*:27) in the vicinity of the Peruzzi and Bardi chapels. Forster does, however, develop Giotto in connection with another character, the Reverend Mr Eager, and later manages to combine this new theme with the previous work on Santa Croce in the second chapter of *A Room with a View*.



In July and August of 1902 Forster and his mother spent six weeks at the Hotel Stella d'Oro at Cortina d'Ampezzo and in an undated letter from his mother while he was visiting Innsbruck there is an account of a certain "painted lady" which was to find its way into "Old Lucy":

> Painted lady wants to get up a concert to help build a new church. The object was an afterthought! She sings and longs to distinguish herself. P.A. is to do the programme. I rather hope it will collapse, as one would have to be agreeable and helpful.[29]

Later, in a postcard to E. J. Dent dated 17 August, Forster remarks that

> The concert was a success, and there is every hope that the place will soon be ruined with an English church. (*LN*:7)

It is Elizabeth Ellem's[30] opinion that this incident resulted in Forster attacking his projected novel with a new lease of life, and this can be seen in notes dating from that time and titled "The Concert", which open:

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[28] Nicola Beauman, *Morgan*, London, 1994, p. 125.

[29] Quoted in Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 95.

[30] Ellem, *op cit.*, p. 624.

> Mrs Flint-Carew longs for a concert to exhibit her voice. Mrs G., an organiser, suggests it shall be in aid of the church decoration fund (digression: enthusiastic vicar decorates his church in fresco to mark the continuity of art . . .). (*LN*:8)

It is a short step for Forster from this "enthusiastic vicar" to the Reverend Mr Eager of the later draft who on Lucy's decision to quit Florence sends her a letter as follows:

> Dear Miss Bartlett . . . I understand that you have suddenly decided to go to Rome, and as you are our accompanist we cannot have the concert without you. It seems strange indeed that I should be writing to thank you for this. As you know, it is the dream of my life that our English church of St George in Florence should be covered with frescoes and thus claim kinship with the Arena chapel at Padua, the church of S. <Francesco> \Francis/ at Assisi, & the other great buildings of the past in which the religious aspirations of mankind have found expression. But at the same time I hope I have not forgotten the spirit in which <these> \those/ medioeval [*sic*] artists worked, how Beato Angelico used every day to search his heart with tears and lamentations ere he set his brush to the frescoed walls. Well he knew that all his skill was vain if purity of heart and singleness of purpose were not to guide it. (*LN*:72)

The reference to Fra Angelico in this instance echoes Vasari's recollection that he "never took up his brush without first making a prayer", and "never made a crucifix when the tears did not course down his cheeks".[31] Yet the frescoes found in the Arena chapel and at Assisi are by Giotto, and Forster without doubt knew that, as they are duly remarked upon by Ruskin in the opening paragraph of *Mornings in Florence*. Thus in mentioning Angelico and the spirit of medievalism in which he worked, Forster introduces a further element into the theme he is developing with regard to Ruskin. From this point there appears in Forster's references to Ruskin and Giotto a sustained and evolving concern with things medieval, or more correctly with the spirit of medievalism which Ruskin saw as informing Giotto's art.

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[31] Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 4 vols, Ed. William Gaunt, London, 1927; rpt. 1963, vol. 1, p. 343.

The combination of Giotto and the Christian faith is presented in an unmistakably Ruskinian way by Mr Eager in *A Room with a View*. Eager still draws upon the spiritual aspect of art as he did with Angelico in "Old Lucy", yet in the published version he speaks singularly of Giotto and in a tone which evokes Ruskin's own interpretation of the artist.

> The chapel was already filled with an earnest congregation, and out of them rose the voice of a lecturer, [Mr. Eager] directing them how to worship Giotto, not by tactile valuations,[32] but by the standards of the spirit.
>
> "Remember," he was saying, "the facts about this church of Santa Croce; how it was built by faith in the full fervour of medievalism, before any taint of the Renaissance had appeared. Observe how Giotto in these frescoes—now, unhappily, ruined by restoration—is untroubled by the snares of anatomy and perspective. Could anything be more majestic, more pathetic, beautiful, true? How little, we feel, avails knowledge and technical cleverness against a man who truly feels!" (*RV*:22)

Gay has found a similarity in tone between Ruskin and Eager in the string of epithets ". . . majestic, . . . pathetic, beautiful, true",[33] but what initially is most reminiscent of Ruskin (setting aside for the moment the interest shown by Forster in Giotto and the spirit of medievalism) is the perfectly Ruskinian aside: "now, unhappily, ruined by restoration." We have seen in Forster's "Normandy Journal" that he himself was obsessed by the notion of restoration, a fixation due

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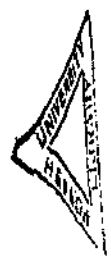
[32] Eager's negation of "tactile valuations" here is to be echoed by Lucy's remark that "It is so wonderful what they say about his tactile values. Though I like the Della Robbia babies better." (*RV*:25) The allusion is to Bernard Berenson's *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (1896) which appears in Forster's 1898-1908 reading list for November 1907 with the annotation "Oh so badly written". (*RV*:222) Yet the importance of this allusion is to be found in following chapter where Lucy, as pianist, is said to be "intoxicated by the mere feel of the notes: they were fingers caressing her own; and by touch . . . did she come to her desire." (*RV*:30) Tactile valuations, the sensation of touch, physical contact and procreation are all hinted at in this allusion and places the developing Lucy in opposition to Eager's asceticism. Touch, as we shall see in the following chapter, is also important to Caroline Abbott.

[33] Gay, *op cit.*, p. 284. Though there may be a similarity in tone between Ruskin and Forster, Summers wisely refers to John Addington Symonds's comment on Giotto, in *The Italian Renaissance: The Fine Arts*, 1877, p. 192., that "no painter is more unaffectedly pathetic, more unconsciously majestic". Summers goes on to make the point that "Mr Eager's echo of this last phrase in his question . . . betrays Forster's indebtedness to Symonds." See Summers, *op cit.*, p. 173.

I would suggest to Ruskin, and this would have been developed by his reading of *Mornings in Florence*. In Forster's parody of Ruskin in "Old Lucy", he refers to Ruskin's abuse of Mr Murray, and in reality Ruskin's abuse is generally occasioned by problems of restoration. It is *a propos* of Giotto's frescoes that Ruskin says, "By restoration—judicious restoration, as Mr Murray usually calls it—there is no saying how much you have lost." (xxiii:298) Ruskin adds later; "When, indeed, Mr Murray's Guide tells you that a *building* has been 'magnificently restored,' you may pass the building by in resigned despair; for *that* means that every bit of the old sculpture has been destroyed".[34] (xxiii:355)

Summers and Meyers, though making direct connections between Forster and Ruskin, still seek to attribute much of Forster's presentation of Giotto to the influence of Roger Fry, particularly in that Fry's belief in Giotto's modernity, with its implied negation of his spirituality, equates him with the character of George Emerson.[35] There is corroboration for such a view in the distinct possibility that in speaking of the "snares of anatomy and perspective" (*RV*:22), Mr Eager is recalling Fry's comments in the lecture series that Forster had attended in 1898, where among many references to Giotto Fry speaks of Jacopo's "Madonna" as "an excellent type of this beautiful period of art before the artist has begun to trouble himself with the problems of scientific structure"—that is anatomy and perspective. Fry's comments were later expanded, for instance, in the "Burlington Fine Arts Club Catalogue of an Exhibition of Florentine Painting Before 1500" published in 1919 and reprinted in *Vision and Design* under the title "The Art of Florence". In this relatively late work—which nevertheless contains opinions Fry was likely to have shared with Forster from a much earlier date, Fry asserts that Giotto attained "completest reality . . . without any attempted verisimilitude", while it was the later Florentine painters who sought science to aid in their pursuit of the beauty of natural form. Fry continues,

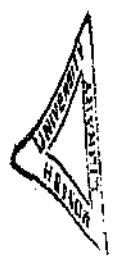


[34] Summers, p. 169, remarks that both Fry and Berenson make reference to "the unsatisfactory restoration of the frescoes in Santa Croce" and by implication Mr Eager's comment is an echo of either or both of these critics.

[35] Meyers, *op cit.*, p. 41, and Summers, *op cit.*, p. 169.

"Perspective and anatomy were the two studies which promised to reveal to them the secrets of natural form", yet to a more modern aesthetic "it is evident that neither perspective nor anatomy has any very immediate bearing upon art" though "perspective and anatomy, while they were still in their infancy, acted admirably as stimulants."[36] The terminology is characteristic of Fry, yet one should be cautious about the suggested influence of Fry on the presentation of Giotto, as the placement of Giotto firmly in the medieval school serves a purpose which clearly distinguishes Forster's presentation of Giotto from Fry's. Giotto in Forster is always representative of the medieval, but of medievalism that is in clearly defined opposition to the later Renaissance, essentially a Ruskinian view of the painter. Morris makes a useful distinction between Ruskin and the more modern critics, specifically Pater but by extension Fry equally:

> Ruskin was a true medieval, for he despised the Renaissance; Pater [not unlike Fry] was a true modern, for he valued the Middle Ages only for their . . . latent Renaissance spirit.[37]



Forster's presentation of Giotto as medieval is to be identified with Ruskin, rather than any critic who valued him for his "latent Renaissance spirit". If I am correct, Giotto's presence in the novel serves Forster as a symbol by which to evoke certain Victorian attitudes typified in Ruskin, and informed with the same morality with which Ruskin interpreted medieval art. Therefore, in the figure of Giotto there is no "meaningful ambiguity" as Summers suggests,[38] rather, he represents the culmination of Forster's concern with Ruskin as begun in "Old Lucy" with the parody of *Mornings in Florence.*

Before continuing with Giotto there is another point at which Forster in "Old Lucy" seems to be demonstrating an interest in Ruskin which connects with his presentation of Giotto as an equivalent to the Ruskinian point of view. Ruskin is acknowledged as belonging to a movement christened by Carlyle as "Götzism",

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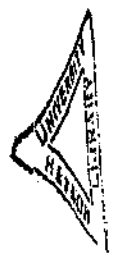
[36] Fry, *Vision and Design, op cit.*, p. 182.

[37] Kevin L. Morris, *The Image of the Middle Ages in Romantic and Victorian Literature*, London, Sydney and Dover, New Hampshire, 1984, p. 215.

[38] Summers, *op cit.*, p. 174.

the name coming from Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1771). According to Shrimpton, in this play, "the competitive individualism of modern life was for the first time disadvantageously compared with the hierarchical social system of the Middle Ages".[39] Coming towards the end of this tradition furthered by Carlyle, Cobbett and Southey, Ruskin nevertheless added to it substantially by contributing the fourth classic text of what Shrimpton calls "English Götzism"—*The Stones of Venice*. Shrimpton believes that Ruskin later turned from this method of political and social analysis, yet it is certain that from 1874 his burgeoning papist sympathies assured his continued place in the movement which Morris calls "religious medievalism",[40] and as part of this tradition Ruskin continued to teach "that the essential values of medieval art – and thereby society – should be isolated and applied to the present".[41] Such religious medievalism is, in this at least, almost indistinguishable from Shrimpton's view of Götzism, and Ruskin's place in either tradition would have led to his reputation for using the Renaissance as a foil by which to highlight the strengths of the Middle Ages to be consolidated in the mind of the English Public.



Though Ruskin made the claim in *The Two Paths* (1859), that "We don't want either the life or the decorations of the thirteenth century back again" (xvi:341), he certainly sought to revive the spirit which had informed medieval society, the spirit of medievalism of which Mr Eager speaks in both "Old Lucy" and *A Room with a View*. Yet in "Old Lucy" Forster also appears to be confronting the medievalist tradition through an exchange between Lucy and a Mr Jenkinson, himself about to take orders. Jenkinson declares;

> I am not so consistently inconsistent as most people, who come to Italy to admire what is old, and see old pictures and old statues and old churches and perhaps read old books, and know that all is better and more beautiful than the new, and then, when any practical question arises, turn away from those who would bring

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[39] Nick Shrimpton, "'Rust and Dust': Ruskin's Pivotal Work," in Robert Hewison,ed., *New Approaches to Ruskin*, London, Boston and Henley, 1981, p. 52.

[40] Morris, op cit., p. 1.

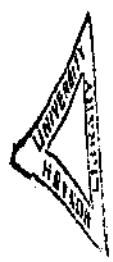
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

> back the old—to those who bawl out Progress . . .. (*LN*:29)

Despite his denial, Ruskin, to Forster's twentieth century outlook, would certainly have stood as one "who would bring back the old". Lucy, who had already lost faith with Ruskin in Santa Croce, answers Jenkinson's complaint for Forster;

> "No we are not inconsistent," she cried. "We love St Benedict but we wouldn't have him again—nor St Francis either. And I don't want another Giotto or even another Botticelli. And most of all we won't have <the> again the people whom we don't love . . .. That is what you would give us now." (*LN*:30)

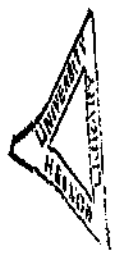
Stallybrass believes such dialogue to have been Forster's response to "the irritant of much *pensione* and art-gallery chatter." Furthermore as it neither "advances the action, . . . [nor] bears the remotest resemblance to anything in *A Room with a View*" (*LN*:28) it is difficult to find the fragment a context within the extant notes. However, in this instance, as with the scene in Santa Croce, the compelling force behind the inclusion of outside irritants appears to be Ruskin and the spirit of medievalism which in the final version of the Santa Croce scene will be developed to include Giotto as a type of Ruskin's medievalism.



It is necessary now to broaden the discussion of Ruskin and Giotto further—what Giotto means to Ruskin, and how in consequence the association of Giotto and Ruskin is used by Forster—in order to show just how much comes together in that scene, which will be commented upon below. For Ruskin, particularly in *Mornings in Florence*, written at the height of his newly awakened sympathy with the art of catholic Europe, Giotto is the type of the Christian artist, and more generally of the medieval temperament. In support of his bias towards Giotto Ruskin often stresses Giotto's faith, yet it is more than an active faith and a desire to teach through his work the Gospel of Christ which encourages Ruskin in his promotion of Giotto as first among Christian artists. Rather, it is his position of reconciler, his ability to gather the divergent influences of his period and integrate them into one divine whole. Ruskin explains Giotto's situation as a thirteenth-century Florentine;

> You had the Etruscan stock in Florence—Christian, or at least semi-Christian . . ..
>
> You had then the Norman and the Lombardi races coming down on this: kings, and hunters—splendid in war—insatiable of action. You had the Greek and Arabian races flowing from the east, bringing with them the law of the City, and the dream of the Desert. (xxiii:331)

Giotto, so Ruskin believed, managed to harmonise these oppositions; in this reconciliation of the dramatic with the contemplative, "of the Norman race with the Byzantine", Giotto has also managed a harmony of "not merely . . . action with repose—not merely . . . war with religion, . . .[but] of *domestic* life with *monastic*, and of practical household sense with unpractical Desert insanity". (xxiii:331) In doing this Giotto reconciled what, until then, had seemed irreconcilable. Ruskin's view of Giotto as reconciling the "monastic" with the "domestic" would have attracted Forster's attention more and more as he developed his own opinions on medievalism which saw no connection between body and soul in the medieval world-view, and which led, jumping ahead a little, to the emphasis on "connecting" later espoused in *Howards End.*



Between *A Room with a View* and *Howards End* Forster tried his hand as a playwright with "St Bridget of Sweden".[42] Based on St Bridget's pilgrimage to Rome and Palestine in 1371, this play provides a link between Giotto as a central figure in *A Room with a View*, and Giotto, like Ruskin, as subsumed in a general attack on medievalism in *Howards End.* Giotto is first introduced in Act II which is set in a room in the palace of Castello dell' Uovo in Naples during the autumn of 1371. The room is described by Forster in terms which reflect his debt to Ruskin's notion of the Middle Ages as a harmonising force between Northern and Eastern influences:

> Another room in the palace, furnished elaborately, and in a medley of styles. The carpet is oriental, the great round table and the chairs gothic, the walls partly in mosaic, partly frescoed by the new Tuscan school with representations of the Virtues and

[42] The manuscript of this unfinished play, in three exercise books, written *circa* September 1909 is held in the Modern Archives at King's College, Cambridge.

Vices.

Yet as the reference to the "new Tuscan School" and the date 1371 implies, within this basically medieval room we find harvested "all the varied soils in which the secular Renaissance is germinating". We find that in this room a "Book of Hours and a Manuscript of the Decameron lie on the table: a bas-relief, stained by long burial in the earth, leans propped against a low divan;" together with all the classical, aesthetic and scientific concomitants of what Ruskin had described as the loss of vital religion which divides the Renaissance from the Middle Ages—"lutes, embroidery, a portable shrine, the model of a cannon".

Giotto, however, is clearly associated with the earlier period. Queen Giovanna, discussing the Virtues and Vices with the Abbot of Marmontier, nephew of the Pope, laments the decline in art since her grandfather's day:

> I do not know what is coming over the painters. They answer you back, and want this and refuse that. There was never any trouble with Giotto; if my grandfather wanted Seven Virtues, Giotto gave them to us. But now he is dead, these upstarts hold the field. However the colours are beautiful, and the Injustice really is like the King of Hungary.

Notice the implication of superior executive power in the Renaissance artist as opposed to the moral power of Giotto which Forster introduces through the allusion to colour and the successful portraiture in the allegorical figure of Injustice. Yet Forster has probably derived his notion of Giotto in this instance from the earlier *Giotto and his Works in Padua*, not from *Mornings in Florence*. In the earlier work Ruskin had discussed briefly Giotto's visit to Naples and his stay with King Robert at the Castello dell' Uovo, and at greater length the Virtues and Vices he later painted in the Arena Chapel at Padua; both discussions are missing from *Mornings in Florence*.

However, the characterisation of St Bridget certainly owes much to Ruskin's notion of the reconciliatory nature of Giotto and the Middle Ages. Indeed, Forster's concern with St Bridget is probably due to his perception of her as a more sympathetic character than her daughter St Catherine. The first we hear

of Bridget leads us to feel she is inhuman in her piety and is intended to be one of Forster's villains. Her sons, Birger and Charles, are discussing Birger's desire for a wife and children with the Abbot:

> Birger. [excitedly] But tell him—a wife who is fruitful. I want children. I want love. My mother will choose me a barren woman.
> Charles. Aye, that is so.
> The Abbot. No doubt that is owing to some vow, or holy purpose.
> Birger. Yes, to get money for Christ.

Birger continues "it is all very just and for a holy purpose, and the will of God, yet we cannot forget that our name is dying out of Sweden, and that we are descended from kings . . . tell him that Hjalmar is a monk, Ulf was served like Charles, and Christianna's husband is no husband." And later Birger again laments the enforced sterility of his family: "Charles, our House is killing itself to bring back the Pope—Ulf is gone, our Mother is ill and will follow him, then Catherine, then you, and I. We are going down a passage that narrows, and this morning I have seen the end of it. Whether we fail or win, we shall fail."

Bridget appears to be deliberately sacrificing her family to the church, and one is tempted to view her as an echo of Harriet Herriton of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. However, on introduction she is a far more sympathetic character and to a large degree reconciles the opposition between her sons, who are sensual and pursue the life of the body, and her daughter Catherine (later to become St Catherine) who is introduced as "a religious". Bridget is initially conspicuous for her good sense. Catherine has covered a tapestry representing the story of Lancelot and Guinevere because, she later admits, "I did not understand it." Bridget reveals her good nature in chastising her daughter's suspicion of bodily passion: "You should have asked me. It is only the story of Launcelot of the Lake, a sinner but a Christian". Bridget herself can "remember his [her husband's] beauty without sin", and appears to be ready to reconcile human love with the divine. Her lack of severity, and basic simplicity are demonstrated in her interview with Giovanna, and it is this lack of severity, of perceived piety, which

causes Giovanna to decide against helping Bridget bring the Pope Gregory XI back to Rome. The Queen herself sees Bridget as "a pleasant little woman, but no saint", and in the picture which Forster builds for us, her pleasantness, good will, and at times triviality, are strangely mixed with severity and piety. While the strength of her convictions are demonstrated in her constant desire to be scourged in order to win God's favour, she, like George and Margaret Schlegel, represents most completely the idea of a reconciliation of "household sense" with "Desert insanity" which Ruskin, as noted above, found embodied in Giotto's work.

Continuing his work towards this reconciliation "Only connect . . ." is chosen by Forster as the epigraph to *Howards End* published the following year. Forster expands upon this notion of connection through Margaret Schlegel and her dealings with Henry Wilcox, who was to become her husband. Wilcox, Forster informs us, was ruled by "an incomplete asceticism" and had "always the sneaking belief that bodily passion is bad", having been brought up on the Christianity which "had once kindled the souls of St Catherine and St Francis into a white-hot hatred of the carnal." (*HE*:183) Margaret's hope, however, was the "building of the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion. Without it we are meaningless fragments, half monks, half beasts, unconnected arches that have never joined into a man." (*HE*:183) And therefore Margaret's sermon, the whole of her sermon, was

> Only connect! . . .. Only connect the prose with the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its highest. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die. (*HE*:183-4)

Forster's reference to St Catherine and St Francis recalls all that we have said of the spirit of medievalism, and makes it evident that to Forster this spirit is responsible for the divided man characterised by Henry Wilcox. Though Ruskin claims that Giotto managed a reconciliation of the domestic (body), with the monastic (soul), Forster draws a different conclusion as seen in Margaret's remark in a letter to her sister Helen:

> Don't brood too much . . . on the superiority of the unseen to the seen. It's true, but to brood on it is medieval. Our business is not to contrast the two, but to reconcile them. (*HE*:101-2)

Forster has shifted Ruskin's medievalism from being a reconciling force, as typified by Giotto, to its opposite. This is recognisable in Mr Eager and his Ruskinian interpretation of Giotto. Through Eager, Forster introduces an opposition between uncompromising piety, the worship of the spirit, and the equally uncompromising humanism, the worship of the physical, as championed by Mr Emerson. This opposition is highlighted through the differing reactions to Giotto.

We recall Eager asking his congregation, with reference to Giotto's frescoes, "could anything be more majestic, more pathetic, beautiful, true?" (*RV*:22) Emerson answers:

> As for the frescoes, I see no truth in them. Look at that fat man in blue! He must weigh as much as I do, and he is shooting into the sky like an air-balloon. (*RV*:23)

McDowell makes the valid point that in his reaction to Giotto and to Mr Eager's lecture, Mr Emerson "exhibits a literalness of mind not far different from the fundamentalism he criticizes."[43] And also it is difficult to accept Forster's later attempt to construct a more moderate Emerson who is "profoundly religious" (*RV*:199) for he "seems to operate on the surface, rather than the depths, of religious issues."[44]

Summers is correct in his opinion that this "contrast in responses" reflects the opposition between asceticism and humanism, and reminds us of a similar incident during the trip to Fiesole in chapter six of the novel. In this scene Eager displays his asceticism both in his blindness, or rather deafness, to the sensuality of the Italian language which in "Mr Eager's mouth . . . resembled nothing so much as an acid whistling fountain" (*RV*:62). This failure of the senses is

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[43] F. P. W. McDowell, *E. M. Forster*, Revised ed., Boston, 1982, p. 26.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

mirrored in his forcing the Italian driver to leave behind his girl after they were caught misbehaving while driving. Emerson, the humanist, attempts to dissuade Eager from his actions;

> He pointed to the Val d'Arno, which was visible far below them, through the budding trees. "Fifty miles of spring, and we've come up to admire them. Do you suppose there's any difference between spring in nature and spring in man? But there we go, praising the one and condemning the other as improper, ashamed that the same laws work eternally through both." (*RV*:63)

Eager is the "enemy of spring"; Emerson its champion. Yet this opposition is not one of the barren ideological type, rather it becomes subsumed in a more personal struggle for a designated prize—the soul of Emerson's son, George.

Eager, in an interview which takes place after the Santa Croce incident, explains to Lucy and Miss Bartlett, how he came to know Emerson, and how the man had allegedly murdered his own wife, "in the sight of God." (*RV*:54) Yet for all his animosity towards Emerson, with whom a history of disagreement stretches back far beyond the scene in the church, Eager remains sympathetic towards George; "the boy—an innocent child at the time—I will exclude. God knows what his education and his inherited qualities may have made him." (*RV*:53) It would be easy, one feels, for Eager to condemn George along with his father, for the sins of the father to be visited upon the son, yet it seems he still has some vague hope that George may have failed to succumb to his father's humanist influence. One reason for Eager's sympathy towards George is explained late in the novel when Emerson tells Lucy of the trouble between Eager and himself. It was over George's soul that Emerson and Eager first came into conflict, and the result was that although George remained unbaptised, Eager's efforts brought about the death of his mother from guilt and fear. It is possible therefore that Eager's sympathy is actuated by feelings of guilt over the death of Mrs Emerson.

Emerson, of course, felt that he had won; "He was not baptised . . . I did

hold firm . . .. My boy shall go back to the earth untouched", yet at what cost?[45] And now in Santa Croce he proclaims the lack of truth in Giotto's frescoes, turning to George for an affirmation of his denouncement of Eager's interpretation;

> "Now, did this happen, or didn't it? Yes or no?"
> George replied:
> "It happened like this, if it happened at all. I would rather go up to heaven by myself than be pushed by cherubs; and if I got there I should like my friends to lean out of it, just as they do here."
> "You will never go up," said his father. "You and I, dear boy, will lie at peace in the earth that bore us, and our names will disappear as surely as our work survives."
> "Some of the people can only see the empty grave, not the saint, whoever he is, going up. It did happen like that, if it happened at all." (*RV*:23)

Stone[46] has condemned George as his father's "melancholy parrot", when rather, as Summers acknowledges, in this incident, by "dissociating himself from those who 'can only see the grave,' he differentiates himself from his father and signals his desire to believe in the continuity of life beyond death."[47] Indeed, George's willingness to allow for the possibility of life beyond death is an answer to the world-sorrow his father's insistent humanism had produced in him. Forster hints at this distinction between George and his father as early as the opening scene where Emerson exclaims "I have a view, I have a view. . . . This is my son . . .. He has a view, too." (*RV*:3) The appropriate response is to accept the possibility that the views of father and son are not the same.

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[45] Emerson's failure to compromise reveals a fanaticism of which Forster would not have approved, and in this Emerson appears less human than the Butlerian character presented in the second half of the novel. Had he been more like the high Ydgrunites of Butler's *Erewhon* and dropped an ideal to oblige his wife all may have been for the better, but the necessary opposition would have failed to develop.

[46] Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster*, Stanford, 1966, p. 222, fails to differentiate between George and his father due in part to a failure to accurately attribute the dialogue in the novel. The example of "stupefying sententiousness" which he attributes to Emerson is in fact George speaking in opposition to his father's worry over the Misses Alan.

[47] Summers, op cit., p. 168.

Returning to the scene in Santa Croce, Emerson, on seeing that George is disinclined to leave the Giottos, is moved to ask Lucy "Why will he look at that fresco? . . . I saw nothing in it." (*RV*:25). George, in denying his father's atheism, manages to reconcile the opposition between Emerson and Eager, and to take a position in which both Eager's spirituality and Emerson's humanism are accessible, and thus creates something approximating the rainbow bridge of Margaret Schlegel's desire and the reconciliation which Ruskin had found embodied in Giotto. Thus when Macaulay suggests that Mr Emerson "does admire Ruskin"[48] it is probable that she has confused the father with the son.

Forster then, while disbelieving Ruskin's belief in the reconciliatory nature of medievalism, nevertheless attributes to Giotto the Ruskinian position of reconciler—has used him as the means by which George could achieve the connection between monk and beast. In doing this Forster has, like Lucy's remarks on Santa Croce being a barn, again borrowed directly from Ruskin, this time basing the dialogue between George and his father on Ruskin's discussion of Giotto's frescoes.[49] Ruskin, speaking of the "Death of St Francis" asks "Was there ever a St. Francis?—*did* he ever receive stigmata?—*did* his soul go up to heaven—did any monk see it rising—and did Giotto mean to tell us so?" (xxiii:339) Ruskin's own answer to this being "that, if ever soul rose to heaven from the dead body, his soul did so rise". (xxiii:340) Emerson's question to George and George's reply clearly reflect Forster's knowledge of this passage, and though they are looking at the "Ascension of St John" as the notion of friends leaning out of heaven to receive the soul suggests, George's reference to "cherubs" pushing one up to heaven is as clearly a reference to the St Francis fresco.

Of course Forster was not convinced by Ruskin's claim that Giotto was capable of reconciling the domestic with the monastic, a reconciliation Forster sought through George and again through Margaret Schlegel, and one reason for

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[48] Rose Macaulay, *The Writings of E. M. Forster*, London, 1938, p. 78.

[49] Also noted by Gay, *op cit.*, p. 284.

this can be found in Ruskin's own qualification of the claim. In defining the "domestic", Ruskin admits

> it is not Rationalism and commercial competition—Mr. Stuart Mill's "other career for woman than that of wife and mother"—which are reconcilable by Giotto, or anybody else, with divine vision. (xxiii:332)

This attitude of Ruskin's to the role of women in society is repeated again in a discussion of the figure of Grammatic Art in Simon Memmi's "The Strait Gate". Ruskin notes that the figure looks upon three children—two boys and a girl—and he asks; "Does this mean that one girl out of every two should not be able to read or write?" (xxiii:387) Rather an unusual inference to be drawn from such an innocent scene we think, but Ruskin continues, elaborating on his own personal bias; "I am quite willing to accept that inference, for my own part,—should perhaps even say, two girls out of every three."

The inability to read and write would, in effect, preclude these unfortunate girls from any career other than that of "wife or mother", and in this we find a hint of debate between Ruskin and Mill on the position of women in society, as found in the respective tracts *Sesame and Lilies* and *The Subjection of Women*, with which Forster was to involve himself. As seen in Trent's comments on the inequalities in the education of women, Forster had a far more enlightened vision of women and society than appears, parenthetically, in *Mornings in Florence*. And though Ellem regards his comments in "Old Lucy" as naive pontificating, Forster's remarks there can be seen as an ironic statement of Ruskin's position in *Sesame and Lilies*, which Forster had obviously read, though when is still a matter for debate.

In "Old Lucy" Forster describes Lucy as feeling "keen selfish disappointment" at Mr Arthur's decision to give up art,

> for she was of the sex which <makes the audience> \fills the auditorium/ of great deeds and <cannot bear to be disappointed of the show.> it was hard that she should not have a show.
>
> But because she had also laid hold of reason, divine reason

> which guides both <woma[n]> man & woman to great though separate goals she only answered him that he must tell her more . . . (*LN*:46)

The divinity which informs the reasoning behind the belief in an essential difference in man and woman, is, as we shall see in the next chapter, obvious in Ruskin's work. Here it is enough to say that Forster appears to be deliberately, and ironically playing on this idea of essentialism and it is this aspect of medievalism, and neo-medievalism, which he most insistently attempts to update in the reconciliations attempted by George and Margaret.

Therefore what appears initially as Forster's exasperation with Ruskin, moves through the reassessment of Ruskin's neo-medievalism in general to develop more specifically as a reassessment of the attitude to women implicit in Ruskin's neo-medievalism. We can now proceed to apply Forster's response to the medieval habit of dividing body and soul, and to the role of women in society based upon such a distinction, to his novels. The additional insight which this discussion has provided will explain a number of incidents and characters which are difficult to interpret.

CHAPTER THREE

(I)

In this chapter the implications of the foregoing discussion of Forster's ideas on the equality of the sexes will be traced out as they develop from Ruskin in a direction of Forster's own in *Where Angels Fear to Tread, A Room with a View* and *Howards End*. This direction was crucial for Forster's career as a novelist. However, in the previous chapter one influence which had a tremendous bearing on Forster's attitude to medievalism was deliberately ignored. Dante, perhaps more than Ruskin and Giotto, provides the basis of Forster's first novel and it is necessary to begin with a brief examination of Forster's conception of this most medieval of writers.

Forster's conventional public stance admits Dante's *Divine Comedy* to be "the supreme achievement of medieval Christianity and perhaps of European civilisation".[1] Yet as early as 1901-2 there appears in Forster's personal notes an aversion to that element in Dante's sensibility which has to do with women. The ambivalence of Forster's estimate of Dante remains consistent from the early conception that Dante's "public life [was] more attractive than his private",[2] a theme which recurs in a note written in 1907[3] that he "must try to read all Dante whom I cannot like", and again in a letter to Lowes Dickinson dated 26 October 1920, where he concedes that "Dante still knocks me whenever I take him up, but either through idleness or through consciousness of fundamental disagreement, I

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[1] From a typescript of a BBC Broadcast titled "Some Books" delivered on 1 September 1946, held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

[2] Found in Forster's "Italian Commonplace Notes" written circa 1901-2, held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

[3] From an entry dated 19 September 1907, in his "Notebook Journal" began in 1903, held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

never continue for long." While he appreciates Dante's historical importance, Forster's estimate of Dante is diminished by the fundamental disagreement over personal relationships. This incompatibility is demonstrated in Forster's "Dante Notebook"[4] which Forster was working on concurrently with the "Lucy" manuscripts. In these notes, which provide the basis for Forster's "Dante"[5] paper for the Working Men's College given in 1908, Forster seems concerned with delineating the characteristic medievalism of Dante's work, though at times he is struck by the relative modernity of some of Dante's opinions.

The most succinct expression of the failure of the medieval world-view, the conscious striving against a harmony of the body and soul, is developed from these early notes into the later "Dante".

> Man consists of body and soul. So the middle ages thought, and so we think today. We agree with them. We believe that a material element and a spiritual element go to make us up. All religion, all philosophy, all science, acknowledges the fact. There are within us these two things. But—and here comes the difference—the middle ages thought that between the body and the soul one can draw a distinct line, that it is possible to say which of our actions is material, which spiritual. (*AE*:154-55)

Rather than imagining that a medieval mind like that of Dante or Giotto is capable, or even desirous, of reconciling these oppositions, Forster's position here clearly attests to his opposition to Ruskin's claims in *Mornings in Florence*.

> Most modern thinkers realize that the barrier eludes definition. It is there, but you cannot put your finger on it, be you theologian or biologist. It is there, but it is impalpable; and the wisest of our age, Goethe for example, and Walt Whitman, have not attempted to find it, but have essayed the more human task of harmonizing the realms that it divides. Not so the men of the middle ages . . .. They desired not to harmonize the body and the soul, but to find out where one stopped and where the other began. Matter on this

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[4] This notebook is held in the Modern Archives at King's College and contains copious notes on *La Vita Nuova*, *De Monarchia*, and *The Divine Comedy*, and is believed to have written circa 1903.

[5] Published in E. M. Forster, *Albergo Empedocle and other writings by E. M. Forster*, Ed., George H. Thomson, New York, 1971.

side: spirit on that, and no connection between them. (*AE*:155)

As Lago[6] notes, Forster in this lecture also focuses upon the failure of Dante's "conduct" in personal relationships, a focus aimed at highlighting the medieval application of the division of spirit and matter even in the personal sphere.

> Hamlet loved Ophelia because she was Ophelia. Othello loved Desdemona because she was Desdemona. But Dante loved Beatrice, because she was a means to God; because the emotions with which she inspired him, took him out of daily life into the life celestial. Here is the great difference between him and Shakespeare, between medieval and modern thought . . .. (*AE*:150)

As Forster continues, his lecture becomes very much a commentary upon a Dantesque concept of women and sexuality:

> At first sight, there is something sublime in it. It makes a man behave with reverence and courtesy to a woman; he disciplines his body and soul, that he may be worthy of the high thoughts to which she leads him. It inspires work: it may inspire a whole life . . .. But, is it a true compliment to the woman herself? . . .Which seems to pay a truer homage—Dante looking through Beatrice, or Othello looking at Desdemona . . .? (*AE*:151)

While expatiating on Dante's medievalism, Forster is not without an awareness of the link between his subject and Ruskin. Forster allows that in Dante's contempt for war at least, "There is nothing medieval or out of date". Dante, Forster believes, "never speaks of the beauties of war, like Ruskin and Kipling." (*AE*:159) Ruskin is medieval in the adversative temper of his thought. Yet the differentiation of Dante and Ruskin over this point only highlights the connection implied throughout the rest of Forster's critique of medievalism, and this connection is nothing new, but survives from the "Dante Notebook" where Forster notes that Dante "doesn't believe in the ennobling force of war like Ruskin—For he has fought himself." That Forster should make this connection between Dante and Ruskin is not unexpected. In *Mornings in Florence*, the inspiration behind Forster's use of Giotto as a substitute for Ruskin, we

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[6] Mary Lago, *E. M. Forster: A Literary Life*, London, 1995, p. 22.

continually find Giotto being paired with Dante. Ruskin states that during Giotto's work for the Franciscans, he was "continually painting under Dante's advice," (xxiii:296) also that Arnolfo worked "with Giotto at his side, and Dante looking on, and whispering sometimes a word to both." (xxiii:299) Later Ruskin is moved to exclaim "What kind of boy is this . . . who can make . . . Dante his friend!" (xxiii:321) In *Modern Painters*, Ruskin takes Giotto and Dante as representative of their age, in his Götzist comparison of the Classical, Medieval and Modern periods discussed above in the Introduction. And in *Sesame and Lilies*, though Ruskin denies his reliance on Dante in developing a model of perfect womanhood—'I do not insist upon Dante's conception; if I began I could not cease: besides, you might think this a wild imagination of one poet's heart" (xviii:116)—certainly his womanly ideal is borrowed in part from Dante's Beatrice.

As mentioned, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was written and published before *A Room with a View*. Consequently, the connection between Ruskin and medievalism which Forster hinted at in *The Lucy Novels* and developed in the final version of *A Room with a View* is yet to be clearly defined. Yet the Church of Santa Deodata and the references to Giotto do, as will be demonstrated, indicate a continuing concern with Ruskin which though reminiscent of his place in "Old Lucy" also anticipates the significance he was to have in *A Room with a View*. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* may therefore be regarded as Forster's first attempt to develop a philosophy of human relations from the frustration and irritants which actuated all his early work while, *like A Room with a View* which was to follow, this novel deals primarily with a search for a set of social standards which could accommodate Forster's vision of a successful relationship. Such a thing is possible neither in conventional English society—represented by Sawston—nor in the medieval Italian society created around the figure of Gino and the town of Monteriano. By the end of the novel it has been established that both Victorian society and the medievalism of Monteriano fail and that they fail for similar reasons. In consequence, Forster would not hereafter place medievalism in opposition to Victorianism but as the informing spirit within

Victorian morality and its repressive attitudes to women.

While *A Room with a View* and "St Bridget of Sweden" provide the culmination of Forster's work with Giotto as a symbol of medievalism, in this novel, as mentioned, Forster seems more interested in the figure of Dante, whose presence in the novel is pervasive. A letter[7] dated 29 June 1902 which Forster sent to his friend E. J. Dent from Pisa provides an important link between Dante and what was to be his new novel—his first published novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. The letter reads:

> I have been sightseeing vigourously [*sic*] for the last three weeks. First Rome, with a two days excursion into the Sabines: then Orvieto, and a week at Siena. Then San Gemignano [*sic*], Volterra, here, and a day at Lucca. We return to Siena for the Palio, and then I go for a night to Monte Oleveto.
>
> I have often thought of your suggestion of a Medieval town—but I can't even make an M. San Gimignano, Volterra, Pisa, & Lucca are all undone, I believe, & the first two are particularly charming.

Forster's use of what appears to be a set of Gothic arches as a stylised letter M in "Medieval" and again for the "M" which he couldn't "make" is comparable to a similarly stylised "M" made to indicate medievalism in his "Dante Notebook". His connection of San Gimignano with Dent's suggestion of his doing a volume for the *Medieval Byways* series probably prompted his use of that town as the basis for the mythical medieval town of Monteriano.

More obvious are Philip's two trips to Italy which, opening the two sections of the novel, both commence with his somewhat cynical joke that "Here beginneth the New Life". (*WAFT*:3&57) Considering Forster's attitude to Dante's relationships with women, this stands as an epigraph, even an epitaph, over the two unsuccessful relationships which Gino is to enter into, first his carnal relationship with Lilia and then his idolatry of Caroline Abbott. Moreover, Gino, trying to impress Philip, allies himself further with Dante by quoting the

[7] This letter is held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

opening lines of the *Inferno*. Stallybrass provides the following translation from Dorothy Sayers:

> Midway this way of life we're bound upon,
> I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
> Where the right road was wholly lost and gone. (*WAFT*:179)

The narrator quips that this was a "quotation which was more apt than he supposed" (*WAFT*:24), and Stallybrass plausibly suggests that the aptness lies in its being an anticipation of the catastrophe in the darkened wood at the end of the novel where, after fainting through pain and shock, Philip recovers consciousness (*WAFT*:131) to find Gino's baby dead and the right road seemingly wholly lost and gone.

Forster's efforts to create a link between Dante and Monteriano can also be seen in the "Baedeker" entry he creates for Monteriano;

> *History*: Monteriano, the Mons Rianus of Antiquity, whose Ghibelline tendencies are noted by Dante (Purg. xx), definitely emancipated itself from Poggibonsi in 1261. Hence the distich, *'Poggibonizzi, fatti in là, che Monteriano si fa città!'* . . .. (*WAFT*:12)

The distich which accompanies this invention of Forster's is repeated throughout the novel as a continuous reinforcement of the towns medievalism. Stallybrass notes that this history "bears little relationship to that of San Gimignano, which is nowhere mentioned or alluded to by Dante". (*WAFT*:178) However, a description of San Gimignano from the 1900 edition of Baedeker's *Central Italy* may have provided the spark for Forster's imagination;

> Its walls, its towers . . . , and its streets all carry us back to the middle ages. Perhaps no other town in Tuscany presents so faithful a picture of Dante's time.[8]

Summers believes these references to Dante simply "help define the book

[8] Karl Baedeker, *Handbook to Central Italy*, Leipsic, 1900, p. 15.

as a life pilgrimage, a *Bildungsroman*."[9] This neither acknowledges the depth of feeling Dante had aroused in Forster, nor does it explain why Forster should so actively work to evoke the Middle Ages in this novel, the above quotation from Baedeker being echoed repeatedly in Forster's own descriptions of Monteriano. The reader's first introduction to Monteriano is via Lilia's letter; "Looking out of a Gothic window every morning, it seems impossible that the Middle Ages have passed away." (*WAFT*:7) Gothic windows are to feature again later in the novel (*WAFT*:89) and Forster creates about them a vision of life as it might have been for the medieval families of Salvucci and Ardinghelli whose feud, Stallybrass tells us "rent San Gimignano in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." (*WAFT*:181) And on Philip's arrival at the station we are provided with the following:

> of a town, medieval or otherwise, not the slightest sign. He must take what is suitably termed a legno—a piece of wood—and drive up eight miles of excellent road into the Middle Ages. (*WAFT*:15)

The purpose behind Forster's insistence on Monteriano's medieval character is revealed in his description of the piazza. The division of body and soul which Forster had noted in Dante, and the Middle Ages generally, is mirrored in Monteriano's piazza, "with its three great attractions—the Palazzo Pubblico, the Collegiate Church, and the Caffe Garibaldi" representing the "intellect, the soul, and the body". (*WAFT*:116-7) Summers at once sees this defining the "wholeness" and "completeness"[10] of Monteriano, while later regarding it as a simile of "incompleteness".[11] He is correct in the second instance; *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is concerned with "the atomised self" and "the near impossibility of connecting the intellect, the soul, and the body."[12] All aspects of man are present in the piazza, but are divided each from the other, and

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[9] Claude J. Summers, *E. M. Forster*, 1983, p. 35.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

only when they are connected into a whole may man find salvation.

This division is inherent in Forster's Ruskinian over-simplification—"the Middle Ages, all fighting and holiness, and the Renaissance, all fighting and beauty" (*WAFT*:20) which attempts to illustrate the variety of life, albeit disconnected, which Monteriano has experienced. Yet it is a division which Roger Fry argues, and which Forster discerns, to be wholly spurious. In the essay "Art and Life" Fry makes the point, almost certainly in response to Ruskin, that

> it seems an easy thing to pass thus directly from the work of art to the life of the time which produced it. . . . Thus we picture our Middle Ages as almost entirely occupied with religion and war, our Renaissance as occupied in learning . . .. Whereas, as a matter of fact, all of these things were going on all the time while the art of each period has for some reason been mainly taken up with the expression of one or another activity.[13]

Forster, fully aware of the truth of Fry's remarks, is deliberately parodying Ruskin's conception of the Middle Ages as clearly disassociated from the Renaissance in this remark and in his presentation of the church of Santa Deodata. His description of the church shows a definite Ruskinian influence and is part of the progress in Forster's conception of Ruskin between "Old Lucy" and *A Room with a View*. Forster describes the church, the Collegiate Church of Santa Deodata, as built of

> brown unfinished stone . . .. But for the inside Giotto was summoned to decorate the walls of the nave. Giotto came—that is to say, he did not come, German research having decisively proved—but at all events the nave is covered with frescoes, and so are two chapels in the left transept, the arch into the choir, and there are scraps in the choir itself. There the decoration stopped, till in the full spring of the Renaissance a great painter came to pay a few weeks' visit to his friend the Lord of Monteriano. In the intervals between banquets and the discussions on Latin etymology and the dancing, he would stroll over to the church,

[13] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design*, London, 1928, p. 2. The essay in question was written from notes of an lecture given to the Fabian Society in 1917, yet the similarity of phrase again seems to imply that Forster was privileged to Fry's views often prior to publication. The chance of the influence working the other way seems small.

> and there in the fifth chapel to the right he has painted two frescoes of the death and burial of Santa Deodata. (*WAFT*:80)

Forster's deliberate differentiation between Giotto and the Renaissance artist, between art as a representation of Faith and art as something pursued between indulgences, is typical of Ruskin. Yet in Forster's description of the church above there are three further details which point to the growing connection he is making between Ruskin and Giotto in terms, not only of art, but of the morality which underlies it.

Firstly, Forster's aside, that "German research" had "decisively proved" the frescoes weren't by Giotto, recalls Ruskin's complaint, again in *Mornings in Florence*, that one of his assistants, "whose help is given much in the form of antagonism,—informs me of various critical discoveries lately made, both by himself, and by industrious Germans, of points respecting the authenticity of this and that". (xxiii:409-10) Forster, having read *Mornings in Florence*, would have known of Ruskin's contempt for German research.

Second, as Meyers[14] points out, Monteriano and Santa Deodata are modelled upon San Gimignano and the church of Santa Fina, and the "two frescoes" attributed by Forster to Giovanni da Empoli in the novel are undoubtedly those by Domenico Ghirlandaio. Forster had himself visited the church and had stood before those frescoes,[15] no doubt recalling Ruskin's use of Ghirlandaio as an example of the corruption of Renaissance art. Indeed, in *Mornings in Florence* Ruskin uses Ghirlandaio as a foil to bring into sharper relief the excellencies of Giotto, and dismisses him as being "to the end of his life a mere goldsmith, with a gift of portraiture." (xxiii:313)

Finally, though Summers[16] argues that Forster owes much of his view of

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[14] Meyers, *Painting and the Novel*, Manchester, 1975, p. 32-33.

[15] In a letter to Dent dated 10 August 1902, from Cortina, Forster recalls that "The last Coronation I spent at San Gimignano, before Ghirlandhaio's frescoes". In Lago and Furbank, *op cit.*, vol.1, p. 55.

[16] Summers, "The Meaningful Ambiguity of Giotto in *A Room with a View*," *English*

Giotto to Browning's poetry, in this novel Forster's differentiation of Giotto and the Renaissance artist recalls not Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi", as Summers suggests, but rather Ruskin's praise of Browning's exposure of the decadence of Renaissance art—something to which Browning did not aspire in "Fra Lippo Lippi". Ruskin observes in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*:

> Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound; so that in the matter of art, with which we have been specially concerned, there is hardly a principle connected with the medieval temper, that he has not struck upon . . .. (vi:446-7)

And further, with regard to Browning's "The Bishop orders his Tomb in St. Praxed's Church",

> I know no other piece of Modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury and of good Latin. (vi:449)

In the passage on Santa Deodata, Forster seems to be remembering Ruskin's account of the Renaissance spirit in his reference to the artist working between "banquets and the discussions on Latin etymology and the dancing." (*WAFT*:80)

Collectively these similarities demonstrate that Forster is already at work adapting his early parodies of Ruskin into a set of symbols meant to evoke an attitude to art and life typified by Ruskin in the mind of the reader. His purpose in this description of the church is to evoke a sense of separation, between historical periods and between the elements which go to make up the human whole. This is achieved through allusions to Giotto and Ruskin which would reinforce for the reader the medieval disharmony Forster is primarily asscoiated with Dante.

The presence of these elements of holiness, beauty and barbarity, the concomitants of the soul, intellect and body represented in the piazza,

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Literature in Transition 30 (1987), p. 170.

nevertheless are attractive to the Sawstonites who encounter them. The attractiveness of this medieval town is perhaps best illustrated in a passage from Ruskin's *Modern Painters* where he seeks to explain the psychology behind the constant turning back of the modern mind to the romance of the Middle Ages:

> They were the ages of gold; ours are the ages of umber . . . [they] had their wars and agonies, but also intense delights. Their gold was dashed with blood; but ours is sprinkled with dust. Their life was woven with white and purple: ours is one seamless stuff of brown.[17] (v:321-2)

It is not surprising that, living amongst the "seamless stuff of brown" which was suburban Victorian life, the Sawstonites in the novel should be delighted by the colour and excitement they perceive to be present in the life of, not simply Italy, but in this case, medieval life as embodied in Monteriano. Moreover this alluring composite of agonies and delights also captures the essential character of Gino who as a man personifies the Middle Ages, and the English are likewise captivated by and drawn to him—all, that is, except Harriet, whose piety blinds her to his beauty and who perceives his brutality only as evil.

Lilia, the thirty-three year old widow of Charles Herriton, and Caroline Abbott her younger, more intelligent and more sensible travelling companion, are the first to encounter Gino. Lilia, because she was rash and foolish and wanted to avenge herself against the constraints of propriety enforced on her by her dead husband's family, decides that she is in love with the handsome young Gino. Caroline, because she too finds Gino attractive and because Italy has wakened her to the narrowness of the polite society represented by Sawston, believes that if Gino is sincere in his desire to marry then they should strike out against convention. However, when faced with the Herritons' obvious anger at the match

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[17] Forster describes the wood which Philip encounters on his way to Monteriano as "brown and sombre" yet once within it is filled with violets (*WAFT*:18). Again the walls of the city are described as "brown" only to heighten the contrast with what Philip is to find within (*WAFT*:20). In both these cases Forster is borrowing from Ruskin the notion that to the modern mind the medieval centuries were the "Dark Ages", which on closer examination reveals a quite contrary state of affairs. This also explains Forster's colour imagery in having Miss Bartlett stand "brown" against the flowers among which George and Lucy kissed in *A*

she had made, Caroline panics and leaves Lilia to a situation she is unprepared for, and which she is too foolish to understand.

Forster has "idealized" the manners of Gino and the inhabitants of Monteriano from "the natural courtesy of guides and servants" (*WAFT*:158) he had met in Italy. And in the novel Forster acknowledges that the equality one may share with these men is accomplished with the knowledge that they meet outside of drawing-room conventions, and that because they are men these conventions are less binding upon them:

> continental society was not the go-as-you-please thing she [Lilia] had expected. Indeed, she could not see where continental society was. Italy is such a delightful place to live in if you happen to be a man. There one may enjoy that exquisite luxury of socialism—that true socialism which is based not on equality of income or character, but on the equality of manners. In the democracy of the caffè or the street the great question of life has been solved, and the brotherhood of man is a reality. But it is accomplished at the expense of the sisterhood of women. Why should you not make friends with your neighbour at the theatre or in the train, when you know and he knows that feminine criticism and feminine insight and feminine prejudice will never come between you! Though you become as David and Jonathan, you need never enter his home, nor he yours. All your lives you will meet under the open air, . . . under which he will spit and swear, and you will drop your h's, and no one will think the worse of either. (*WAFT*:35-36)

Clearly, Forster is aware that this "brotherhood" is achieved through the repression of women; indeed, the brotherhood he refers to cannot be accomplished without it. The feminine element in society must be excluded and so the house and church function as agents of repression. The men's relationship is primal; marriage is simply a convenience to ensure children and provide the stability of a home to return to. Yet in a similar search for brotherhood in *The Longest Journey*, Forster has demonstrated that there also exists a sisterhood which is inherently antagonistic to male friendships. The poem of Shelley's which supplies the title of the later novel is used to demonstrate the idea that to

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Room with a View. (*RV*:68)

enter into marriage may destroy some men. The passage from *Epipsychidion* beginning "I never was attached to that great sect," is interpreted by Forster through a letter from Ansell in which he tries to dissuade Rickie from marriage: "You are . . . unfitted in the soul: you want and you need to like many people, and a man of that sort ought not to marry. 'You never were attached to that great sect' who can like one person only, and if you try to enter it you will find destruction . . .." (*LJ*:81) Rickie, before his capture by the sisterhood of Agnes and Mrs Lewin, also acknowledges the value of male friendships.

> Nature has no use for us . . .. Dutiful sons, loving husbands, responsible fathers—these are what she wants, and if we are friends it must be in our spare time. Abram and Sarai were sorrowful, yet their seed became as sand of the sea . . .. But a few verses of poetry is all that survives of David and Jonathan. (*LJ*:64)

The reference to Jonathan and David which occurs in both novels is to the 2 Samuel i. 26 where David, with homosexual overtones noted by various critics, laments the death of Jonathan: "thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." And there remains a vagueness about the nature of this "brotherhood" which Forster does not fail to realise. As late as 1910 he could still ask of himself— "Physical attraction—Universal Brotherhood. Any connection?"[18] Is the fraternity which Forster felt during his Italian travels simply a cover for his homosexual response to the good-looking young Italian porters and waiters and chauffeurs from whom Gino was constructed? Forster returns a verdict of "No", yet looking forward to *Maurice*, we find a similar differentiation between all male and male-female relationships. Clive Durham, who learnt his homosexuality as an intellectual exercise from Plato's *Symposium*, attacks society's lack of understanding of homosexuality,

> it serves these people right. As long as they talk of the unspeakable vice of the Greeks they can't expect fair play. It served my mother right when I slipped up to kiss you before

[18] From Forster's "Locked Diary" an entry dated 22nd February 1910, held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

> dinner. She would have no mercy if she knew, she wouldn't attempt, wouldn't want to attempt to understand that I feel to you . . . a particular harmony of body and soul that I don't think women have even guessed.[19] But you know. (*M*:81)

Here Forster acknowledges that the love of man for man, like that of Jonathan and David, is passing the love of women, but its corollary is that this brotherhood must "go the way of all sterility". (*M*:87)

The nagging burden of this enforced sterility can only be assuaged if, like Gino, one is to take a wife one doesn't love simply for procreation and the chance to experience the greatest passion man can come to, "to become the father of a man like himself, . . . the first great desire, the first great passion of his life." (*WAFT*:52) For Forster this was not apparently an option (which may explain his cool treatment of Clive Durham once he has chosen to pursue this course of action), and so he found release from his burden in visions like that of Stephen and his child in *The Longest Journey*, and his futuristic homosexual fantasy "Little Imber",[20] where in a world in which men are becoming increasingly impotent, two of the dwindling number of still fertile men (the older not unlike Forster, the other young, coarse, and obviously working class) together create

> the first of a new strain. The sorority cherished it, but what it really desired was its own younger brother. It felt sure there must be one. There was, they met and then things hummed. Retiring to a pagan grove, the whereabouts of which they concealed, they perfected their technique and produced Romuloids and Remoids in masses. It was impossible to walk in that countryside without finding a foundling, or to leave two together without finding a third. The women were stimulated and began to conceive normally as of old, their sons got raped by the wild boys and

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[19] However, in writing his life of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson Forster refers to Dickinson's friendship with Mrs. Webb; "Although he was never drawn to women in a passionate sense, all his deepest emotions being towards men, his life would have been empty and comfortless without them. He found in them—that is to say, in a few women—a patience and a nobility undiscoverable elsewhere". (*GLD*:47-8) These two contrary statements, when taken together, reflect a belief in an essential difference between the emotional capabilities of men and women which leads Forster to his attempt to subsume the masculine and feminine in the image of the tree and the house in *Howards End*.

[20] Published in E. M. Forster, *Arctic Summer and other fiction*, Ed. Elizabeth Heine and Oliver Stallybrass, London, 1980.

> they buggered their daughters who bore sons, the pleasing confusion increased and the population graph shot up until it hit jackpot. Males had won. (*AS*:234-5)

In this way women are sacrificed to the cause of brotherhood. Yet, between the mourning of the sterility of homosexual love and the fanciful creation of a third sex, Forster nevertheless realises the similarly desperate situation of women who do not marry, which creates that unsympathetic sisterhood of Agnes and Mrs Lewin to which Rickie is sacrificed. The ultimate resolution of this antagonism is found in Forster's vision of ideal heterosexual relationships in *Howards End.*

Caroline and Lilia, unaware of the nature of the equality they perceived in Monteriano—the same vision which was to awaken Lucy's desire for equality beside George in *A Room with a View*—find that in marrying Gino Lilia had simply "changed one groove for another—a worse groove." (*WAFT*:61) In "Old Lucy" Forster makes a similar remark about "grooves", this time referring to them as "bonds"; Lucy discovers that as a woman she can never be free, for wherever she goes it is "only changing one bondage for another." Forster continues,

> She had hit <upon> the truth. The night had taught her that bondage was inevitable. There she stopped. The day was not there to reveal that there are degrees of bondage, and that we have the power not only to choose but to change \our bonds/. And the power to change bonds is not so very far off from what men call Freedom the unattainable. (*LN*:67)

Forster later explains that travelling is "the only true freedom in the world, the little interval we have between the putting off <of> the bonds of one town, and the putting on the bonds of the next." (*LN*:77) Lilia and Caroline are deceived by this situation and are convinced that these Italian towns, full of men with the most carefree manners, are without bonds. Caroline later admits to Philip her intoxication with Monteriano and its intimations of freedom:

> when the spring came I wanted to fight against the things I hated—mediocrity and dullness and spitefulness and society. I

> actually hated society for a day or two at Monteriano. I didn't see that all these things are invincible, and that if we go against them they will break us to pieces. (*WAFT*:61)

This is reminiscent of Forster's comment in *Nottingham Lace*, that society takes terrible revenge for even minor transgressions, and she sees Lilia's death as its revenge.

Yet Caroline also admits that Lilia's fall at the hands of Gino and Italian social conventions was due to her own cowardice, and in doing so is intimating that perhaps women should take some of the blame for the conventions by which they are enslaved. Gino was young and beautiful, "just going to turn into something fine" (*WAFT*:61), but Lilia failed to instil in him the desire to include her in the equality he shared with his male friends. Subsequently, Gino took his notion of relationships from his friend Spiridione, whose remark, "The more precious a possession the more carefully it should be guarded", (*WAFT*:42) is respected by Gino and it turns out that he "kept her even closer than convention demanded. But he was very young, and he could not bear it to be said of him that he did not know how to treat a lady—or to manage a wife." (*WAFT*:46)

This implied division between lady and wife in Gino's view of women is constant throughout the novel, and it is this which places Gino most squarely among the medievals of Forster's "Dante". In "Dante", as we have seen earlier, Forster points out the typically medieval aspects of Dante's, and by association Ruskin's, character, the first of which was the separation of body and soul which moderns like George Emerson and Margaret Schlegel sought to harmonise. The second aspect of medievalism and the one that is most important here, is the division of women into two categories. The first category comprises those worshipped as "windows, through which we may see God" (*AE*:151), like Beatrice, inspiring man to act. There is, however, a second category consisting of those who become wives and mothers, cooks and cleaners, like Dante's own wife. In "Dante" Forster speaks out about Dante's habit of worshipping Beatrice, and asks the natural question "Why didn't Dante marry Beatrice?" He explains,

evoking once again a somewhat chilly attitude to sex which shall be shared by Forster's later neo-medieval characters, Cecil Vyse and Henry Wilcox:

> he would have shrunk from marriage as from sacrilege. He would have regarded it as a debasement of his ideal, a concession to the animal element within. He preferred to worship Beatrice from a distance. And as for marrying—he married someone else. His wife—Gemma Donati was her name—seems to have had no influence on her husband. She was merely his wife, the mother of his children, not a window through which to see God. (*AE*:150)

Wilde is correct in suggesting that Gino and Monteriano "give a definite shape to the universe of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, encompassing . . . everything between heaven and hell".[21] This is the idea behind Forster's description of the tower which, as Philip remarks, "reaches up to heaven . . . and down to the other place." (*WAFT*:90) The shape which Gino and Monteriano suggest is that of Dante's supreme survey of the medieval world, *The Divine Comedy*. Of course Monteriano also represents such a survey; and we must remember what medievalism meant to Forster and that though Gino's manners and face may be beautiful he nevertheless shares his attitude to women with the other medievals. Yet contrary to Wilde's suggestion, Gino is not Forster's "ideal",[22] and his basic correspondence with Dante is exposed in Philip's vision of Caroline, Gino and the baby as "to all intents and purposes, the Virgin and Child, with Donor." (*WAFT*:112) This displays not only Philip's penchant for viewing life through art, but Gino's Dantesque habit of idolatry. Gino's infidelity also parallels Forster's conception of Dante:

> Beatrice is the only woman to whom he owes loyalty—Beatrice, who leads his thoughts heavenwards. He can be false to all others, if he is thus enabled to be true to her. What duties has he to these other ladies? They cannot give him the keys of heaven. What duties has he to people whom he does not passionately love or intimately know? None. And here, I think, is the real

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[21] Alan Wilde, "Depths and Surfaces: Dimensions of Forsterian Irony," *English Literature in Transition* 16 (1973), p. 257.

[22] Alan Wilde, *Art and Order*, London, 1965, p. 19.

> defect in his noble character: he cannot be fair to the commonplace. (*AE*:153)

We know that Gino married Lilia for money, that he does not love her passionately, is callously unfaithful and that on her death he prepares to marry again—again not for love but for comfort for himself and his baby. This appears a poor model for what Wilde considers "a whole and integral man."[23]

Summers[24] believes that the bathing scene mentioned above, establishes Philip, Caroline and Gino as separate parts of whole which is Forster's ideal of the connected man—Gino as the body, Philip the intellect and Caroline the soul. I would suggest that Caroline is superior to the other English visitants to Monteriano. She is the one character in the novel who reconciles the sexual and spiritual. She, too, is attracted to Gino, an attraction which involves her in a constant struggle to willingly not share in Lilia's fate. At the end of the novel, she escapes from the medieval Gino, and many critics feel it is due to her denial of sexuality, or her decision not to act against social convention a second time. Finklestein, more correctly, notes that Caroline "learns to accept her sexuality",[25] and contrary to the idea of Caroline as frigid, believes that her decision to leave Monteriano is brought about because she has seen "her own attraction to Gino for what it is".[26] In saying this Finklestein emphasises the sexual nature of Caroline's feelings for Gino, and ignores her completeness and connectedness which distinguishes her from the other characters in the novel. Caroline seeks sexual fulfilment but realises that the type of relationship offered by Gino would destroy her as it had Lilia, but for very different reasons. Caroline's awakening to her desire for physical fulfilment is intimated through her fingering of the Gothic windows, which represent the passionate, medieval element in the novel. Forster describes Caroline as "standing by the little Gothic window as she spoke . . . and

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 20-1.

[24] Summers, *E. M. Forster, op cit.*, p. 40.

[25] Bonnie B. Finkelstein, *Forster's Women: Eternal Differences*, New York & London, 1975, p. 1.

[26] *Ibid.*, p.13.

with her finger she was following the curves of the moulding as if they might feel beautiful and strange." (*WAFT*:85) And on the conclusion of her discussion of Gino with Philip, she leans out of the window and gazes at the "tower" which symbolises Monteriano, the summit of which "was radiant in the sun, while its base was in shadow" (*WAFT*:90). This prefigures a similar episode in *A Room with a View*, where Lucy is playing the piano, and we are told, "she was intoxicated by the mere feel of the notes: they were fingers caressing her own; and by touch, not by sound alone, did she come to her desire." (*RV*:30) Acting on her desires, Lucy ventures into the Piazza Signoria and is greeted with a vision of another tower, like that in Monteriano.

> She fixed her eyes wistfully on the tower of the palace, which rose out of the lower darkness like a pillar of roughened gold. It seemed no longer a tower, no longer supported by earth, but some unattainable treasure throbbing in the tranquil sky. Its brightness mesmerized her . . . . (*RV*:41)

This tower, when transformed through Lucy's awakened sexuality, represents the power of sexual fulfilment to transfigure everyday existence, echoing Caroline's own sexual awakening.

Later she is moved to admit her love for Gino to Philip, making a point of the fact that her love is of the "body and soul".

> "If he had asked me, I might have given myself body and soul. That would have been the end of the rescue-party. But all through he took me for a superior being—a goddess. I who was worshipping every inch of him. And every word he spoke. And that saved me." (*WAFT*:147)

Caroline instinctively felt that Gino's attitude to women was medieval, and that he could treat women badly, as he had Lilia, or he could worship them, as Dante did Beatrice, but he could not sustain the type of sexually equal relationship she desired. Lago, who recognises the importance of Dante in Forster, argues that Lucy in *A Room with a View* "is afraid that he [Cecil] will

use her as Dante used Beatrice as a means to an elevating purpose all his own."[27] While this is true of the later novel it is even more appropriate to Caroline's fear of Gino. Caroline had come to know that by marrying Gino she would be submitting to another set of bonds which, because of her love, would be not easily changed. Forster was probably loath to allow the disaster of Lilia's marriage to the medieval Gino to be repeated by Caroline whose greater awareness of the situation would make her fate even more tragic.

The character of Philip, the "hero" whose role is that of the *ingénue* who is quickened through exposure to the energy of medieval Monteriano, recalls a number of Forster's early male characters; physically he resembles young Edgar, he also possesses Cecil Vyse's aestheticism coupled with Trent's inaction. Most importantly, he represents the need to reconcile body and soul, beauty and passion which is to be typified by George Emerson.

Philip, we know, had been to Italy previously and was, like Lilia and Caroline, attracted by what he found there. But for Philip it only reinforced his aestheticism, his faith in Beauty as an escape from the seamless stuff of brown that was his everyday existence. Philip was a "weakly-built", extremely self-conscious young man who, being bullied and harried at school, had channelled "the energies and enthusiasms of a rather friendless life . . . into the championship of beauty." (*WAFT*:54-55) Forster introduces him as follows:

> he had got a sense of beauty and a sense of humour, two most desirable gifts. The sense of beauty developed first. It caused him at the age of twenty to wear parti-coloured ties and a squashy hat, to be late for dinner on account of the sunset, and to catch art from Burne-Jones to Praxiteles. At twenty-two he went to Italy with some cousins, and there he absorbed into one aesthetic whole olive-trees, blue sky, frescoes, country inns, saints, peasants, mosaics, statues, beggars. He came back with the air of a prophet who would either remodel Sawston or reject it. (*WAFT*:54)

This recalls Trent's oration against the rules of society in *Nottingham Lace*. Yet

[27] Lago, *op cit.*, p. 30.

in that passage, Trent ends by apologising to Edgar for his outburst and seeks to explain that "It's only because I'm twenty-three I go off like that. I used to do it much oftener when I was your age. You're just beginning." (*AS*:35) Then on being questioned by Edgar as to whether Edgar will also stop when he becomes twenty-three Trent explains:

> It depends what sort you are. If you're a comfortable person like me you will. If you're an uncomfortable person you may go knocking your head against walls till you die. (*AS*:35)

Philip is obviously a "comfortable" person for after a short period of quarrelling with his sister he "concluded that nothing could happen, . . . disenchanted, a little tired, but aesthetically intact, he resumed his placid life, relying more and more on his second gift, the gift of humour." (*WAFT*:55)

Forster's opinion of the merit of retiring into a comfortable superiority to society is emphasised in Caroline's claim against Philip that he is "dead—dead—dead". His intellectual powers, she feels, "are splendid. But when you see what's right you're too idle to do it." (*WAFT*:120) This echoes Edgar's complaint against Trent as one of the "comfortable" people:

> He was clever and kindhearted, and he turned his gifts to good account by supporting his mother and sisters, but he would not use them to combat the evils he evidently saw in the world. His only true occupation was to "go on observing people till he died". He had no wish to make people better: his intellectual and physical powers would count for nothing. (*AS*:35)

While Edgar doesn't realise that this "applied equally to himself", Philip is aware of his failing and admits as much to Caroline: "don't worry over me. Some people are born not to do things". (*WAFT*:120-1)

Forster's early male protagonists neither can nor—from within the conventions of their society—will they try to reconcile the beauty of life with its passion. This failure is demonstrated to be typical of the Victorianism Forster fights against through his art in a later essay "Mr Walsh's Secret History of the Victorian Movement". Written in 1911, this article provides a commentary on

this characteristic comfort and inaction in some of Forster's characters. Forster describes Mr Walsh's book and its contents as follows:

> It is the work of a man—or of a committee—who had a complete view of life, and imply that view even in a recipe for a rice pudding. The audience it assumes regarded comfort as everything, personal relations as nothing, passion and beauty as nothing. . . . But most of us have known and perhaps still know a few of them in daily life. (*AE*:116)

Except for his sense of beauty Philip might fit in well with Mr Walsh's readers, and only because he possesses a sense of beauty does Forster feel Philip is able to be saved—provided that he can find a way to harmonize the passion he denies with the beauty he acknowledges.

Certainly personal relations are beginning to be of importance to Philip. He admits to Caroline that the "great events" of his life were his trip to the theatre where he met Gino as a brother, and his conversation with Caroline at that moment in the church. He is becoming conscious of the vivifying effect of his relations with Gino and Caroline. These two events are closely connected with the two main instances of Ruskinian thought in this novel. The first, recalling our discussion of Giotto from the previous chapter, is where George endorses the spiritual aspect of Giotto's "fat man in blue" and with his desire that "if I got there [heaven] I should like my friends to lean out of it, just as they do here", and thus manages a reconciliation of the spirituality of Eager's interpretation of the fresco with the humanism of his father's. Philip must achieve a similar reconciliation of the diverse elements of life, all present in Monteriano yet divided. An early intimation that he is set to achieve this is the concert scene which strangely prefigures George's comments in Santa Croce.[28] In the theatre Philip is seduced by the carefree attitude to art displayed by the Italians and is tempted into joining in a joke between the audience and the singer. The result is

[28] Judging from the plot of "New Lucy", Forster had already rewritten the Italian section of the novel to a close approximation of the finished novel. Yet whether the discussion of the Giotto frescoes had by that time been conceived, or whether it suggested itself in this scene is uncertain.

he comes across "a young man . . . flung stomach downwards across the balustrade" of a box and has his hands "seized affectionately" (*WAFT*:96). It was Gino, who had not seen him since he had toppled Philip onto his bed when Philip had come to prevent the marriage of Gino and Lilia. Philip caught up in the good-humour of the situation forgets both the insult suffered on that occasion and the purpose of his visit and greets Gino "hilariously". Lago, also noting the importance of Philip's salvation, finds proof of his improvement in that "when he realises that Caroline loves not himself but Gino, Philip makes a great discovery: he can be generous. Such an epiphany can promise salvation".[29] Yet the generosity here in forgiving the insult is equally as great and its importance is celebrated by Philip's symbolic ascension to heaven. Just as George had desired to be helped in by his friends, now Philip finds himself "swinging by his arms. The moment after he shot over the balustrade into the box" (*WAFT*:97), as if he were Giotto's Evangelist being lifted into heaven. Gransden implies the connection with the scene in *A Room with a View* by saying, "Philip, always so nearly on the side of the angels, is reconciled to Gino",[30] who doubtless represents the body.

Yet in the medieval church in front of the Renaissance frescoes of Santa Deodata, Philip is still, to borrow an expression from Miss Pembroke *of The Longest Journey*, cracked on beauty. He admits to Caroline "that life to me is just a spectacle, which—thank God, and thank Italy, and thank you—is now more beautiful and heartening than it has ever been before." (*WAFT*:121) In his ascent into heaven at the opera he had glimpsed the harmony of "holiness" and "beauty" which Forster with his Ruskinian allusions had presented as divided in the frescoes of Santa Deodata. He is yet to recognise, however, the element of barbarity or passion which Forster assigns to both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as the life blood of both periods and which enter even into the story of Santa Deodata. The concert had given Philip a brief taste of life connected, yet

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[29] Lago, op cit., p. 31.

[30] K. W. Gransden, *E. M. Forster*, London, 1962, p. 23.

now back in the church he reverts to his former self. So, "splendid as it had been," (*WAFT*:121) the meeting of Caroline and Philip in the church of Santa Deodata resulted in nothing, as Meyers[31] suggests, reflecting Forster's comment that "In her death, as in her life, Santa Deodata did not accomplish much." (*WAFT*:119)

However, there is one death in Monteriano which is to accomplish something. By the accidental death of Gino's baby and Philip's subsequent torture at the hands of Gino, Philip is saved. Forster explains the necessity of this physical punishment to Philip's salvation in a letter to Bob Trevelyan.

> P. is a person who has scarcely ever felt the physical forces that are banging about in the world, and he couldn't get good and understand by spiritual suffering alone. Bodily punishment, however unjust superficially, was necessary too . . .. (*WAFT*:150)

By confronting the existence of brutality and passion, the forces which kindle beauty into life, Philip reconciles the disparate elements of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—the holiness and beauty with the constant underlying brutality and passion. As a result he should have gained the power to exist completely as a man, neither on the Victorian model of "Mr Walsh's" where man shirks whatever would threaten his comfort, nor on Gino's model, divided between brutality and idolatry on the medieval model of Dante, but according to Forster's vision of a society in which men and women are capable of enjoying healthy relationships, an awareness which he shares with Caroline.

Philip's images of Pasiphaë and Endymion in the final scene denote his salvation. First, Pasiphaë, whom Poseidon causes to become enamoured of a bull, bears witness to Philip's repulsion from the facts of sexual intercourse. That Caroline should physically desire Gino, a bull not even human, disgusts Philip. But when Philip realises the innocence of the relationship, and that Caroline was cutting herself off from Gino, he displays a new generosity and is able to "be glad that she had once held the beloved in her arms". (*WAFT*:146) The epiphany,

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[31] Meyers, *op cit.*, p. 35.

which Lago perceives here, is revealed in the benign image of Gino as the beautiful Endymion, who may only receive the chaste embraces of his lover while asleep. The Endymion of Philip's vision is not so much the classical figure, as he is the hero of Keats's romance. As such this final vision represents, not what Wilde has regarded as the triumph of "coldness and aloofness",[32] but "the search for fulfilment and the need of the human imagination to accept the actual world with love".[33] Philip's acceptance of Caroline's sexual desire for Gino demonstrates his possession of the "human sympathies" necessary for man to attain union with the ideal. Yet even in these final images Forster reinforces to the reader the duality of Gino, an animal in the consummation of the sexual act with women, yet an idolater who is content with the chaste embraces of the goddess.

(II)

By the time we come to *A Room with a View* the division between medievalism and Victorianism has disappeared and to Forster's mind the two have become synonymous with the set of attitudes to personal relationships and to women which in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* he found to be typified by Dante. One principle of this neo-medievalism is the acceptance of an essential difference between men and women, an attitude suggested in "Old Lucy", and for the discussion of which Forster has turned to Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), particularly the lecture "Of Queen's Gardens" where Ruskin seeks to delineate the "relations of the womanly to the manly nature, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue". (xviii:111) In this, though he draws also upon Shakespeare and Scott, Ruskin finds himself inevitably drawn to Dante and the medieval conception of women based upon a notion of Christian chivalry. He explains his notion of chivalry:

> chivalry, to the abuse and dishonour of which are attributable

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[32] Wilde, *Art and Order*, *op cit.*, p. 27.

[33] David Perkins, ed., *English Romantic Writers*, 1967, p. 1136.

> primarily whatever is cruel in war, unjust in peace, or corrupt and ignoble in domestic relations; and to the original purity and power of which we owe the defence alike of faith, of law, and of love; that chivalry, I say, in its very first conception of honourable life, assumes the subjection of the young knight to the command—should it even be the command in caprice—of his lady. (xviii:119)

To be a worthy recipient of such "subjection" the lady must in turn submit herself to the stringent demands of decorum and propriety, and thus Ruskin is able to differentiate the roles of men and women:

> The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest . . . . But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle,—and her intellect is not for invention or creation . . . . Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man . . . must encounter all peril and trial . . . . But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. (xviii:121-2)

This conception of women inspired much Edwardian satire. An instance of such can be found in Wells (of whom more will be said later with relation to Leonard Bast) who was moved to exaggerate this image of Ruskin's to the point of absurdity in *Tono-Bungay* (1910):

> I seem to see—a sort of City of Women . . . . A walled enclosure—good stone-mason's work—a city wall, high as the walls of Rome, going about a garden. Dozens of square miles of garden . . . . And this city-garden of women will have beautiful places for music, places for beautiful dresses, places for beautiful work. Everything a woman can want. Nurseries. Kindergartens. Schools. And no man—except to do rough work, perhaps—ever comes in. The men live in a world where they can hunt and engineer, invent and mine and manufacture, sail ships, drink deep, and practise the arts, and fight . . . . [34]

[34] H. G. Wells, *The Collected Works of H. G. Wells*, Atlantic edition, 28vols, London, 1924-27, p. 233-4

Wells's allusion to "good stonemason's work" and "garden-city", as well as the general notion of separate occupations and spheres of influence for the sexes is clearly an allusion to Ruskin's conception of the sexes, and one need only read further in *Tono-Bungay* for Wells's valuation of Ruskin and, by association *Sesame and Lilies*, to become obvious.[35] D. H. Lawrence also shows that Ruskin's lectures were still ruffling feathers in "Goose Fair"[36] where, contrary to Atkins's view that Lawrence is satirizing "the earnest and sentimental world of the archetypal Victorian three-decker novel" in having a "copy of Ruskin's lectures squashed beneath the stock figure of the Victorian mother",[37] the actions of the heroine are in deliberate contradiction to Ruskin's recommendations. Lois is reading *Sesame and Lilies*,[38] but on hearing a commotion outside late at night, ventures forward, against the warnings of Ruskin as to her rightful sphere, in search of her lover. In doing this she comes to hear insinuations against her lover's integrity that makes her on her return to the house take the "flattened Ruskin out of her chair" and weep—not for her lover, one thinks, but for not having obeyed Ruskin.[39] Yet in the conclusion it comes about that the knowledge gained from her adventure in the world outside her house allows Lois to stand her ground against her wayward boyfriend winning her an equality in her relationship beyond that enjoyed by Ruskin's heroines. In this revision of Ruskin, Lawrence leaves his heroine fulfilling the Ruskinian position of "conscience-keeper"[40] for her lover, but it is a position only gained through the deliberate contradiction of Ruskin's counsel.

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[35] Later in *Tono-Bungay* Wells displays a disdain for Ruskin's socio-economic position when he is compared to the ineffectual Moggs "a very typical instance of an educated, cultivated, degenerate plutocrat. His people had taken him about in his youth like the Ruskins took their John". *Ibid.*, p. 282-3.

[36] First published in 1910, substantially revised in 1914. Reprinted in D. H. Lawrence, *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, Ed. Antony Atkins, Oxford, 1995.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Turning to *A Room with a View* it is obvious, as Gay[41] points out, that in the figure of the "medieval lady", Forster is also parodying Ruskin's notion of women's role in society, something which will find its more mature culmination in *Howards End*.

> There is much that is immortal in this medieval lady. The dragons have gone, and so have the knights, but still she lingers in our midst. She reigned in many an early Victorian castle, and was the queen of much early Victorian song. It is sweet to protect her in the intervals of business, sweet to pay her honour when she has cooked our dinner well. But alas! the creature grows degenerate. In her heart also there are springing up strange desires. She too is enamoured of heavy winds, and vast panoramas, and green expanses of the sea. She has marked the kingdom of the world, how full it is of wealth, and beauty, and war—a radiant crust, built around the central fires, spinning towards the receding heavens. Men, declaring that she inspires them to it, move joyfully over the surface, having the most delightful meetings with other men, happy, not because they are masculine, but because they are alive. (*RV*:39)

However, *A Room with a View* is more than a simple Wellsian parody of the accepted Victorian view; rather like Lawrence in "Goose Fair", Forster establishes a typically Victorian set of values through which to highlight the need for his own more modern vision of personal relationships. In applying this method Forster has made ironic use of the idea of "contest" which Ruskin introduces. For example, Eager and Emerson are in combat over George (as discussed in the previous chapter), though George manages to reconcile the opposing sets of values into a whole. For Lucy—neither Eager nor Emerson being appropriate suitors—George and Cecil are locked in a contest of which Lucy herself is not only judge and ultimate prize but, against Ruskin's advice, must also enter into. And in her final decision to marry George, her "infallible" judgement marks an end to the neo-medieval hero Cecil.

Of course this is not merely a contest between George and Cecil, but

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[41] Gay, "E. M. Forster and John Ruskin: The Ambivalent Connection," *Southern Review* (Adelaide) 11 (1978), p. 286.

allegorically, between the neo-medieval attitudes which Cecil champions and the modern vision which George has gleaned from the reconciliation of his father's position and Eager's. From the outset of the novel Forster seeks to establish the idea of contest between the Emersons and pension society. The pension stands as a microcosm of polite society where the accepted rules of propriety and decorum are strictly adhered to, indeed, it may be even more strict than Forster's own Edwardian society because of its isolation and resistance to change. It certainly seems so from Lucy's perspective.

> She looked at the two rows of English people who were sitting at the table; at the row of white bottles of water and red bottles of wine that ran between the English people; at the portrait of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate that hung behind the English people, heavily framed; at the notice of the English church (Rev. Cuthbert Eager, M.A. Oxon.), that was the only other decoration of the wall. (*RV*:2)

As the reader moves from the red and white of the bottles on the table (representing St George and by association Ruskin) to the trinity of Victoria, Tennyson, and Eager upon the wall there can be little surprise that such stolid Englishness should move Lucy to exclaim "Charlotte don't you feel, too, that we might be in London?" In *Where Angels Fear to Tread* the Piazza had stood as the body, intellect and soul of Monteriano, in this novel the Pension Bertolini represents Victorian England and the three figures—Queen Victoria, the Poet Laureate and The Rev. Eager—again each divided from the other, together combine the body, intellect and soul in one repressive whole. The people who are entrenched in this Victorianism all display the same obeisance to respectability which was demonstrated by the Manchetts in *Nottingham Lace*. There it was a story of "silly little valleys that lead nowhere, and silly little hills that look out on nothing" (*AS*:19&21); now it is the struggle over a room with a view. Forster removes the battle between the drawing-room and George's more expansive vision from the confines of the pension to England when later in the novel Charlotte, "entrenched" in her own "victoria", reminds George of the novel's opening scene in the pension dining-room:

> It was the Pension Bertolini again, the dining-table with the decanters of water and wine. It was the old, old battle of the room with the view. (*RV*:152)

Of course, Miss Bartlett and the Misses Alan are not directly opposed to George, but rather are presented as the victims of Victorianism. Forster has seen through his initial irritation at the pension ladies of his Italian trip to the underlying cause, but George must fight against their conformity in order to prevent them leading Lucy along a similar path. Indeed, Lucy leads the reader into a tangle of issues related to women's accepted place in Victorian society, and her salvation is one in which she manages to escape the pressures of conformity which have wrecked characters like Miss Bartlett.

On three occasions early in the novel the unconventional behaviour of George and his father, which is like that of Trent, causes Lucy to wonder about the existence of another standard of behaviour outside of that demanded by the pension. During the argument between Charlotte and the Emersons at dinner on the first night, Lucy

> had an odd feeling that whenever these ill-bred tourists spoke the contest widened and deepened till it dealt, not with rooms and views, but with—well, with something quite different, whose existence she had not realized before. (*RV*:4)

Having accepted the offer of rooms, Charlotte explains that Lucy should have the father's room because it was safer to be under obligation to him, and Lucy again "had the sense of larger and unexpected issues." (*RV*:12) And finally, in Santa Croce, during the confrontation between Eager and Emerson, Lucy "was again conscious of some new idea, and was not sure wither it would lead her". (*RV*:21) It is worth noting that in each of these cases Lucy is described by Forster as being either "perplexed", (*RV*:4) "bewildered", (*RV*:12) or "puzzled" (*RV*:21) by her encounter with attitudes outside of her limited and sheltered experience. But this puzzlement is, of course, the first step to realisation and final acceptance of George's, that is to say, Forster's vision.

Another point which is established through these events is the idea of a

barrier, so that when Lucy leaves the table on her first evening in the pension George smiled at her and he "seemed to be smiling across something." (*RV*:6) This is further hinted at by Forster's reference to the contest over the rooms as having "deepened and widened"; it is the imposition of conventions which prevent women from experiencing anything of life except that which comes second-hand through men—the situation which Ruskin seems to commend in *Sesame and Lilies*. This barrier is evoked again when Lucy sees George in the Piazza Signoria at the death of the young Italian.

> Mr George Emerson happened to be a few paces away, looking at her across the spot where the man had been. How very odd! Across something. (*RV*:41)

Lucy is yet to understand the nature of the barrier between herself and George but is subject to a growing discontent with the expectations placed upon her. Leading into the scene in the Piazza, Lucy ruminates on the precise nature of this barrier:

> Why were most big things unladylike? Charlotte had once explained to her why. It was not that ladies were inferior to men; it was that they were different. Their mission was to inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve themselves. Indirectly, by means of tact and a spotless name, a lady could accomplish much. But if she rushed into the fray herself she would be first censured, then despised, and finally ignored. (*RV*:39)

Forster shows Lucy's dissatisfaction with this parody of Ruskin's view that "We are foolish . . . in speaking of the 'superiority' of one sex to the other . . . they are in nothing alike", (xviii:121) but it is a dissatisfaction not yet raised to the level of conscious rebellion:

> Lucy does not stand for the medieval lady, who was rather an ideal to which she was bidden to lift her eyes when feeling serious. Nor has she any system of revolt. Here and there a restriction annoyed her particularly, and she would transgress it, and perhaps be sorry she had done so. This afternoon she was peculiarly restive. She would really like to do something of which her well-wishers disapproved. (*RV*:40)

Feeling chaffed by society's restrictions, Lucy makes the complaint typical of Philip in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* that "The world . . . is certainly full of beautiful things, if only I could come across them." (*RV*:40) Philip, like Lucy, feels separated from life but on the death of Gino's baby and through his torture at the hands of Gino, his heart was stirred from its apathy.

Lucy also, on encountering death in the Piazza, has crossed this barrier of conventions, a "spiritual boundary" (*RV*:43) she feels (recalling Tancred's discovery of the value of the spirit on a similar occasion in "Old Lucy"), which until then had effectively closed her off from the world, and on recovering from her faint notices that George, though still looking at her, was doing so not "across anything." Lucy, who had "complained of dullness," now found that "one man had been stabbed, and another held her in his arms." (*RV*:41)

Having once crossed this boundary Lucy begins to re-evaluate George from an altogether new stand point. No longer is he "vulgar"; by his admission of having thrown her blood-stained photographs into the Arno, George appears as an "anxious boy" and Lucy's "heart warmed to him for the first time." (*RV*:43) Lucy is later reminded of this incident in England when, after having been led to think badly of George by Miss Bartlett, she realises through a second display of his anxiousness George's essential goodness.

> Perhaps anything that he did would have pleased Lucy, but his awkwardness went straight to her heart: men were not gods after all, but as human and as clumsy as girls; even men might suffer from unexplained desires, and need help. To one of her upbringing, and of her destination, the weakness of men was a truth unfamiliar, but she had surmised it at Florence, when George threw her photographs into the Arno. (*RV*:153)

However, the exultation of Lucy's excursion into a new awareness is quickly deflated by the realisation that she still must exist within the rules of the pension society. With this in mind she asks George to conceal what has happened:

> ". . . this is the real point—you know how silly people are

> gossiping—ladies especially, I am afraid—you understand what I mean?"
>
> "I'm afraid I don't."
>
> "I mean, would you not mention it to anyone, my foolish behaviour?" (*RV*:44)

George's failure to react in an appropriate fashion emphasises to Lucy George's independence of the world of decorum in which she had hitherto belonged. Lucy surprises herself with her new insight as she judges George by a new set of standards, but fearing the sexual implications of having been in his arms reverts to the accepted standards of behaviour to censure him:

> He had thrown her photographs into it [the Arno], and then he told her the reason. It struck her that it was hopeless to look for chivalry in such a man. He would do her no harm by idle gossip; he was trustworthy, intelligent, and even kind; he might even have a high opinion of her. But he lacked chivalry; his thoughts, like his behaviour, would not be modified by awe. It was useless to say to him, "And would you—" and hope that he would complete the sentence for himself, averting his eyes from her nakedness like the knight in that beautiful picture. She had been in his arms, and he remembered it . . .. (*RV*:44-45)

The knight of Lucy's imagination is comparable to the Christian knight of Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, but Forster's imagery here represents an even sharper irony. Stallybrass notes that "that beautiful picture" is probably Millais's *The Knight Errant* and goes on to recall Ruskin's comments upon the picture. (*RV*:227) The relationship between Ruskin and Millais is, of course, more complicated than that with Millais marrying Ruskin's ex-wife after Ruskin had failed to consummate their marriage of six years. Effie Millais, as she was to become, bore Millais eight children; Forster, then, is perhaps hinting pointedly at the physical failure of chivalry and its idealising of women.[42]

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[42] That the impotence of Ruskin and of many famous Victorians was a talking point among Forster's Bloomsbury acquaintances is suggested by Strachey's letter to Keynes in response to reading *Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir*. Strachey writes of the Victorian period: "What an appalling time to have lived! . . . It was the Glass Case Age. Themselves as well as their ornaments, were left under glass cases. Their refusal to face any fundamental question fairly – either about people or God – looks at first sight like cowardice; but I believe it was simply the result of an innate incapacity for penetration – for getting either out of themselves or into

Lucy's fear of sexual involvement with George forces her to stay clear of him for the rest of her stay in Florence, and she even allows herself the excuse of being persuaded by Miss Bartlett that his intentions are evil. At first she is not prepared to relinquish her new found freedom, but she is pressured by Charlotte.

> George would seem to have behaved like a cad throughout; perhaps that was the view which one would take eventually. At present she neither acquitted nor condemned him; she did not pass judgement. At the moment when she was about to judge him her cousin's voice had intervened, and, ever since, it was Miss Bartlett who had dominated; Miss Bartlett who, even now, could be heard sighing into a crack in the partition wall; Miss Bartlett who had really been neither pliable nor humble nor inconsistent. She had worked like a great artist; for a time—indeed, for years—she had been meaningless, but at the end there was presented to the girl the complete picture of a cheerless, loveless world in which the young rush to destruction until they learn better—a shamefaced world of precautions and barriers which may avert evil, but which do not seem to bring good, if we may judge from those who have used them most. (*RV*:78-9)

The story at this point moves from Italy to England, but Forster appears loath to let drop the promising development Lucy has shown before leaving Florence for Rome: she is going to prove capable of finally throwing off the example of the medieval lady held up to her by Miss Bartlett, her engagement notwithstanding. Mr Beebe recounts the impression she had made upon him in Florence: ". . . that she had found wings, and meant to use them." (*RV*:92)

That Lucy hasn't yet slipped back completely under Charlotte's influence is confirmed in a long passage which aims to exhibit the unsuitability of Cecil as a match for Lucy by showing her as having moved beyond the scope of Summer Street society.

> Hitherto she had accepted their ideals without questioning . . .. Life, so far as she troubled to conceive it, was a circle of rich,

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anything or anybody else. They were enclosed in glass. How intolerable! Have you noticed, too, that they were all physically impotent? – Sidgwick himself, Matthew Arnold, Jowett, Leighton, Ruskin, Watts. It's damned difficult to copulate through a glass case." Quoted in Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Biography*, London, 1973, p. 312.

> pleasant people, with identical interests and identical foes. In this circle one thought, married and died. Outside it were poverty and vulgarity, forever trying to enter just as the London fog tries to enter the pinewoods, pouring through the gaps in the northern hills. But in Italy, where anyone who chooses may warm himself in equality, as in the sun, this conception of life vanished. Her senses expanded; she felt that there was no one whom she might not get to like, that social barriers were irremovable, doubtless, but not particularly high. You jump over them just as you jump into a peasant's olive-yard in the Apennines, and he is glad to see you. She returned with new eyes. (*RV*:109-10)

Certainly this passage clarifies the existence of Forster's vision of a new egalitarian society, but a point within the text itself bring doubt as to Forster's true feelings. In speaking of warming oneself in "equality, as in the sun", Forster's phrasing, "anyone may warm himself", makes it obvious that the equality to which he is referring is that granted to men, particularly Italian men who may share in the brotherhood of man at the expense of women. Forster, as noted above, had already spoken on at some length on this theme in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

That women in Italy face prejudice as they do in England is made obvious here, yet in *A Room with a View* Forster is trying to include Lucy in such a vision, and has failed through a slip of expression to conceal his knowledge of the true situation. The vision of Italy as an egalitarian society in *A Room with a View* is no more than a vision—a dream of equality Forster knew not to exist.

If Lucy is to meet with any degree of equality she must first come to terms with Cecil Vyse, who for the rest of the novel acts not only as George's opponent for Lucy's hand but as a symbol for the spiritual standards which Lucy has consented to bow to. Forster has somewhat perversely arranged for Lucy to become engaged to Cecil, exacerbating the difficulties she must overcome in order to gain release. As in "New Lucy", Lucy must demonstrate her preparedness to denounce once and for all society's rules by breaking an engagement to marry another. In "New Lucy" this action leads Mr Emerson to exclaim "women's rights—Lucy had furthered the cause—she had practically

proposed marriage—death blow to conventions" (*LN*:120), a just valuation of her extraordinary actions. In *A Room with a View* Cecil's presence as fiancé also acts as an irritant to prod Lucy into action, for certainly Lucy's dream of equality is more than he is prepared to grant her. Italy, explains Forster, had "quickened Cecil, not to tolerance, but to irritation."

> He saw that the local society was narrow, but instead of saying, "Does this very much matter?" he rebelled, and tried to substitute for it the society he called broad. (*RV*:110)

This is what Cecil offers Lucy—his idea of "broad" society, but a society in which she will still require his protection, and in which his role as "knight errant" is assured. Forster, rather awkwardly, has to move outside Cecil's viewpoint and beyond his understanding in order to present the alternative confronting Lucy here:

> . . . if she was too great for this society [Summer Street society] she was too great for all society, and had reached the stage where personal intercourse would alone satisfy her. A rebel she was, but not the kind he understood—a rebel who desired, not a wider dwelling-room, but equality beside the man she loved. For Italy was offering her the most priceless of all possessions—her own soul. (*RV*:110)

It is time to speak in more detail of Cecil. He is introduced in the chapter entitled "Medieval" and from the opening paragraph Forster has recourse to certain imagery which immediately recalls Ruskin's *Modern Painters* to the informed reader. The room in which Mrs Honeychurch and Freddy await the outcome of Cecil's proposal to Lucy which opens the chapter eight is described as follows:

> The drawing-room curtains at Windy Corner had been pulled to meet, for the carpet was new and deserved protection from the August sun. They were heavy curtains, reaching almost to the ground, and the light that filtered through them was subdued and varied. A poet—none was present—might have quoted, 'Life like a dome of many-coloured glass,' or might have compared the curtains to sluice-gates, lowered against the intolerable tides of heaven. Without was poured a sea of radiance; within, the

> glory, though visible, was tempered to the capacities of man. (*RV*:82)

Page finds it difficult to understand "the symbolism of the excluded view and the unwelcome sunshine" in this scene.[43] It seems certain, however, that this imagery reveals Forster's debt to his reading of *Modern Painters*. In this work Ruskin makes the point that the art of the Middle Ages is characterised by its luminousness. The perfect weather outside the house, therefore, corresponds to Cecil's chivalrous proposal to Lucy, and to Lucy's acceptance of a medieval world-view in accepting Cecil. Mrs Honeychurch and Freddy, who don't share in this view, find that they must pull the curtains against the glare of Cecil's chivalry. This is manifest in a comparison of the above with Ruskin's description of the value of clouds:

> the heavens . . . had to be prepared for his [man's] habitation.
> Between their burning light—their deep vacuity, and man, . . . a veil had to be spread of intermediate being;—which should appease the unendurable glory to the level of human feebleness . . .. (vii:133)

Similarly, the weather which accompanies Lucy's breaking of the engagement echoes Ruskin's own comparison of medieval and modern art from "Of Modern Landscape", that chapter which was so influential in other instances. First Forster after Lucy's refusal of Cecil:

> The sky had grown wilder since he stood there last hour . . .. Gray clouds were charging across tissues of white, which stretched and shredded and tore slowly, until through their final layers there gleamed a hint of the disappearing blue. (*RV*:184)

The sunlight and perfect weather which had accompanied Lucy's engagement to Cecil, are ended, just as when, Ruskin informs us,

> We turn our eyes . . . as boldly as and as quickly as may be, from these serene fields and skies of medieval art, to the most characteristic examples of modern landscape. . . .
> Out of perfect light and motionless air, we find ourselves

[43] Norman Page, *E. M. Forster*, London, 1987, p. 42.

> on a sudden brought under sombre skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our face, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the medieval was in *stability*, *definiteness*, and *luminousness*, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability . . .. (v:317)

Indeed, we are expected to rejoice in the darkness of Forster's scene because his modernism, an updated version of Ruskin's, spells an end to both Mr Eager's medieval and Cecil Vyse's neo-medieval visions of personal relationships.

Cecil is possessed of an attitude to women and to the body which Forster has represented as being shared by Dante and Giotto and Ruskin. Mr Beebe, who remembered Lucy as having grown wings in Florence, also interprets for the reader Cecil's true nature (at the same time confessing his own denial of bodily passion)—"Mr Vyse is an ideal bachelor", he is reported as saying by Lucy's brother, "he's like me—better detached." (*RV*:85) Forster elaborates in his own introduction of Cecil:

> He was Medieval. Like a Gothic statue. Tall and refined, with shoulders that seemed braced square by an effort of will, and a head that was tilted a little higher than the usual level of vision, he resembled those fastidious saints who guard the portals of a French cathedral. Well educated, well endowed, and not deficient physically, he remained in the grip of a certain devil whom the modern world knows as self-consciousness, and whom the medieval, with dimmer vision, worshipped as asceticism. A Gothic statue implies celibacy, just as a Greek statue implies fruition, and perhaps this was what Mr Beebe meant. (*RV*:86-87)

From this it should be obvious that Forster intends the reader to associate with Cecil just those habits of medievalism with which he had connected Mr Eager. Though Cecil is unencumbered of the active Christian faith which informed Dante's worship of Beatrice, there is a similar asceticism at work, a similar desire to worship women and place them above the sphere of daily activity rather than to share a physical, sexual relationship. Cecil worships Lucy

as a work of art, interestingly, not a medieval artefact, rather a Leonardo. Cecil is thus freed from religious asceticism, but worshipping a work of art for its beauty nonetheless precludes any hint of the carnality which he feels so uncomfortable with—witness the scene of his first kiss by the pond.

It is possible that Forster had Pater in mind when constructing the figure of Cecil. Cecil is tempted to despise the villas, Cissie and Albert, demonstrating a contempt for Ruskin's aesthetics shared by Pater. And we must recall that these villas were indeed Ruskinian: "'. . . all the capitals were different—one with dragons in the foliage, another approaching to the Ionian style, another introducing Mrs Flack's initials—every one different.' For he had read his Ruskin. He built his villas according to his desire". (*RV*:102)

Moreover, in Forster's sympathetic description of Pater in a fragment of what was to be a talk for Leveaux's Theosophical Society in Alexandria, *circa* 1917, we find many characteristics which may have gone into the construction of Cecil. Pater is described as polite and retiring, as a man "who dreaded the impact of any hostile personality on his own, he was the essence of respectability, always attending college chapel in the morning and dressing for dinner in the evening. With his pallid face and heavy moustache, his gold-topped umbrella and with his [?] and shy cultural talk" he is indeed a fine model for the character of Cecil. This sympathetic portrait belies a certain severity in Forster's earlier characterisation of Pater. In *Nottingham Lace*, for instance, Edgar is reading Pater:

> His aunt bored him, and Pater did not, nor did he see a parallel between the Oxford don who found undergraduates too boorish to speak to and the middle-class lady who was finding the world too vulgar a place to live in. <At present Pater and Mrs Manchett were antipodes.> (*AS*:2)

Falling somewhere between these opposing views of Pater, Cecil owes something to both, and this connection with Pater would certainly explain his habit of seeing Lucy as a Leonardo:

> She was like a woman of Leonardo da Vinci's, whom we love not so much for herself as for the things that she will not tell us. The things are assuredly not of this life". (*RV*:88)

While Martin believes that the reader "will not find a passage in Forster that echoes a specific one in Pater",[44] the above passage is nevertheless comparable with Pater's famous description of the "Mona Lisa":

> She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes . . .. [45]

Cecil's Lucy is derived from Pater's interpretation of da Vinci's "Mona Lisa", a vision which, by highlighting the "otherworldliness" of the lady, divides her from the life of the everyday. Cecil's aestheticism is at once in opposition to Eager's Ruskinesque interpretation of Giotto, and yet an extension of the asceticism of Eager into another sphere.[46] This aestheticism shares with medievalism the tendency to emphasise one aspect, in this case beauty, out of the whole range of human emotions which comprise life. It is left to George not only to reconcile Eager's piety with his father's humanism, but being constantly connected with Michelangelo, also to manage a reconciliation of Eager's single-minded pursuit of the spirit in his valuation of Giotto with Cecil's pursuit of beauty in his

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[44] Robert K. Martin "The Paterian Mode in Forster's Fiction: *The Longest Journey* to *Pharos and Pharillion*," in Judith Herz and Robert K. Martin, *Centenary Revaluations*, 1982. p. 101. In this essay Martin ignores the connection between Pater and Cecil and *A Room with a View* altogether, even while noting that the passage on the Mona Lisa parallels Forster's "syncretic" mythmaking in *The Longest Journey*. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[45] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, Library Edition, London, 1910; rpt. 1967, p. 125.

[46] Joseph Bizup, "Walter Pater and the Ruskinian Gentleman," *English Literature in Transition* 38 (1995), argues that in Marius the Epicurean it was Ruskin's model of the Victorian gentleman which served "as an exemplary instance of a particular conception of masculinity which Pater manipulates and complicates". (p. 52) Whether Forster had noted this connection is perhaps doubtful. Yet the "affinity of a refined aesthetic sense for a superior moral system" (p. 66) which Marius exemplifies is not at all dissimilar from the convergence of Paterian aestheticism and Ruskinian asceticism we find in Cecil.

supplication to da Vinci.

Returning to Cecil and Lucy, the new consciousness which Lucy had developed in Florence leads her to act upon her own, to venture an opinion without consulting Cecil. Cecil responds to these exhibitions of personality by feeling that Lucy in some way falls short of his ideal;

> There was indeed something incongruous in Lucy's moral outburst over Mr Eager. It was as if one should see the Leonardo on the ceiling of the Sistine. He longed to hint to her that not here lay her vocation; that a woman's power and charm reside in mystery, not in muscular rant. (*RV*:99)

And again after Lucy upbraids Cecil for his disloyalty in helping the Emersons into Sir Harry's vacant villa ahead of Lucy's Misses Alan, Forster tells us that Cecil "stared at her, and felt again that she had failed to be Leonardoesque." (*RV*:116) Cecil here demonstrates the same failure to harmonise beauty with passion which has initially prevented Philip from realising the true nature of life in *Where Angels Fear to Tread.*

Lucy, however, is in a muddle. Though she is aware of the new consciousness which has overtaken her since Florence she is ever more determined to act, in spite of it, as the model of Victorian propriety. Even after the second of George's kisses she appears more resolved than ever to deny herself the chance of happiness with George.

> Lucy had developed since the spring. That is to say, she was now better able to stifle the emotions of which the conventions and the world disapprove. . . . Lucy's aim was to defeat herself. (*RV*:161)

George is not so eager to let things lie and his final attempt to win Lucy to his side, though apparently a failure, at least provides Lucy with telling arguments to use against Cecil some hours later:

> "You don't love me, evidently. I dare say you are right not to. But it would hurt a little less if I knew why."
> "Because"—a phrase came to her, and she accepted it—

"you're the sort who can't know anyone intimately." (*RV*:171)

She then re-echoes George's elaboration of the point from the same conversation earlier in the day. After illustrating his disregard for his fellow beings with Cecil's behaviour towards Mr Emerson in the National Gallery, George has gone on to the condescension Cecil has shown to Lucy herself:

> Next, I meet you together, and find him protecting and teaching you and your mother to be shocked, when it was for you to settle whether you were shocked or no. Cecil all over again. He daren't let a woman decide. He's the type who's kept Europe back for a thousand years. Every moment of his life he's forming you, telling you what's charming or amusing or ladylike, telling you what a man thinks womanly; and you, you of all women, listen to his voice instead of to your own. (*RV*:166)

Lucy is to pick this up where, with a partial retraction of the accusation that Cecil cannot know people intimately, she continues:

> 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. (*RV*:171)

Now she is decided.

> Her voice swelled. "I won't be protected. I will choose for myself what is ladylike 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." (*RV*:171-2)

Lucy's dismissal of Cecil, borrowed from George, is a repudiation of the neo-medieval code that Forster has represented earlier in the image of the "medieval lady". (*RV*:39) So inspired is Lucy by George's words that she at last breaks free of the conventions which had held her bound and speaks as herself. Cecil sees

her as a new person, someone whom he hadn't known until then—"this evening you are a different person: new thoughts—even a new voice"—and Lucy, shamed by the knowledge that George had supplied her with her weaponry, now attacks Cecil for his touching upon the unacknowledged truth of the matter. But the debate has established what is at issue even if the tangle of relationships remains.

Although she is able to lie convincingly to Cecil, Lucy fears the exposure of her true feelings about George will bring upon her society's terrible revenge. Thus she decides it safer to deny her feelings and enter "the vast armies of the benighted" (*RV*:174) which had received, we are told, Miss Bartlett some thirty years previous. That she has fallen to modelling her behaviour upon the standards set by Charlotte, and demonstrated in the Italian section of the novel, is further intimated by Mrs Honeychurch's remark—"How you do remind me of Charlotte Bartlett!" (*RV*:193) This of course carries the further weight of recalling Charlotte's earlier remark to Lucy that "How you do remind me of your mother." (*RV*:9) How very far had Lucy been led along the road which Charlotte herself had trod is obvious in her change. However, *A Room with a View* being what Forster saw as a sunny novel, Lucy is at last forced into accepting her love for George in a final and apparently permanent transgression of propriety.

Somewhat astonishingly, Forster enlists the almost inhuman humanist of the first part of the novel, Mr Emerson, to act as guide to Lucy. Certainly there appears a degree of inconsistency in Forster's characterisation here when in the final interview between Lucy and Mr Emerson he advocates the reconciliation between the body and the spirit which previously was only possible through his son's opposing Mr Emerson's insistence upon the body alone. This sleight of hand by Forster can also be seen in Emerson's appropriation of conventional religious imagery in rendering his vision of equality:

> The Garden of Eden, . . . which you place in the past, is really yet to come. We shall enter it when we no longer despise our bodies. (*RV*:126)

Mr Emerson continues to represent this reconciliation of body and soul in the final part of the novel. This is necessary to the plot as George has, in effect, been written out after his second kiss. Thus it is old Mr Emerson who must present Lucy with the final kiss in lieu of George.

The setting for the final contest is Mr Beebe's study in the rectory, and Lucy's sympathy for the old humanist reduced to seeking sanctuary in the house of a clergyman occasions Forster's explanation that "Mr Emerson was profoundly religious, and differed from Mr Beebe chiefly by his acknowledgment of passion".[47] (*RV*:199) Obviously Forster is gambling with the plausibility of a characterisation for the sake of heightening tension in the incident. The change to Mr Emerson is to equip him for a role George has abdicated. George has "gone under" and only Lucy can save him now; save him and herself by accepting the vision which Emerson offers her.

Emerson, who had been only allowed a "transitory Yes" in Santa Croce, can now speak confidently of the existence of the soul;

> Ah for a little directness to liberate the soul! Your soul, dear Lucy! I hate the word now, because of all the cant with which superstition has wrapped it round. But we have souls. I cannot say how they came nor whither they go, but we have them, and I see you ruining yours. I cannot bear it . . . it is hell. (*RV*:202)

Lucy is moved to action by Emerson. She sees the truth of his declaration of her love for George—"body and soul"—and she leaves to face her family and society. Overwhelmed by the prospect of entering the contest for her own soul Lucy turns back to Emerson and

> his face revived her. It was the face of a saint who understood. . . . He gave her a sense of deities reconciled . . .. He had robbed the body of its taint, the world's taunts of their sting; he had shown

[47] It is perhaps necessary to say something of Mr Beebe here. His aim, as his name comically suggests (Bee-bee), is to tempt Lucy Honeychurch to his own celibate way of life, thus it comes about that, secretly rejoicing in Lucy's broken engagement, he tries to lure her for tea to the "Beehive" where he obviously proposes to expatiate on the benefits of spinsterhood. (*RV*:180) His failure to secure her leaves him at the end of the novel quite inhuman.

her the holiness of direct desire. (*RV*:204)

In accomplishing this Emerson has provided Lucy with a vision corresponding to that which had visited George in Santa Croce in front of Giotto's frescoes, the intimation of a reconciliation between Giotto's spirituality and a modern view of women—something Ruskin had categorically declared to be impossible. And thus the final chapter, the epilogue in which George and Lucy begin their "new life", Forster can triumphantly claim as "The End of the Middle Ages".

The final vision of Lucy in the Pension Bertolini has troubled many critics who, like Crews, believe Forster's modern woman a failure when "Lucy, who finally embodies Forster's idea of the happy modern woman, is last seen in the act of mending her husband's socks."[48] Yet the view from the window which she shares with George, seen by Finkelstein as a "symbolic rejection of the old arbitrary roles",[49] should be taken together with the darned sock as proof of the scope of the reconciliation achieved through her acceptance of George. We must remember that George had reconciled "Mr Stuart Mill's 'other career for woman than that of wife and mother'" (xxiii:332) with the harmony of the "monastic" and "domestic" aspects of life Ruskin perceived in Giotto. Lucy, too, manages this reconciliation, a point Gay misses when she declares Lucy a "post- and indeed anti-Ruskinian heroine."[50] The sock stands for domesticity and home life which must, for all Mill's objections to married life as a form of "domestic slavery", be an option open to women in Forster's vision. Forster has found room in his vision for "the vulgar career of wives and mothers, to which we have Mr Mill's authority for holding it a grievous injustice that any girl should be irrevocably condemned." (xvi:166) I suggest that this is the raison d'etre of Mrs Honeychurch. Finkelstein has suggested that "Mrs. Honeychurch exhibits several

[48] Frederick Crews, *E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism*, Princeton and London, 1962, p. 87.

[49] Finkelstein, *op cit.*, p. 88.

[50] Gay, *op cit.*, p. 287.

serious flaws",[51] which may be summed up as a desire "to limit other women to a purely domestic life."[52] Yet in spite of her domesticity she is a sympathetic character, and we should read her preoccupation with the domestic sphere as an attempt by Forster to find in his expanded vision of women's place in society a continuing place for benign traditions of the household as well as the life of "typewriters and latchkeys" (*RV*:193) which Mrs Honeychurch fears will usurp her in Lucy's affections. In this concern with household tradition Mrs Honeychurch provides a prototype for Forster's portrayal of Mrs Wilcox in *Howards End.*

(III)

Howards End provides the reader with a far more complex attempt at reconciliation in which Forster seeks once again to harmonise the opposition of body and the soul, the masculine and the feminine, and also to tackle a third opposition: that of rich and poor. It is convenient to postpone the examination of this final opposition to the second part of this thesis, and therefore I intend to deal only with the problems of body versus soul and masculine versus feminine. What, in these terms, *Howards End* achieves is a bringing together of the similar and yet distinct concerns displayed by Forster in the two Italian novels to form something like a conclusion to Forster's concern with the issues of gender and social convention in the pre-war period, pending of course his work in *The Longest Journey*, but in that novel the emphasis is more definitely upon the relationships between male characters and they touch only lightly upon ground covered in the Italian novels and *Howards End.*

In her paper "Mill and Ruskin on the Woman Question Revisited", Nord[53]

[51] Finkelstein, *op cit.*, p. 86.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[53] Deborah Epstein Nord, "Mill and Ruskin on the Woman Question Revisited" in James Engell and Davis Perkins, eds., *Teaching Literature: What is needed Now*, London and Cambridge, Mass., 1988, p. 74.

praises Kate Millett[54] for being the first to bring together Mill's *The Subjection of Women* and Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* for twentieth-century consideration. While Millett is correct in suggesting the respective works of Mill and Ruskin to be "two of the central documents of sexual politics in the Victorian period",[55] contrary to Nord's assessment, her comparison of the "rational" versus "chivalric" debate embodied in these works was predated by as much as sixty years. One piece of evidence for saying that the same debate was being conducted among early feminists is clearly manifest in Forster's paper "The Feminine Note in Literature".[56]

About the time that Forster prepared this paper for the Apostles he was, through his friendship with Florence Barger, becoming more closely associated with the Suffragette movement as is evident in his letters to Malcolm Darling. The first of these, dated 1909, also shows a growing disillusionment with the means of protest undertaken by the Suffragettes.

> The political outlook (to my ignorant eyes) is gloomy: and, lay the blame where one will, the Suffragettes are becoming a real danger. Mrs Barger, who has been stopping here, is just not militant, but full of militant arguments. It is so difficult for an outsider to settle at what point physical force becomes justifiable.

A similar dissatisfaction is evident in the following more personal attack upon Christabel Pankhurst, in another letter to Darling in 1912:

> I am definitely off with her [Christabel Pankhurst], not so much for her window breaking as for the moral windows that she broke in me in Belfast when she suggested we should all be beastly together.

Although Forster appears to have been put off by the militancy of the Suffragettes, he maintained that he "stuck" to their "principles" and was looking

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[54] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, London, 1972.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[56] The manuscript of this paper read to the Apostles and later to the Friday Club in 1910 is held in the Modern Archives at King's College.

for a way in which he too could further the cause. His novel *Howards End*, which was released the following year, in 1910, can be regarded as his answer to this question. In this novel Forster attempts to come to terms with Mill and Ruskin, and the women's movement in general, and yet deliver his message to society in his own inimitable manner.

It has been shown already that Forster was not happy with Victorian or "neo-medieval" notions of chivalry and in the above mentioned paper, which he jokingly deprecates as a frivolous footnote to the Apostles' more serious discussion of Mill which had preceded it, he too manages to prefigure Millett's own attack on Ruskin through a demonstration of chivalry's incompatibility with successful male-female relationships.

> Chivalry entails reaction. When gentlemen have been handing ladies up and down steps all day, they will naturally retire to what they term their "den" in the evening, and [scarify]? the fair sex to the accompaniment of whiskeys and cigars. And, conversely, the ladies who have been handed up & down the steps, will naturally have a boudoir, and they will naturally retire to it and have a quiet talk about those men. Chivalry appears in the morning. The servants have scrubbed the steps, and the handing up and the handing down begins again. They are a fine and for the moment happy couple. He has strength, she charm. But the happiness leaves no tenderness behind it, and neither the strength nor the charm will ever be touched with beauty. They must go back to their real homes—she to the boudoir, he to the den—never to breathe the warmer air that is at once honesty and literature.

The steps in this passage act as what Forster was to call in *Howards End*, "a forcing-house for the idea of sex".[57] They exacerbate the division of masculine and feminine along the lines demanded by chivalry and accentuate whatever real difference may exist between the sexes. Forster's work to this point—from Trent in *Nottingham Lace* to the "medieval lady" of *A Room with a View*—has often dealt with the notion of there being an essential difference between the sexes, at

[57] Stallybrass's note on this statement of Forster's is misleading in that it implies some connection with the sexual act. (*HE*:361)

times Forster himself has attempted to provide some definition of where those "eternal differences" (*HE*:336) may lie. Yet in *Howards End* Forster attempts to answer the problem of women's rights through a reconciliation of masculine and feminine, and while drawing upon the opposed positions of Mill and Ruskin, captures the harmony of his vision of human relationships in the typically Forsterian image of a tree and a house standing adjacent to one another.

This image of the tree and house in *Howards End* belongs specifically to the heroine Margaret Schlegel. On her first visit to Howards End, the house and the wych-elm which stands fast by it provides her with the intimation of a perfect domestic harmony. This is her reaction:

> No report had prepared her for its peculiar glory. It was neither warrior, nor lover, nor god; in none of these roles do the English excel. It was a comrade, bending over the house, strength and adventure in its roots, but in its utmost fingers tenderness, and the girth, that a dozen men could not have spanned, became in the end evanescent, till pale bud clusters seemed to float in the air. It was a comrade. House and tree transcended any simile of sex. Margaret thought of them now, and was to think of them through many a windy night and London day, but to compare either to man, to woman, always dwarfed the vision. Yet they kept within the limits of the human. Their message was not of eternity, but of hope on this side of the grave. As she stood in the one, gazing at the other, truer relationships had gleamed. (*HE*:203)

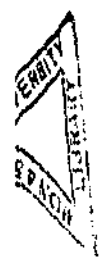
This echoes Margaret's sentiments on the death of her friend Ruth Wilcox: "She saw a little more clearly than hitherto what a human being is, and to what he may aspire. Truer relationships gleamed. Perhaps the last word would be hope—hope even on this side of the grave." (*HE*:101) This is also akin to the later declaration by Margaret's sister, Helen, that "Death destroys a man; the idea of Death saves him." Forster develops the thought:

> Behind the coffins and the skeletons that stay the vulgar mind lies something so immense that all that is great in us responds to it. Men of the world recoil from the charnel-house that they will one day enter, but Love knows better. Death is his foe, but his peer, and in their age-long struggle the thews of Love have been

> strengthened, and his vision cleared, until there is no one who can stand against him. (*HE*:236)

Such is Helen's advice to the desperate Bast, and this may well have been the advice that the dying Italian in the Piazza Signoria had sought to offer Lucy in *A Room with a View* when from the very threshold of death he "bent towards Lucy with a look of interest, as if he had an important message for her." (*RV*:41) Forster emphasises that the importance of this event was not "that a man had died; [but that] something had happened to the living", (*RV*:45) and in a figurative manner not dissimilar to his description of the tree and the house in Howards End he describes Lucy and George in conversation while returning from the piazza as follows:

> [Lucy] leant her elbows against the parapet of the embankment. He did likewise. There is at times a magic in identity of position; it is one of the things that have suggested to us eternal comradeship. (*RV*:44)



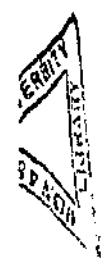
The unexpected death of the Italian has forced the young couple to confront death and while Lucy feels little more than strangely disconcerted by it, George has come to an understanding of what Forster was later to express through Helen and Margaret. Faced with the knowledge of death George declares that "I shall want to live" (*RV*:45) and comes to accept the notion of the "transitory Yes"—which is love and personal relationships—as an answer to the "everlasting Why" (*RV*:27) which had puzzled him until now.

It is suggested by Thomson[58] that the notion of the idea of death saving man was adapted by Forster from Michelangelo via J. A. Symonds. Certainly Michelangelo features in *A Room with a View* in connection with George, yet there is also evidence that the transforming of Michelangelo's ascetic statement into a motto for Forster's humanism may have, rather perversely we may feel, come via Forster's reading of Ruskin. Forster, at his death, possessed a copy of the 1906 edition of Ruskin's *A Crown of Wild Olive*, and it seems unlikely that

[58] George. H. Thomson, *The Fiction of E. M. Forster*, Detroit, 1967, p. 286.

Forster would have purchased this much later than its date of issue, particularly as he uses Ruskin in his novels of this period. It is probable then that Forster was reading this volume about the time of his work on *Howards End*. What we find in the introduction to *A Crown of Wild Olive* is perhaps the most humanist of Ruskin's statements, and concerns the "brave belief in death" (xviii:395) as opposed to a belief in life after death. At this stage of his career Ruskin was without the "Christian hope" (xviii:lxxvii) which marked *Mornings in Florence*, and his notion that "It is a difficult thing . . . to live without hope of another world . . . ; but by how much the more difficult, by so much it makes one braver and stronger" (xviii:lxxvi-lxxvii) certainly provides a model for Forster's revision of Michelangelo. Ruskin concludes his vision of the rewards possible this side of the grave as follows:

> this, such as it is, you may win, while yet you live . . .. Free-heartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry to their pain; these,—and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath; and mysteries and presences, innumerable, of living things,—may yet be here your riches; untormenting and divine: serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come. (xviii:398-9)



Ruskin's "requited love" and "sweet waters" both appear in Forster's vision of "truer relationships this side of the grave", and when Helen is attempting to convince Leonard of the truth of this vision she does so to prevent him giving up his interest in books—particularly his Ruskins. I don't insist upon this connection but it appears a likely influence, supported by a striking similarity between Helen's denunciation of Wilcox's opposition to social reform and Ruskin's remarks in this introduction. Gay has noted the relation between Wilcox and Ruskin's "modern capitalist",[59] and believes there to be "no basic disagreement between Ruskin the idealist and Forster the realistic novelist on questions of

[59] Gay, *op cit.*, p. 290.

political economy."[60] They are, however, diametrically opposed in their prescriptions for the likes of Bast, but that must wait until the next chapter.

Turning again to *The Crown of Wild Olive*, Ruskin poses to his audience the problem of faith, of whether they believe in eternal life or not, asking his audience to decide one way or the other, for he is aware of the expediency of maintaining a double-standard with regards to this question. The purpose behind this initial seeming irrelevance is however soon brought to bear. Ruskin claims that for employers who truly believe in life after death, and Divine justice, "it may be no sign of hardness of heart to neglect the poor, over whom they know their Master is watching; and to leave those to perish temporarily, who cannot perish eternally." (xviii:396) But, for those without belief, "there is no such hope, and therefore no such excuse."

> This fate, which you ordain for the wretched, you believe to be all their inheritance; you may crush them, before the moth, and they will never rise to rebuke you;—their breath, which fails for lack of food, once expiring, will never be recalled to whisper against you a word of accusing . . .. (xviii:397)

Ruskin continues by asking the capitalists he believes himself to be addressing that if such is the case, "Will you be more prompt to the injustice which can never be redressed; and more niggardly of the mercy which you can bestow but once, and which, refusing, you refuse for ever?" (xviii:397) Helen, similarly attacks Wilcox as "one of those men who have reconciled science with religion," that is that in business terms they are "scientific . . ., and talk of the survival of the fittest, and cut down the salaries of their clerks", yet when it comes time to speak of social justice these men turn to God and a "sloppy 'somehow'" to repair their injustices. (*HE*:189) Helen's notions of social justice and are thus closely aligned with Ruskin's own attitudes as demonstrated in *The Crown of Wild Olive*.

What is important from all this is that death has intimated to Margaret, as it had Ruskin, the possibility of perfection in her relationships and the vision

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 291.

provided her at Howards End, the tree and the house, has given the clue that perfection in domestic relations requires the transcendence of ideas of masculine and feminine in what Forster concludes is the "noblest" form of love, "where man and woman, having lost themselves in sex, desire to lose sex itself in comradeship". (*HE*:309)

Yet one can't help but feel that Forster is obscuring his true feelings on the subject of essentialism. In "The Feminine Note in Literature" Forster displays no such reticence. That he was aware of the main thrust of Mill's *The Subjection of Women* is evident from the introduction to his paper:

> Last time this society met to discuss the Subjection of Women. Speeches were made by those well qualified to make them, dealing with various aspects of the question, economic, legal, and moral; and of course politics and religion were also dealt with as is usual at the meetings of this society. The result was an evening of great interest from which everyone must have carried away a clearer conception of what has been done since J. S. Mill's time, and of what still remains to be done.

That he felt unsure of the veracity of Mill's claims is also intimated in his apology for the present paper, "Last time some of us hesitated to speak, or spoke with diffidence, knowing ourselves to be both unreasonable and ignorant, and unlikely to say anything of value. But today one does not hesitate." Furbank[61] notes that in this talk Forster disagrees with Mill's conclusion that there was no "such thing as a 'feminine note'" and the point of contention may well be that Forster believed to some degree in there being an essential difference between men and women.

From the above quoted passage it is clear that in 1909 Forster was well aware of what Millett terms the "rational", or economic, legal and political, demand for equality for women which Mill espoused. Forster had acknowledged that Mill's view of women had "led us to some salutary admissions", particularly that "it is historically true that women have had a miserable chance as human

[61] Furbank, *op cit.*, vol.1, p. 193.

beings" and that until recently women were "the servants or the playthings of men", but given the same chance in the future their achievements will be shown to be "indistinguishable from those of men". Yet Forster is not convinced with what he sees as Mill's view that if the existing social relations between the sexes be replaced by perfect equality then in the future women's achievements will be shown to be "indistinguishable from those of men", particularly with regards to literature, and one thinks, to life in general. He continues:

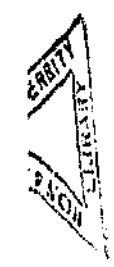
> That is Mill's opinion on this point—perfectly logical, and if you feel it is all right it is all right, and the rest of this paper will seem mere spinning of cobwebs. But to me it feels all wrong, and as if the writer, however just his conclusions elsewhere, is here applying his formulae to a region in which they will not act. . . . Mill was primarily a philosopher, and as such abhorred exceptions. He was also a lawyer—not a very good one as it was pointed out to us last time—still he was one and as such abhorred untidiness. But literature [and one suspects Forster would like to include personal relationships and life in general] is the most exceptional & untidy affair that has ever entered the heart of man . . . to say that the Feminine Note is the result of limitations is to cross the line that divides the aesthetic critic from the legal. We feel instinctively that it is not so. Bad luck did not create it, better luck will not destroy it.

In an examination of literature, logic and science are useless. To gain insight into the feminine note Forster believes in criticism which "guesses and feels and wonders". The previous discussion of women's rights had been an appeal to "Reason & Knowledge", this paper is an appeal to "feelings and emotions", to instinct, and it is this element which Mill appears to leave out of his discussion of women, but is an aspect which Forster feels strongly about and, one suspects, it is an aspect which he attempts to introduce into his vision of the modern women.

Returning to Margaret's vision of the tree and house, of relationships in which comradeship transcends the feminine and masculine, it is obvious that Forster is hesitant to reveal himself. But he manages to provide a place for a belief in essentialism by introducing Ruskin into his vision. Forster uses what Nord refers to as the "questions of sexual difference and of essentialism which lie

stubbornly sat the center of *Sesame and Lilies*"[62] as an important counterbalance to Mill's concern with legal and economic justice. Before Margaret can achieve her vision she must help Henry to unite body and soul in love, to construct "the building of that rainbow bridge that should connect the . . . unconnected arches that have never joined into man" (*HE*:183) which in itself owes much to Ruskin. But to effect that connection, something Lucy was unable to do with Cecil in *A Room with a View*, Margaret must overcome thirty years of socialisation into the "Ruskinian" ideal which Henry's marriage to Ruth represents.[63] Indeed, much of the interest in Howards End is derived from Forster's contrasting of Margaret's ideal with the reality of the relationship between Henry and Ruth.

Most of what we know of the Wilcox marriage is offered to the reader through Henry's reminiscences on the morning after his wife's funeral.



> He remembered his wife's even goodness during thirty years. Not anything in detail—not courtship or early raptures—but just the unvarying virtue, that seemed to him a woman's noblest quality. So many women are capricious, breaking into odd flaws of passion or frivolity. Not so his wife. Year after year, summer and winter, as bride and mother, she had been the same, he always trusted her. (*HE*:88)

Clearly Ruth represents for Henry the "medieval lady" of *A Room with a View*. However, Ruth Wilcox appeared not unhappy in her role as wife and mother, recalling Mrs Honeychurch's domesticity, and consciously accepts the Victorian model which she represents, contentedly admitting to Margaret that "I sometimes think that it is wiser to leave action and discussion to men", (*HE*:74) and that "I am only too thankful not to have a vote myself." (*HE*:75) Margaret replies in a tone not dissimilar to Mill (remembering that it is Margaret who also professes that idea of Mill's which had upset Ruskin in *Mornings in Florence* "that for

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[62] Nord, *op cit.*, p 79.

[63] Gay, *op cit.*, p 292-4, is aware of the relevance of "Of Queen's Gardens" (though neglects its complement, "Of King's Treasuries"), and provides an interesting discussion of the Ruskinian elements in Forster's description of the married relationship between Margaret and Henry but neglects the equally important correlation between Ruth and Ruskin's model of womanhood. For this reason she again fails to realise the reconciliation of Ruskin's vision

women . . . 'not to work' will soon become as shocking as 'not to be married' was a hundred years ago" (*HE*:108));

> "Aren't we differing on something much wider, Mrs Wilcox? Whether women are to remain what they have been since the dawn of history; or whether, since men have moved forward so far, they too may move a little now." (*HE*:75)

It is clear that Forster, through Margaret, is attempting to replace the prevailing view of women as irrelevant in the public sector, with an attitude closely allied with that of Mill.

Thus through Henry's recollections of his deceased wife Forster is alluding to the role Ruskin laid out for women. Henry, through his praise of his wife's "even goodness" and "unvarying virtue" recalls the prime precondition of Ruskin's "Queen" is to be "enduringly, incorruptibly good". (xviii:123) Ruskin further recommends that worldly knowledge is of little significance to the ideal wife, that it "is of little consequence how many positions of cities she knows, or how many dates of events, or names of celebrated persons—it is not the object of education to turn the woman into a dictionary". (xviii:126) This recalls a similar remark in *Mornings in Florence* which suggests that girls require not even the basics of education such as reading and writing, and certainly Forster had this idea in mind when he allowed Henry the following commendation of his deceased wife:

> Her tenderness! Her innocence! The wonderful innocence that was hers by the gift of God. Ruth knew no more of worldly wickedness and wisdom than did the flowers in her garden, or the grass in her field. Her idea of business—"Henry, why do people who have enough money try to get more money?" Her idea of politics—"I am sure that if the mothers of various nations could meet that there would be no more wars." Her idea of religion—ah, this had been a cloud . . .. (*HE*:88)

With the same gentle pervasive irony which typified his treatment of Ruskin in *The Lucy Novels*, Forster here demonstrates an innocence in Ruth which Ruskin

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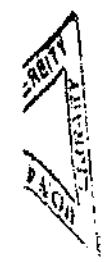
with Mill's which Forster is attempting.

would admire no less than Henry does through a number of examples of naivety which are themselves drawn from Ruskin's work.

First, Ruth's idea of business. The Mammonism of nineteenth-century England was of singular importance to Ruskin and stands at the centre of his concern in many works of political economy. Yet *Sesame and Lilies*, and particularly the second lecture titled "Of Queen's Gardens", signals a new approach to the problem with the construction of a feminine ideal that will with instinctive wisdom guide the male counterpart. Nord[64] suggests that Ruskin "imagines a traditional notion of the 'feminine' as the one thing needful, as the antidote to a wrongheaded, male-created world." Indeed, the 'gardens' over which Ruskin's women are to hold sovereignty symbolise England and the influence Ruskin hopes they will exert is that of a countercheck, in one sense spiritual yet drawn from an association with nature, to male materialism. Ruth's bewilderment about people with enough money seeking more has its equivalent in Ruskin:



> Suppose you had each, at the back of your houses, a garden, large enough for your children to play in, with just as much lawn as would give them room to run,—no more—and that you could not change your abode; but that, if you chose, you could double your income, or quadruple it, by digging a coal shaft in the middle of the lawn, and turning the flower-beds into heaps of coke. Would you do it? . . .
>
> Yet this is what you are doing with all England. The whole country is but a little garden . . .. (xviii:133-4)

Moreover, the role set out by Ruskin is exactly that which Forster allows Ruth Wilcox in her own "little garden". Charles recalls his mother's "gentle conservatism" in fighting against the ruination of her home by Charles and Henry's materialism: "How she had disliked improvements, . . . what trouble they had had to get this very garage! With what difficulty had they persuaded her to yield them the paddock for it—the paddock that she loved more dearly than the garden itself! The vine—she had got her way about the vine. It still

[64] Nord, *op cit.*, p. 77-8.

encumbered the south wall with its unproductive branches." (*HE*:91) And all this is done in the face of Henry's belief that the farm was useless because it "doesn't pay". (*HE*:203)

Of course the farm was saved by an input of Henry's capital, and therefore Forster acknowledges that though the house and farm have a value beyond Henry's capacity to calculate, it is the capital and the business sense of men like Henry which is needed to preserve this farm and others like it from going the way of all that is unprofitable in the new world of business interests. Margaret tries to reconcile the opposition in declaring that men like the Wilcoxes, though not suited to the appreciation of a place like Howards End, nevertheless "keep England going". (*HE*:271)

The second aspect of Ruth's naivety which Forster plays upon is her idea of politics. She believes that the mothers of nations can put an end to wars,[65] and, though Forster has criticised Ruskin for glorifying war, this too is a view not unlike Ruskin's in *Sesame and Lilies.* As well as holding the power to correct men's materialism, Ruskin believes that women may also correct men's aggression:

> There is not a war in this world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered. Men, by their nature, are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause, or for none. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. (xviii:140)

It is but a short step from this to Ruth Wilcox's idea of mothers ending all wars, and this idea is again put forward by Ruskin in *A Crown of Wild Olive*. In the third chapter, a lecture on war, Ruskin admonishes the women in his audience at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, saying that the fault of war was "Wholly yours" (xviii:491), and that "Let every lady in the upper classes of

[65] Stone, *op cit.*, p. 238, again makes an error in attributing this statement to Margaret Schlegel rather then Ruth Wilcox, and imagines it demonstrates Margaret's "feminist idea of politics".

civilized Europe simply vow that, while any cruel war proceeds, she will wear *black*;—a mute's black,—with no jewel, no ornament, no excuse for, or evasion into, prettiness—I tell you again, no war would last a week." (xviii:492)

Finally, Ruth's idea of religion. Of course Henry would feel Ruth's strong views upon her children's religious education to be a "cloud" for Ruskin had prophesied that

> There *is* one dangerous science for women—one which they must indeed beware how they profanely touch—that of theology. (xviii:127)

Taken together these three comments by Henry strongly suggest that Forster did have Ruskin in mind when he constructed the character of Ruth Wilcox. So far, Forster's presentation of Ruth has been aimed at demonstrating the negative aspects of Ruskin's ideal, yet on one point Ruskin's ideal and Forster's do coincide and that is concerning the positive nature of the "instinctive wisdom" that Ruth is shown to possess. While Forster parodies Ruskin's advice that women need little, if any, worldly knowledge, the precondition of Ruskin's ideal that she be "instinctively, infallibly wise" (xviii:123) is shown as a positive trait that links Ruth to her spiritual heir Margaret Schlegel. Indeed, it is this trait which Margaret needs to accommodate to the merits she possesses in the tradition of Mill if she is to embody Forster's own modern ideal.

Ruth's wisdom is demonstrated quite early in the novel, over the unfortunate incident between Helen and the younger Wilcox son, Paul. Ruth appears in time to save what Charlotte Bartlett may have called a *mauvais quart d'heure*.

> "Charles dear," said a voice from the garden. "Charles, dear Charles, one doesn't ask plain questions. There aren't such things."
>
> They were all silent. It was Mrs Wilcox.
>
> She approached just as Helen's letter had described her, trailing noiselessly over the lawn, and there was actually a wisp of hay in her hands. She seemed to belong not to the young people and their motor, but to the house, and to the tree that

> overshadowed it. One knew that she worshipped the past, and that the instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow had descended upon her—that wisdom to which we give the clumsy name of aristocracy. (*HE*:19)

Forster's use of the garden in so strong a connection with Ruth seems certain to be a reference to the second part of *Sesame and Lilies*, also known as "Of Queen's Gardens". Taking Forster's cue to recall Helen's letter, there we find Ruth described as follows:

> I looked out earlier, and Mrs Wilcox was already in the garden. She evidently loves it. No wonder she sometimes looks tired. She was watching the large red poppies come out. Then she walked off the lawn to the meadow, whose corner to the right I can just see. Trail, trail, went her long dress over the sopping grass, and she came back with her hands full of the hay . . .. (*HE*:2)

According to Ruskin: "The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps . . .. 'Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy.'" (xviii:141) Together with Henry's recollection of her "wonderful innocence" like that of the "flowers in her garden, or the grass in her field", all of this imagery is set to evoke in the mind of the audience Ruskin's image of the ideal wife:

> This is wonderful—oh, wonderful!—to see her, with every innocent feeling fresh within her, go out in the morning into her garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with the happy smile upon her face, and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace: and yet she knows, in her heart, if she would only look for its knowledge, that, outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their life-blood. (xviii:141)

Ruskin's notion of there being knowledge "in her heart" again emphasises the "instinctive wisdom" which is possessed of both his ideal and Forster's Ruth Wilcox. And it appears in this passage that like Ruth Wilcox, Ruskin's ideal also gains this wisdom through close association with nature, and a respect for

tradition which attends it. There also appears some connection between Ruskin and Forster in the notion of aristocracy being linked with this "instinctive", natural wisdom—Forster sees aristocracy as only a "clumsy" name for that wisdom which can be acquired through observance of tradition. Ruskin takes a lot of trouble over the derivations of "Lord" and "Lady",[66] and seeks through his advice to give women, by virtue of the "instinctive wisdom" Forster speaks of, a rightful claim to this "title of Lady". (xviii:138)

The possession of this natural, "instinctive" wisdom is, for Forster, connected with Ruth's love of her house, and the story of *Howards End* is the story of Ruth's passing on of this spiritual legacy to her rightful heir Margaret, who will reconcile Ruskin's ideals with those of Mill. When Ruth dies she does leave Howards End to Margaret but the Wilcoxes act against her wishes, being unable to understand the purpose behind her request. Her daughter Evie incurs Forster's irony by declaring "Mother believed so in ancestors too—it isn't like her to leave anything to an outsider, who'd never appreciate." (*HE*:97) For

> it was contrary to the dead woman's intentions in the past, contrary to her very nature, so far as that nature was understood by them [her family]. To them Howards End was a house; they could not know that to her it had been a spirit, for which she sought a spiritual heir. (*HE*:96)

Yet through her marriage to Henry, Margaret finally comes into possession of Howards End and we are left with a final vision of the future. From Ruth to Margaret and so to Helen and Leonard's child, the house will return to the farming stock to whom it belongs by right. However, the son of Leonard and Helen will presumably be brought up to Margaret's model and bridge the gulf that divides the spirit and the material as represented by Henry. There will be more to say on this point later: for the present, what is important is the material passing on of the house from Ruth to her spiritual heir, a succession from one

[66] Moreover Ruskin declares in a note that "I wish there were a true order of chivalry instituted for our English youth of certain ranks, in which both boy and girl should receive, at a given age, their knighthood and ladyhood by true title; attainable only by certain probation and trial both of character and accomplishment". (xviii:138)

who is "instinctively" wise to another who may well be so. Yet this bequest proves to be as impossible in Forster's England (as it was in Mill's), without Henry's patriarchal consent—Ruskin's ideal cannot survive in the absence of Mill's "rational" equality for women. The success of Margaret's actions, her display of Ruskin's instinctive wisdom, are indicated in a speech by Helen which recognises the importance of Howards End to reconciling her attitudes to life with Henry's, attitudes in opposition throughout the novel but which Margaret had all along sought to reconcile:

> "You did it all, sweetest, though you're too stupid to see. Living here was your plan—I wanted you; he wanted you; and everyone said it was impossible, but you knew. Just think of our lives without you, Meg—I and baby with Monica, revolting by theory, he handed about from Dolly to Evie. But you picked up the pieces, and made us a home." (*HE*:336)

Margaret position as Ruth's spiritual heir is hinted at in her reply that "I can't help hoping, and very early in the morning in the garden I feel that our house is the future as well as the past." (*HE*:337)

So there exist in Howards End three sets of oppositions which Forster sets to reconcile in the character of Margaret Schlegel: first, the medieval division of body and soul which she must bridge in her husband Henry (from *Where Angels Fear to Tread*), but in which she appears to have failed, though Bast's son holds hope for the future; second, the neo-medieval division of masculine and feminine (from *A Room with a View*) which through her vision of human relationships she may well achieve; and third, the opposition between the ideals of a woman's role in society held by Ruskin and Mill (exclusive to *Howards End*), and which the future of Howards End seems set to accomplish. Finkelstein would like to call this harmony of masculine and feminine which Margaret manages, "sororibus"[67] in opposition to the singularly masculine "fratribus" of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *The Longest Journey*. While correctly acknowledging that this

[67] Finkelstein, *op cit.*, p. 91. Indeed, "sororibus" nicely captures the notion of sisterhood always in contest with "fratribus" which unites Agnes and Mrs Lewin in their plan to capture

reconciliation of Margaret's is "bisexual and androgynous", and that Forster has sought to blur the differences of gender through comradeship, to appropriate this image is to be guilty of what had led Forster to his conviction of there being a distinctive feminine note which required reconciling. Referring to an unnamed novel in which the authoress has similarly appropriated to the feminine ideal both the Venus of Milo and Goethe's "*Das ewig Weibliche zieht uns heran*", Forster decides against females "annexing for themselves what should be a vision for all humanity". Such authors are claiming "extra reverence . . . on the ground of their sex. If we accord this reverence it is out of chivalry and at the end of the book we feel the reaction that chivalry always entails". Forster notion of comradeship has been well chosen to exemplify his hope of losing the divisions of sex which both "fratribus" and "sororibus" imply.

Before closing this discussion of Ruskin and the male-female relationships in *Howards End* it is necessary to say a few words about the male characters, Leonard and Henry. Beginning with Henry, it has already been established through the discussion of his wives, Ruth and Margaret (in this chapter and in that previous), that he has much in common with Ruskin and Dante in terms of his medieval attitude to women. He is a fitting complement to the Ruskinian heroine, Ruth. Henry saying "the most horrid things about women's suffrage" (*HE*:3) complements Ruth's complacent denial of its efficacy. Moreover, Millett is correct in thinking Ruskin's "virtuous matron", of whom Ruth is an embodiment, "relies for her very existence on that spectral figure of the temptress, her complement in the period's dichotomous literary fantasy—just as in life, the two classes of women, wife and whore, account for the socio-sexual division under the double standard."[68] Remembering that the distinction between wife and whore is merely a Victorian adaptation of the medieval double standard embodied in the Dantesque view of women, Henry's relationships with Jacky, Ruth and Margaret lead him into a tangle of sexual morality essentially medieval

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Rickie in *The Longest Journey*.

[68] Millett, *op cit.*, p. 89.

in its nature:

> Had he only known that Margaret was awaiting him—Margaret, so lively and intelligent, and yet so submissive—he would have kept himself worthier of her. Incapable of grouping the past, he confused the episode of Jacky with another episode that had taken place in the days of his bachelorhood. The two made one crop of wild oats, for which he was heartily sorry, and he could not see that those oats are of a darker stock which are rooted in another's dishonour. Unchastity and infidelity were as confused to him as to the Middle Ages, his only moral teacher. (*HE*:256)

In this confusion, Henry recalls Forster's most medieval of characters, Gino Carella from *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, who is unconscious of the inconsistency of his idolatry of Caroline, his marriage of convenience to Lilia, his laughing infidelity, and his jealousy over Lilia's letter to Mr Kingcroft. Yet Forster's portrayal of Gino demonstrates a certain prejudice in that his actions are somewhat redeemed by his coarseness, passion, and good looks. Henry, due to his position of influence, is simply a hypocrite—made to appear more hypocritical by his refusal to forgive Helen's pregnancy.

Jacky provides a link between Henry and Leonard, and while she suffers through Henry's medievalism, she captures Leonard through a similar medievalism. Henry, again like Gino, provides what sexual force there is in the male characters in the novel. He is obviously attractive to women, and is jealous of competition in the pursuit of sexual gratification. Conversely, Leonard, like Cecil Vyse, is devoid of any sexual force. Critics have been critical of the lack of credibility in Leonard's sexual encounter with Helen, who is the most erotic force in the novel. Such a view fails to recognise that Leonard is constructed to be a sexual failure. He represents the last in the line of characters including Philip Herriton, Rickie Elliot and Vyse, all of whom are placed in opposition to more passionate characters; Gino (whose barbarity and beauty provides a touchstone to Philip's entry into life), Stephen Wonham (who awakens in Rickie's wife memories of her deceased fiancé, the passionate Gerald), and George Emerson (who helps to awaken Lucy). Leonard is as much caught up in a tangle of

Ruskinian morality as he is in the Ruskinian aesthetics which will be discussed in the following chapter. When Jacky attempts to reinforce Leonard's promise of marriage with the offer of sex we see Leonard hide from her advances in the pages of Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*. We can recall Forster's joke at the expense of Ruskin in *A Room with a View*, likewise here Forster appears to be referring to Ruskin's impotence.

> From the darkness beyond the kitchen a voice called, "Len?"
> "You in bed?" he asked, his forehead twitching.
> "M'm."
> "All right."
> Presently she called him again.
> "I must clean my boots ready for the morning," he answered.
> Presently she called him again.
> "I rather want to get this chapter done."
> "What?"
> He closed his ears against her.
> "What's that?"
> "All right, Jacky, nothing; I'm reading a book." (*HE*:52)

From this it is almost certain that Leonard doesn't often engage in sex with Jacky, and that it is an intimidating experience which he tries to avoid where possible. Lago believes Leonard to be "honourable" and that "his marriage is his honourable action to regularise his relations with the deplorable Jacky".[69] Rather his purpose in staying with Jacky, just as with his reading of Ruskin, is "just to show the kind of man I am", that he wasn't "one of your weak knock-kneed chaps. If a woman's in trouble, I don't leave her in the lurch." (*HE*:51) Jacky is playing on the chivalry Leonard has picked up from his reading of Ruskin to rescue her from the plight of many an ageing prostitute, a fact that Helen is quite aware of and which may well have played a role in her encounter with him—quite bravely one might add knowing as she does the usual consequences of prostitution:

> What do you suppose is the end of such women? . . . They end in

[69] Lago, *op cit.*, p. 46.

> two ways: either they sink till the lunatic asylums and the workhouses are full of them, and cause Mr Wilcox to write letters to the papers complaining of our national degeneracy, or else they entrap a boy into marriage before it is too late. She—I can't blame her. (*HE*:249)

If this is truly Forster's conception of Leonard he is unlikely to appear suddenly as a successful lover later in the novel. Helen is the initiator of the sexual encounter, as she later admits to her sister. Without her insistence Leonard "would have gone on worshipping me". (*HE*:310) Leonard is like one of the cupids Helen has seen at the Queen's Hall "inclining each to each with vapid gesture" and of which she remarks "How awful to marry a man like those Cupids!" (*HE*:30) McDowell, who notes that "Leonard is linked also to Helen by virtue of the Cupid figurines on his lodging mantelpiece", is aware of the irony of Helen giving "herself to a man whom she could never bring herself to marry".[70] This connection also emphasises the vapidity of Leonard's chivalric gesture in marrying Jacky just to show the kind of man he is.

The presence of these Cupids in Leonard's love nest, also connects him to the medieval hero of Wagner's *Tannhauser*—a word which Leonard had such trouble with. Shaw's conception of Wagner's hero stresses that while "Tannhauser may die in the conviction that one moment of the emotion he felt with St Elizabeth was fuller and happier than all the hours of passion he spent with Venus but that does not alter the fact that its earlier tentatives towards the final goal were attended with relapses."[71] Such a model is strangely inverted in Forster's characterisation of Leonard where his moment of "emotion" is a brief sexual encounter with the woman he has hitherto worshipped, while the hours of "passion" are no more than the endless struggles to avoid sex with his wife, herself a shopworn Venus, whom he has married out of Ruskinian notions of chivalry and whom he doesn't particularly like. Yet just as Tannhauser returns to Venus—about whose couch "numerous sleeping Cupids are huddled

[70] McDowell, *op cit.*, p.82.

[71] George Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, London, 1891, p. 34-5.

together'"[72]—Leonard returns to the degradation of his chivalry.

Such is the misfortune of Leonard, to be wrecked by that ghost from Wilcox's past, the ever present companion to Ruskin's lady, Jacky. Yet while Jacky, and the acceptance of Ruskin's notions of chivalry play a large part in Leonard's destruction, Ruskin's notion of womanhood, in the guise of Margaret, nevertheless is responsible for the rescue of his son. As Dougherty suggests, while "*Sesame and Lilies* can be understood at the first level by equating the King with intellect and the Queen with the feelings",[73] the underlying significance is that of "redemption" from the chaos of the world by "charity".[74] Dougherty maintains that this "charity" is not gold, and we see that Leonard, the muddled product of Ruskin's "Of King's Treasuries" as will be explained in the following chapter, rejects Helen's offer of five thousand pounds. In doing so he refuses his chance of life, but so highlights the "two bright spots" revealed through his downfall, steadfastness against "muddledom" as a drug, and his newfound "tenderness for Jacky" (*HE*:315).

Leonard's death is necessary to the reconciliations that Margaret manages at the end of the novel. With Charles Wilcox killing Leonard, Henry's heir is removed and the cause of Henry's breakdown provided for. Economic and legal power, which by rights would have passed to Charles, now move to Margaret and the Ruskinian and the Millian have been reconciled. The "charity" which Margaret may now offer Leonard's bastard child—entry into Forster's Garden of Eden which is Howards End—and which she demonstrates in her generosity to Henry's children and in "giving away a great deal of money" (*HE*:339), is, as Dougherty suggests, the true significance of Ruskin's garden. Yet Forster's garden has only been ensured through the acceptance of Mill's legal and economic rights for women.

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[72] Ernest Newman, *Wagner Nights*, London, 1949, p. 78.

[73] Charles T. Dougherty, "Of Ruskin's Gardens," in Bernice Slote, ed., *Myth and Symbol*, Lincoln, Neb., 1963, p. 148.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

CHAPTER FOUR

The preceding chapters have demonstrated the use made of Ruskin by Forster in his novels toward the emancipation of women and the development of truer relationships between men and women, both of which were to be achieved through the reconciliation of the medieval and neo-medieval opposition of the body and soul. These novels represent the practical application of Forster's liberal belief in personal relations and the individual described in "Three Generations". Yet looking back on this pre-war period, Forster is aware that his generation had placed too much emphasis on personal relationships—had "expected them to function outside their appropriate sphere."

Beyond the private sphere of personal relationships lies a containing sphere of political economy, a sphere which Forster fears was too frequently ignored by his liberalism. In "The Challenge of Our Time" Forster acknowledges the economic naivety of his liberalism:

> we none of us realized our economic position. In came the nice fat dividends, . . . and we did not realize that all the time we were exploiting the poor of our own country and the backward races abroad . . .. (*TCD*:55)

The unsavoury reality of the "fat dividends" was obscured behind the Victorian veil of decorum and the notion that to talk about money was "ugly". Even though in "Three Generations" Forster feels that this attitude persisted in his own case at least until his first Indian visit in 1912 where he believed racial tension could be overcome by "good manners", thus "completely ignoring the economic factor" (*TG*:275), his much earlier awareness of the problem is substantiated in the development between his short stories and his "rural" novels, *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*. Acknowledging the impact of Hilaire Belloc's *Mr*

Burden on turn of the century opinion exemplified by Kipling, Forster implies as much in "Three Generations":

> It was no good talking about tribes without law when the tribes said they had laws. It was no good taking up the white man's burden when it didn't want to be taken up. Many of us soon saw that this crude imperialism had an economic side and we were put off. (*TG*:273)

Forster's pre-war rural novels reveal a definite attempt to reconcile that other division in society—the rich and poor. Critics like Levenson[1] may be placing too great an emphasis on his belief in personal relations and failing to understand the true nature of Forster's work towards this other reconciliation. Taking Hobhouse[2] as his authority, Levenson correctly identifies the equivocal nature of the liberal tradition to which Forster belonged. The first phase of liberalism, that which informed Forster's work on women's issues, was characterised by the effort to "endow the individual with civil, economic and political freedom." It was "an essentially negative activity, devoted to the removal of constraints".[3] The second phase, or "positive" liberalism, was initiated by Bentham and finds "the highest value attached not to the individual but to the community and its collective will." Levenson continues:

> This commitment to the positive aspect of the liberal movement: the regulation of behaviour, the intervention in markets, the exercise of legal restraints and 'social control,' an emphasis which threatens 'the complete subordination of the individual to social claims.'[4]

Levenson, while using Hobhouse to help define the two phases of liberalism, is also aware that Hobhouse refuses to admit the inherent contradiction between "individualism and collectivism". Rather, as Levenson notes, Hobhouse's belief

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[1] Michael Levenson, "Liberalism and Symbolism in *Howards End*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 21 (1985), p. 295-316.

[2] L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, London, n.d.

[3] Levenson, *op cit.*, p. 303.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 303-4.

was "in steady progress, a slow course of mutual adjustment in which the self and the state would move gradually toward equilibrium. Such a view gives expression to the best hopes of modern liberalism: a commitment to social reform and an unremitting respect for personality."[5]

Levenson is correct in his suggestion that Forster had "no confidence in an emerging balance between these two concerns, personal freedom and public obligation".[6] Yet he appears to misunderstand Forster's meaning behind the statement from "What I Believe"—that I am "an individualist and a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him". (*TCD*:72) Levenson reads this as evidence of Forster's return to the individualism of "old liberalism" as "new liberalism" crumbled beneath him.[7] On the contrary, it was Forster holding on to his belief in the individual as "old liberalism" crumbled under attack from collectivism. We have noted in the Introduction that Forster, in "Three Generations", viewed his life as the "tragedy of the individualist—a tragedy in three acts" which concludes with his decision to retire from the new collectivist tendencies of society—"It has been well said that you can make a bundle of sticks, but not a bundle of eels, and individualists are like eels". (*TG*:287) This doesn't sound like a man who believes "new liberalism" to be crumbling.

A close reading of "The Challenge of Our Time" provides the necessary insight lacking in Levenson's assessment. Here Forster raises the question which Hobhouse had sought to answer with the notion of a "slow course of mutual adjustment", how to reconcile first-phase liberalism with second-phase liberalism, individualism with collectivism. Hobhouse's notion of first-phase liberalism is consistent with what Forster, in this 1946 broadcast, describes as the "Old Morality". The term "Old Morality" is used by Forster to represent the sentiment prevailing among his circle in the early years of the twentieth century which

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

sought to invert the *laissez-faire* attitude of the late Victorian period by removing it from the economic sphere while applying it to the realm of the spirit. Forster explains this position:

> The doctrine of *laissez-faire* will not work in the material world. It has led to the black market and the capitalist jungle. We must have planning and ration-books and controls, or millions of people will have nowhere to live and nothing to eat. On the other hand, the doctrine of *laissez-faire* is the only one that seems to work in the world of the spirit; if you plan and control men's minds you stunt them, you get the censorship, the secret police, the road to serfdom, the community of slaves. (*TCD*:55)

The *laissez-faire* of the spirit is equivalent to first-phase liberalism, and economic planning represents the second phase, what Forster terms the "New Economy". But Forster has no inherent faith in second-phase liberalism, nor does he believe as Hobhouse does that individual rights can be reconciled with the common good:

> Our economic planners sometimes laugh at us when we are afraid of totalitarian tyranny resulting from their efforts . . .. But the danger they brush aside is a real one. They assure us that the new economy will evolve an appropriate morality, and that when all people are properly fed and housed they will have an outlook which will be right, because they are the people. I cannot swallow that. I have no mystic faith in the people. I have in the individual. (*TCD*:55)

This assumption, that the good of the individual is inexorably connected with the good of the whole, is another aspect of Dante which Forster had found unpalatable.

In the first book of his treatise, *De Monarchia*, Dante, arguing the necessity of a single secular ruler, makes the claim that only through a single ruler can the ultimate goal of humanity—universal peace—be achieved. Forster's antagonism to any movement which sacrificed the individual to the common good lies behind his comment in his 1903 "Dante Notebook", that while making such a claim Dante fails to notice that "the goal of the Whole may be fatal to the

goal of the part". Dante's support of the Holy Roman Emperor, like second-phase liberalism, seeks to subsume the individual in the whole. Forster's answer to the question of whom to support in such a collision of goals is to favour the individual: "would you favour the individual at the expense of the community, as I would? Or would you prefer economic justice for all at the expense of personal freedom?" (*TCD*:56)

Forster, however, is also aware of the good sense of some of Dante's suggestions in *De Monarchia*, in particular the notion that the Emperor "rules the human race '*secundum sum communia*,' their divergences being entrusted to local potentates, his delegates.—A concession to Nationality." This is a point in favour of Dante which leads Forster to ask "Were other M[edieval] writers equally sensible?" By the time Forster had prepared "Dante" for the Working Men's College in 1908, this concession to nationality in Dante had become in Forster's mind a concession to the "individual good". Forster is able to inform his audience that Dante

> admits an individual goal. He believes in national and local life; his Emperor is not to introduce a gray cosmopolitanism. Mankind united is not to mean that men are dull. The Emperor is to suppress war, not personality. Our bodies are not absorbed into a machine on earth, any more than our souls will be absorbed into a machine in heaven. Even in the next life we shall retain our personality, so why should we lose it in this? It was harmony, not monotony, at which Dante aimed; and I wish I could say the same for the social reformers of today. These, excellent as they are, seem to see no path between monotony and war . . .. (*AE*:160)

Of course the individual goal in Dante is subsumed in the common goal, and the "national" and "local life" of non-believers must be brought within the twin spheres of influence of the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. Dante, as Forster rightly acknowledges, had even fought to impose this vision. One feels that Forster here is stretching a point in Dante's favour in order to express his fears about the grayness of modern social reform, which, as explained later in "The

Challenge of Our Time", he saw to be providing economic justice at the expense of individual freedom, or what he refers to above as "personality".

Forster again appears to deliberately misread Dante in another article "What I Believe" and again with the aim of making a point against the modern preoccupation with the good of the whole as opposed to the good of the individual:

> if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I should have the guts to betray my country. Such a choice may scandalize the modern reader . . .. It would not have shocked Dante, though. Dante places Brutus and Cassius in the lowest circle of Hell because they had chosen to betray their friend Julius Caesar rather than their country Rome. (*TCD*:66)

Such an interpretation of this scene in Dante's *Inferno* blatantly contradicts Forster's earlier observations about Dante's failure to take account of the opposition of goals inherent in *De Monarchia*. And a more likely interpretation of this scene, one that is also consistent with Forster's earlier criticism, is that Brutus and Cassius, along with Judas, are placed in the mouths of Satan (himself frozen in place in Cocytus for his revolt against God), not for the betrayal of their friend but for the betrayal of Caesar and Christ, the representatives of God's word on earth, which in Dante's medieval conception of the world corresponded to the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, to the spirit and the body—precisely the division in the medieval conception of man which Forster had been attempting to reconcile. One explanation for this apparent about-face in Forster's comments on Dante, who in the "Dante Notebook" and in the greater part of the lecture "Dante" Forster had been attacking for his legitimising of the division of body and soul, was that Forster sought to embarrass the conceit of modern reformers with the fact that a medieval had a better conception of the danger of collectivism than they. While Dante, and later Ruskin, may have divided the spirit from the body, he still admitted the existence of both, and that both must be catered for,

unlike collectivism which sought to regulate for the body at the expense of the spirit.

But Forster is unable to begrudge the economic benefits provided the poor by Benthamite liberalism, and his individualism is not a retreat from new liberalism but a fail-safe he sought to apply to it in his attempt to reconcile the two aspects of liberalism. Forster desired the economic advantages for the previously exploited under classes which came with the "New Economy" while as a preventative to spiritual serfdom under the Welfare state he maintained an emphasis on the individual and personal freedom which was the hallmark of the "Old Morality".

> That, then, is the slogan with which I would answer, or partially answer, the Challenge of our Time. We want the New Economy with the Old Morality. We want planning for the body and not for the spirit. (*TCD*:56)

Forster is aware of the difficulties which are raised in such a reconciliation. As noted in the earlier chapters Forster is opposed to drawing a "hard-and-fast" distinction between where the body ends and the spirit begins, and again in the 1946 broadcast he observes that

> according to the medieval theory of the Holy Roman Empire [without doubt Dante's *De Monarchia* is being referred to here] men rendered their bodies to Caesar and their souls to God. But the theory did not work. The Emperor, who represented Caesar, collided in practice with the Pope, who represented Christ. And we find ourselves in a similar dilemma today.(*TCD*:56)

Forster seeks to harmonise this division providing for the body and the soul, but with the proviso that in case of conflict the life of the spirit and individual freedom should be given precedence over economic considerations. In this work of reconciling personality and economy Forster is less successful than he was in dealing with the objectives discussed in the previous chapters.

Although the comments in "The Challenge of Our Time" and "Three Generations" are retrospective and written with the advantage of hindsight and in an England very different from the pre-war world of *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*, it is possible to delineate a definite progression in Forster's attempts at reconciling personality and economy which leads the reader from the fiction of "Other Kingdom" through *The Longest Journey* to *Howards End* and beyond to the articles and broadcasts mentioned above. In Forster's early work, of which "Other Kingdom" is a fine example, the emphasis is more upon the choice to be made between economic considerations and personal freedom. If this short story is read correctly, with the "heroine" assured of escape through her "otherworldliness", the crux of the story then revolves around the two male characters, Ford and Inskip, who are faced with the choice between economic security through the patronage of Mr Worters, or personal freedom, freedom of thought and action, represented by Evelyn Beaumont. This choice prefigures a similar choice offered to Stephen Wonham and Rickie Elliott in *The Longest Journey*, and Leonard Bast in *Howards End*. These later novels, however, show progress in that Forster attempts to provide not just a choice between the opposing sides but a reconciliation. Crews has argued that this development in Forster coincided with his association with the *Independent Review*.[8] The *Independent* was founded in 1903, and, allowing for a period of assimilation, this might explain the change in Forster's outlook which is noticeable from around 1905. Moreover, Crews believes that Forster's notion of reconciling Old Morality and New Economy was derived from an article in the *Independent* which "exhorts the Liberal Party to overcome its unwillingness 'to combine the old freedom with the new demand for order'".[9] Yet before continuing with an examination of Forster's works of this period it must be asked what place John Ruskin has in all of this?

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[8] Frederick Crews, *E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism*, Princeton and London, 1962, p. 29.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Thomas Hardy, in what may well have been his own response to Ruskin's ideas on the education of the working classes, provides one of the keys to the understanding of the relationship between Ruskin and Forster. In his 1878 novel *The Return of the Native*, Hardy introduces the hero Clym Yeobright's decision to open a school for the education of the hitherto uneducated members of his local agricultural community with the warning that

> A man who advocates æsthetic effort and deprecates social effort is only likely to be understood by a class to which social effort has become a stale matter. To argue upon the possibility of culture before luxury to the bucolic world may be to argue truly, but it is an attempt to disturb a sequence to which humanity has long been accustomed.[10]

This "sequence" to which the world had "long been accustomed" is described as follows:

> passing from the bucolic to the intellectual life the intermediate stages are usually two at least, frequently many more; and one of these stages is almost sure to be worldly advance. We can hardly imagine bucolic placidity quickening to intellectual aims without imagining social aims as the transitional phase.[11]

Forster, too, was aware of the importance of this intermediate stage, but it is a stage which Forster has his example of Ruskinian aesthetic effort, Leonard Bast, forgo in *Howards End*.

> One guessed him as the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization had sucked into the town; as one of the thousands who have lost the life of the body and failed to reach the life of the spirit. (*HE*:113)

Whether it is Hardy's passage from "bucolic" to "intellect", or Forster's passage from "body" to "spirit", it is clear that the gulf created by the denial of the

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[10] Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, The New Wessex Edition, Ed. P. N. Furbank, Intro. Derwent May, London, 1975, p. 190-1.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

intermediate stage was destroying many who attempted it, a fear he voices through the character of Margaret Schlegel:

> Culture had worked in her own case, but during the last few weeks she had doubted whether it humanized the majority, so wide and so widening is the gulf that stretches between the natural and the philosophic man, so many the good chaps who are wrecked in trying to cross it. (*HE*:113)

The mistake, as Hardy had seen it, was in supposing that "the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence",[12] because wisdom, culture and the life of the spirit that comes through the right appreciation of culture can only be built by the proper "sequence" which includes social aims, and the connected economic advancement, and the subsequent staling of social effort which in turn leads to aesthetic effort. The failure to acknowledge this is the stumbling block in Ruskin's theory of education for the working-classes, and though Hardy never mentions Ruskin's efforts at educating the working men of England in his novel, there is a similarity of outlook between Clym and Ruskin that appears to be more than coincidental. In a later novel, *Jude the Obscure* (1896), which deals more intimately with the advancement from the bucolic to the intellectual, Hardy adds in a postscript to the preface (April 1912) that "The difficulties down to twenty or thirty years back of acquiring knowledge in letters without pecuniary means" were used as the "tragic machinery" of the novel.[13] And while Jude's dreams of education precipitate his tragedy, he is allowed in the end the comfort of realizing his failure was not brought about by lack of ability or effort on his part. Rather, and in saying this Hardy echoes his earlier novel, "it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one".[14] Jude comes to understand the necessity for the tradition, or proper sequence, in gaining

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[13] Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, The New Wessex Edition, Ed. P. N. Furbank, Intro. Terry Eagleton, London, 1975, p. 29.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 336.

knowledge and the life of culture, and that rightly includes the intermediate phase of social and economic advancement. This is something that Ruskin, as we shall see, excludes from his vision of education, and Bast who bases his aspirations on the advice of Ruskin does likewise:

> he did believe in effort and in a steady preparation for the change that he desired. But of a heritage that may expand gradually he had no conception: he hoped to come to Culture suddenly, much as the Revivalist hopes to come to Jesus. (*HE*:48)

Forster appears to have first come across the tragedy of those lost between the body and the spirit during his trips to Italy in 1901 and 1903, and this is revealed in *Arctic Summer*, the unfinished novel begun in 1910-11 soon after *Howards End*, in which the Italian bourgeoisie are presented as a summary of what he had explored through the character of Bast in the earlier novel. Describing an incident in which one of Forster's mouth-pieces in the novel, Martin Whitby, is confronted with the superficial aestheticism of an Italian dealing in *permessi* for frescoes he hoped to see, Forster declares:

> These Milanese seem to me really peasants gone wrong. Italy has to produce a middle class—every nation that counts has to—and Signor Hoeppler is her first shot at it. She'll do better another time. She's neither poetical nor heroic nor artistic really. She used to be, and still lives on her reputation—hence all his rubbish about frescoes, many frescoes in the antique style. He felt he had to talk like that, though the only things he really cares about are flashy furniture and money. (*AS*:139)

The Italian middle class, evolved from her peasant class, had gone wrong in its love of the social benefits of advancement, while vulgarly asserting an aesthetic appreciation they had yet to achieve and most likely had lost sight of. Yet this was a necessary evil to Forster: physical, economic well-being was necessary for spiritual well-being. It was a step in the tradition spoken of by Hardy, and as seen above Forster wanted the body to be looked after while the spirit was left free to develop as it would. Whitby, recalling the violent beauty of Gino's natural instincts which attracted the various characters in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*,

concludes that the vulgarity of the new *bourgeoisie* was just "the horror of barbarism with none of its beauty. And yet, all the same, it's the future. I don't believe in people remaining peasants. To stop in the country and look picturesque—it isn't enough". (*AS*:140)

Yet Forster's real experience of the men like Hardy's Jude came in England through his dealings with the Working Men's College with which he had been connected for a number of years since his return from his first visit to Italy. Anyone associated with the College at that time must have been faced with the spectre of John Ruskin still hanging thickly over the College and those in attendance. Indeed, we have seen the impact that Ruskin had upon Forster's earlier work (*The Lucy Novels* for example), and recollections of the almost daily confrontation with Ruskin's posthumous fame could well have produced the rather cryptic remark we find in Forster's biography *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (1934). While describing the role of Dickinson's father in the founding of the Working Men's College along with F. D. Maurice, Forster adds parenthetically "Ruskin was a fellow teacher." (*GLD*:2) Exactly what induced this remark and what weight it was meant to carry with Forster's readership at that time can only be guessed but it comes to us across the years pregnant with implied criticism.

Also about the time that Forster was working at the College, there occurred a number of events which would have raised Ruskin's profile to an even higher level. An example of such is reported in the *Working Men's College Journal*, January 1907:

> Mr. George Allen having, as above mentioned, presented a set of six portraits of John Ruskin to Dr. Furnivall, for the Working Men's College; they have been mounted and framed . . . and they can now be seen in the coffee room.

Among these portraits was "a fine side view . . . taken towards the end of his life" under which appeared the following lines from Canon Scott Holland:

> He lifted his voice in praise of high and noble things, through an evil and dark day; and now he sits there silent and in peace, waiting for the word that will release him, and open to him a world where he may gaze upon the vision of perfect Beauty, unhindered and unashamed.[15]

Forster's talk, "Pessimism in Literature", appeared in this same edition and a copy was in his possession at his death. Undoubtedly Forster would have felt confronted by the Canon's eulogy, and these lines strangely prefigure Forster's less sympathetic assessment of Ruskin in *Howards End.* In the novel Ruskin's voice is noted as "piping melodiously of Effort and Self-Sacrifice, full of high purpose, [and] full of beauty". (*HE*:47) Forster also implies that Ruskin, the "rich man . . . speaking to us from his gondola" (*HE*:46), was far from being hindered or ashamed in this world. Furbank agrees that in this novel, "Forster was drawing on his experiences at the Working Men's College", and that the "very touching scene, in which Leonard wrestles with Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, . . . was a vision bred in Forster by the Working Men's College." Furbank continues:

> He taught at the College devotedly for twenty years or more; and not only that, he made personal friendships with students; he often wrote for the College journal, and he was active in all the College's social activities. Nevertheless – as one can sense from occasional references – he had his reservations about the College and was not sure it worked entirely for the good. He shared some of Margaret Schlegel's doubts about Leonard and his fellows: "She knew the type very well – the vague aspirations, the mental dishonesty, the familiarity with the outsides of books . . ."[16]

While noting the obvious relationship of this scene to Forster's experiences at the College Furbank fails to explain, or even to make reference to, Forster's decision to have Bast (as perhaps representative of the Working Men's College student) wrestling with Ruskin in particular.

Stoll also makes the connection between Forster's characterisation of Bast and his experiences at the Working Men's College, that the "aspirations of

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[15] *Working Men's College Journal*, London, X (Jan 1907), p. 17.

[Wells's] Kipps and Forster's Leonard Bast faithfully reflect the wide-spread belief among members of this class in pre-war England that 'culture'—gained through Working Men's Colleges and self-improvement schemes such as the National Reading Union—would enable them to rise in the class system."[17] In saying this Stoll seems unaware of one striking similarity in Wells's Kipps and Bast as typical of the College—the relationship of Ruskin to their failed attempts to attain culture.

Of Ruskin and Bast we will have much to say later, but it is more than coincidental that Wells, in demonstrating the uncertainty of cultural aspirations in men like Kipps, should specify Ruskin as the archetypical advocate of this doctrine. Not just Ruskin, but *Sesame and Lilies*. I have noted earlier Wells's parody of "Of Queens' Gardens" in *Tono-Bungay*. In *Kipps* he finds time to expose the absurdity of Ruskin's counsel in "Of Kings' Treasuries". Having come into twelve-hundred pounds a year, Kipps falls under the influence of the genteel figure of Coote. Coote's rooms, like Bast after him, were arrayed with books, and with "Ruskin in bulk". We are told that

> in front of this array stood Kipps, ill-taught and untrained, respectful, awe-stricken, and, for the moment at any rate, willing to learn, while Coote, the exemplary Coote, talked to him of reading and the virtue of books.[18]

Coote appears to have modelled himself on Ruskin's "King", and on Ruskin's belief in the value of books which is the basis of his advice in "Of Kings' Treasuries". It is not surprising that on taking his leave of Coote we should find Kipps "bearing in his arm . . . 'Sesame and Lilies'". Having returned home Kipps begins to read *Sesame and Lilies* "with ruthless determination".[19] Kipps loses his

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[16] P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 2vols, London, 1977, vol. 1, p. 173-174.

[17] Rae Harris Stoll, "The Unthinkable Poor in Edwardian Writing", *Mosaic* 15 (Dec 1982), p. 27-29.

[18] H. G. Wells, *The Collected Works of H. G. Wells*, Atlantic edition, 28vols, London, 1925, vol. vii, p. 193.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

keenness for books and cultural advancement after a chance re-acquaintance with an old sweetheart and we find his attention wandering from *Sesame and Lilies*.[20]

Forster's Bast has not the advantage of twelve hundred a year nor the acquaintance of a Mr Coote, but the fame of Ruskin has led Leonard to him with a similar aim. In Forster's characterisation, Bast represents more than personal experience at the College. The doubts which Forster, in Furbank's opinion, had about the College and its students—"the familiarity with the outsides of books" criticised in *Howards End*—can be seen as attributable to Ruskin's influence, not just on the school, but to society in general. Leonard's struggle with Ruskin is therefore typical of both the College and society at large, Forster himself included, struggling with the Ruskinian legacy—a legacy no doubt due in part to the misunderstanding of Ruskin's teaching which, in its perverted form, appears to place an emphasis on the physical manifestations of culture, books and art, rather than the spirit which lies behind it. This accounts for the ambivalent attitude to Ruskin present in the relevant chapter—an attitude which at once displays sympathy for Ruskin, the thinker reduced to the role of pretty wordsmith by those like Bast, yet, at the same, which lays the blame of the confused aspirations of the likes of Bast squarely at the door of the likes of Ruskin whose rejection of social effort in preference to the aesthetic had contributed to their economic distress.

Leonard, we are told, believes Ruskin to be "the greatest master of English Prose" (*HE*:47) and it is obviously Leonard's failing, not Ruskin's, that he should attempt to acquire the outward impression of culture by trying to adapt Ruskin's prose style to meet his own squalid needs. Wedderburn and Cook mention that while Ruskin was "on the Continent in 1861, Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. published a volume of *Selections from the Writings of John Ruskin*" (xvii:l), and that this volume "enjoyed considerable popularity, and was frequently re-issued during the following years." (xvii:lii) It was volumes like this

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

which encouraged the common view of Ruskin as little more than a clever wordsmith, a view Ruskin himself laments in "The Mystery of Life and its Arts":[21]

> I have had what, in many respects, I boldly call the misfortune, to set my words sometimes prettily together; not without a foolish vanity in the poor knack that I had of doing so: until I was heavily punished for this pride, by finding that many people thought of the words only, and cared nothing for the meaning. (xviii:146)

Cook and Wedderburn comment:

> [*Selections*] assisted not a little to spread the author's fame; yet not in way he desired. The dissemination of these "elegant extracts," with their "sweets brought together in cloying abundance" helped to encourage the idea, which Ruskin greatly resented—especially in these years when he was concentrating himself upon economical discussion—that he was a fine writer, a pretty "word painter," and nothing more. (xvii:lii)

Clearly they were anticipating the incongruity of such a scene as Leonard's attempt to imitate Ruskin.

For all his sympathy, Forster nonetheless does place blame firmly at the feet of Ruskin. Gay suggests that Forster in this scene is "almost too eager to show us his awareness of Ruskin's practical irrelevance"[22] and that the passage from *The Stones of Venice* with which Forster concludes the chapter demonstrates "even more sarcasm" on Forster's behalf. It is Gay's belief that Forster knew no more of hunger and dirt than did Ruskin and therefore Ruskin was "doing duty for Forster's guilty conscience about his own inability to deal with the 'very poor'"[23] when he says that Ruskin's was "the voice of one who had never been dirty or hungry, and had not guessed successfully what dirt and

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[21] This lecture delivered in the theatre of the Royal College of Science, Dublin, in 1868, was included in the revised edition of *Sesame and Lilies*.

[22] Penelope Gay, "E. M. Forster and John Ruskin: The Ambivalent Connection," *Southern Review* (Adelaide) 11 (1978), p. 288.

hunger are." (*HE*:47) It is obvious, however, that, with whatever success, Forster has at least made his guess in this very scene.

Forster perceives Ruskin's attitude as complacency, and is not content to accept the "folly . . .of such as Leonard". The basis for Forster's attack then is Ruskin's distancing of himself from the economic reality of life. Such distance is obvious in Ruskin's advice to the young men of England in "Of Kings' Treasuries":

> I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily—however slowly—increasing, series of books for the use through life; making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece . . .. (xviii:34)

Kipps may spend his time and money fruitlessly on volumes of Ruskin. But to recommend the same to Bast demonstrates exactly that failure to realise the necessary steps in the progression from the "bucolic" to the "intellectual" which Hardy had noted in *The Return of the Native*. Thus Bast's little library taken together with his ill-fitting clothes, his economy with regards to trams, newspapers and concert programmes—the "something[s] that distracted him in the pursuit of beauty" (*HE*:37)—is a damning indictment of Ruskin's indifference to economic reality.

The distance of Ruskin from the reality of Bast's life again connects him with Dante. Forster's description of Dante from his Working Men's College talk, "Dante", reveals a striking relevance to Ruskin and Leonard. First, Forster on Dante:

> Dante tries to look at human affairs with the eyes of God. His standpoint is not in this world. He views us from an immense height, as a man views a plain from a mountain. We, down on the plain, have our notions of what the plain is like, and at times

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 288-9.

> we reject Dante's description as false. We feel that by his very elevation he is not qualified to judge; and that he knows no more about us than we know about the canals in Mars. Here we are wrong . . . and yet it is natural that we should find him hard to follow, for his standpoint is not one that we find congenial today. . . . Dante stands with unwavering feet upon the Empyrean, proclaiming the will of God; and though his words are full of love and beauty, they gather a certain terror as they pass through the interspaces, and fall with a certain strangeness upon our ears. (*AE*:167-8)

Compare Forster's tone and choice of phrase with the following from *Howards End*:

> And the voice in the gondola rolled on, piping melodiously of Effort and Self-Sacrifice, full of high purpose, full of beauty, full even of the love of men, yet somehow eluding all that was actual and insistent in Leonard's life. For it was the voice of one who had never been dirty or hungry, and had not guessed successfully what dirt and hunger are.[24] (*HE*:47)

Although Forster allows that Dante knew what it was to be dirty and hungry, that he had experienced life as "a soldier, a politician, a scholar, and a lover, and he never forgets his experiences" (*AE*:167), his medieval world-view is no longer relevant to those whom Forster encountered at the Working Men's College, and whom of Bast is representative. Likewise, Ruskin in his gondola is removed from Leonard in his stuffy flat, and the similarity in Forster's conception of Dante as knowing as little of the life of the majority of humanity as the average man knows of the "canals in Mars", demands comparison with the conception of Ruskin knowing as little of the realities of Bast's life as Bast knew of the canals in Venice of which he was reading. Ruskin's medievalism, like Dante's, allows him to gaze with equanimity upon suffering confident in Divine munificence. As Hoy suggests, "Ruskin is too remote to be of value"; like Margaret's card, he

[24] Forster similarly criticises Brahms' remoteness from the realities of life as Margaret Schlegel listens to his *Four Serious Songs*—"Brahms, for all his grumbling and grizzling, had never guessed what it felt like to be suspected of stealing an umbrella." (*HE*:33)

symbolizes "the life of culture" to Leonard,[25] but to Forster he symbolizes much more.

Ruskin was able to champion his notions of education, of cultural aspiration and knowledge-for-knowledge's-sake, secure in his medieval Christian vision of society providing for the economic and spiritual well-being of its labourers in their day-to-day work—a famous example of which Leonard will soon encounter if he continues with *The Stones of Venice*, the chapter titled "The Nature of Gothic". As this thesis has emphasised, in Forster's eyes Ruskin was a true medieval, and his view of society and social organisation reveals this. Just as Ruskin had interpreted Giotto's art through moral considerations, so too he sees the value of books, of true books, to be in their consolidation of Christian doctrine. Part of Ruskin's advocacy of the doctrine of knowledge without social advancement is the encouragement to accept one's socio-economic position. Ruskin's work in many ways can be seen to be a bulwark against that spirit which Hardy's Jude had seen working behind his attempts at advancement, "I was, perhaps, after all, a paltry victim to the spirit of mental and social restlessness, that makes so many unhappy in these days!"[26] It is this spirit of restlessness, generally regarded as Democracy, which "had arisen, enshadowing the classes with leathern wings, and proclaiming, 'All men are equal—all men, that is to say, who possess umbrellas,'" (*HE*:43) and which encourages Bast to assert his gentility. Ruskin is confident in the "impossibility of equality", but Forster seeing that men cannot stay peasants seeks to find the best path which the likes of Leonard Bast may take in their attempt to cross the gulf from the feudal, agricultural man, to the modern, philosophic man.

Ruskin's medieval, and predominantly feudal world-view, is revealed in the very language of his advice to the young Leonards. Not only must Ruskin's

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[25] Pat C. Hoy II, "The Narrow, Rich Staircase in Forster's *Howards End*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 31 (1985), p. 225.

[26] Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, *op cit.*, p. 336.

audience pronounce each word correctly or be doomed to "a certain degree of inferior standing for ever", but they must also be "learned in the *peerage* of words;" must know

> the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern canaille; remember[s] all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distant relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and the offices they held, among the national noblesse of words at any time . . .. (xviii:65)

Ruskin suggests that this knowledge of "peerage" is necessary in order that his audience may counter the "equivocation" current through the use of "Latin or Greek words for an idea when they want it to be awful; and Saxon or otherwise common words when they want it to be vulgar." (xviii:66-67) This "equivocation" is seen to be particularly aimed at obscuring the force of Christian doctrine, and Ruskin's use of some lines from Milton's *Lycidas* to provide an example of how to read correctly, of how to use this knowledge of the "peerage" of words serves moreover as support for his own view of this equivocation. Thus Milton's

> The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
> But, swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
> Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;

becomes a parable of the "puffing up" of men filled with wind rather than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (xviii:70-73) Ruskin here is playing on the Greek, *pneuma*, which signifies both "wind" and "spirit'. And this false spirit represents nothing if not the desire for social advancement which threatens to lure man from his rightful place in the Christian socio-economic scheme.

Indeed, Ruskin's method of reading correctly, of "watching every accent and expression,and putting ourselves always in the author's place, annihilating our own personality, and seeking to enter his," also has the effect of reminding his audience that

> what *you* thought was a matter of no serious importance;—that your thoughts on any subject are not perhaps the clearest and wisest that could be arrived at thereupon:—in fact, that unless you are a very singular person, you cannot be said to have any "thoughts" at all; that you have no materials for them, in any serious matters;—no right to "think" . . .. (xvii:75-76)

Rather, Ruskin would have his audience keep to their proper employment, keeping their houses in order, selling their goods, ploughing their fields, and cleaning their ditches. This proper employment is to be enough. This echoes the feudal social order prescribed in *The Stones of Venice*. Happiness and freedom are reliant upon the acceptance of the *status quo*, of the "impossibility of equality", and abnegation of ideas of social advancement to the true freedom of working within the hierarchal framework supplied by a benign feudal lord.

Unrau has noted that "Ruskin's perception the sufferings endured by the factory workers of his day, and his attractive vision of what work could be . . . cast a spell over his conception of Gothic as a historical phenomenon."[27] Deliberately ignoring the facts he created a romantic image of the freedom inherent in the workman's life under feudal social relations. This image came as a reaction to the agrarian order in which Ruskin had been raised "giving way to an unkown, but almost surely more democratic, urban, and industrial future."[28] Confronted daily with industrial workers dissatisfied with their working conditions, Ruskin comes down hard, in the manner of Carlyle, upon both the existence of such conditions and the cry for democracy and equality arising from it.

> It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into a vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth, and against

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[27] John Unrau, "Ruskin, the Workman and the Savageness of Gothic," in Robert Hewison, ed., *New Approaches to Ruskin*, London, Boston and Henley, 1981, p. 48.

[28] Jeffrey L. Spears, *Dreams of an English Eden: Ruskin and his Tradition in Social Criticism*, New York, 1984, p. 4.

> nobility, is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine, or the sting of mortified pride. These do much, and have done much in all ages; but the foundations of society were never yet shaken as they are at this day. It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure. It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men. (x:194)

Together with this cry for the pleasures of the wealthy comes the belief in education as a means of obtaining it, the idea of an education for "advancement in life" which Ruskin so vehemently opposes in "Of Kings' Gardens". Ruskin laments the object behind the education of youth, their interest in books, is always that of an education "which shall keep a good coat on my son's back;—which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitor's bell at double-belled doors; which shall result ultimately in establishment of a double-belled door to his own house;—in a word, which shall lead to advancement in life;—*this* we pray for on bent knees—and this is *all* we pray for." (xviii:55) In *Time and Tide*, or "Twenty-five Letters to a Working Man in Sunderland", Ruskin re-iterates his opposition to such an attitude to education:

> The cry for it among the lower orders is because they think that, when once they have got it, they must become the upper orders. There is a strange notion in the mob's mind now-a-days . . . that *everybody* can be uppermost; or at least, that a state of general scramble, in which everybody in his turn should come to the top, is a proper Utopian constitution; and that, once give every lad a good education, and he cannot but come to ride in his carriage (the methods of supply of coachman and footmen not being contemplated). And very sternly I say to you—and say from sure knowledge—that a man had better not know how to read and write, than receive education on such terms. (xvii:396-7)

What Ruskin really desires is repeated throughout his later work, *Fors Clavigera* (which represents a similar approach to *Time and Tide* yet on a broader scale), subtitled "Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain", where he states that "the first condition of education, the thing you are all crying out for,

is being put to wholesome and useful work. And it is nearly the last condition of it, too; you need very little more". (xxvii:39)

Forster clearly has Ruskin's view in mind when introducing Bast in *Howards End.* He declares that

> Had he lived some centuries ago, in the brightly coloured civilizations of the past, he would have had a definite status, his rank and his income would have corresponded. But in his day the angel of Democracy had arisen, . . . and so he was obliged to assert gentility, lest he slipped into the abyss where nothing counts, and the statements of Democracy are inaudible. (*HE*:43)

Forster, like Ruskin, is aware of the restlessness induced through democratic thought, and aware that it was Ruskin's double-belled doors, or umbrellas, or that other trapping of social advancement—culture, which were to become the prerequisite physical proofs of the veracity of that doctrine. Forster tells us that Bast had read Stevenson's *Virginibus Puerisque* and I believe that another of Stevenson's essays he may have read was "The Philosophy of Umbrellas", written in 1894. This article begins: "it is the habitual carriage of the umbrella that is the stamp of Respectability. The umbrella has become the acknowledged index of social position."[29] It is easy to see the influence of such on Bast, in his concern for his stolen umbrella, his denial of "any inferiority to the rich" (*HE*:43) which can only be supported through his possession of such commodities.

Yet where Ruskin, in reaction to the letters received from parents concerned only with "position in life" (xviii:54), seeks a return to Christian principles and feudal socio-economic structures in which the workman may find spiritual and material well-being in useful and wholesome labour, Forster is unable to follow. Forster could not accommodate Ruskin's desired hieratic social-order, with its emphasis on the perfection of society rather than of the individual,

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[29] *The Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Swanston Edition, 25vols, London, 1912, vol xxii, p. 58.

with the liberal tradition of intellectual, spiritual freedom.[30] The reconciliation of body and soul to be found in the artist-labourer portrayed by Ruskin, and his disciple William Morris, as the answer to industrialism, precluded intellectual freedom. As discussed in the second chapter Brown has dwelt upon the connection between Forster and Edward Carpenter, much of which is probably the mis-attributed influence of Housman which predated Forster's association with Carpenter. Yet Carpenter's sandal-making socialism may well have influenced Forster's ideas on economics and social justice. Indeed, more than Morris, it can be said that Carpenter was the man most influenced by Ruskin's work on political economy, influenced in all but Ruskin's medievalism from which Carpenter actively distanced himself. Tsuzuki records that Carpenter was closely involved with Ruskin's St George's Guild but "took care not to be drawn too closely into Ruskin's mediaeval utopia."[31] Carpenter's de-mystification of Ruskin's political economy could well have been one seed which Forster carried away from their relationship and could have been influential in awakening Forster to the impracticality of Ruskin's vision of the working man in the twentieth century—an impracticality which Forster seems to be most persistently attempting to correct.

Certainly *Howards End* implies, without actively voicing, Forster's awareness of the impracticality of the Ruskin-Morris "gospel of work". This latent criticism develops through the years to become most explicit about the time Forster wrote "The Challenge of Our Time", and a 1949 broadcast for the BBC Far Eastern Service, "I Speak for Myself". This broadcast again deals with Forster's belief in individualism as a means of combating the ever-growing trend towards regulation and he recalls the experiences of a factory worker during the second war.

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[30] This difference in emphasis is revealed in Forster's adaptation of Ruskin's phrase from "such as man" to "such as Leonard". (*HE*:53)

[31] Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter 1844-1929: Prophet of Human Fellowship*, London, 1980, p. 41.

The subject of this broadcast was "the employment of leisure—particularly leisure under industrialism." Forster's vision of the nature of what work was to become under continuing industrialism owes perhaps more to his personal fear of machines (as demonstrated in the Wellsian short story "The Machine Stops" (1908), in which the hero escapes from machine-captivity to rural earth in a manner reminiscent of Bast's favourites Jefferies, Borrow and Thoreau) than to the reality of post-war factory life. This fear of machine-captivity, and for the future of the working man, is evident in Forster's opening remarks:

> The world, whether peaceful or warlike, is likely to become more industrialised during the next century, and it is hard for some of us to realise what this means. A few people will find their work interesting and varied, as work often has been in the past, but they will only be a tiny aristocracy of labour, they will have special jobs. The vast majority will find it dull, or at least colourless. They will be directed to specialise on some insignificant mechanical detail, and continue doing it year after year. The factory, with its routine, will replace the open air with its variety of seasons.

Awareness of the fact that in "the past" work had been often "interesting and varied", as Ruskin claimed, is tempered by the awareness that such work is no longer possible. This is made explicit in the story of the female factory worker during the war, whose job it was

> to stamp out pieces of metal, the little pointers which were to go on the dials on time-bombs. She was not concerned with the dials themselves, nor with the bombs. It was stamp a pointer, stamp a pointer, stamp a pointer. At first she was worried by the work, then she was bored of it, and finally she didn't notice it. Phrases like "the joy of work" and "the glory of work" and the "creativeness of work", which may have been appropriate during the 19th century, could have no meaning for this child of the 20th, and any suggestion that she was or ought to be an artist in her own small way would have made her guffaw.

Of course, Ruskin's vision of the artist-labourer provided for both the body and spirit, in that creative freedom was applied to work by which men might

also make their daily bread. This "stamp a pointer" work, however, is "suicide of the spirit", and "all that is good in the average industrial worker, all that is spiritual or creative, has to be reserved for the leisure period." Forster continues that "the analogy between work and craftsmanship must be dropped, and the imagination concentrated upon leisure". Thus standing firm against Ruskin's romantic notion of the medieval workmen as representing a return to the mental oppression of Christian doctrine Forster here finally comes out in support of the division of the body and soul as the only salvation possible for the industrial worker, and perhaps explains his support of Dante's assertions in *De Monarchia* noted above, who while endorsing this medieval division at least recognises the necessity of providing for both aspects of man. This allowance for both aspects may well have saved Leonard Bast, who thought that he must choose between his books, or work, and not that his hope of happiness lay in concentrating his creativity into those sealed-off corners of his life, his encounter with the university undergraduate, and his relationship with the Schlegels, which represented Romance and the beauty of life.

The purpose behind this broadcast, then, is to hint at how and how not to use leisure, because leisure represents the life of the spirit and this must be given priority in modern society. In leisure we may find the spiritual well-being which completes the material well-being provided through factory work. In all of this Forster is developing an answer to, or a more realistic and achievable option than, Ruskin's neo-medievalism. Forster goes on to warn his audience that

> you will find plenty of people who are anxious to spend your leisure [read instead, spiritual life] for you. They will shepherd you into clubs, youth organisations and so on, and tempt you with instructional films. This may be all right, but sometimes there is an ulterior motive, so keep your eyes open, and if the instructional film seems to be instructing you on the "sanctity" of work, keep them very wide open.

Forster here suggests that the absorption of the individual into groups which seek to control spiritual freedom through indoctrination is even more dangerous than

the regulatory force of the factory which makes men into the physical components of a machine. This can definitely be read as a criticism of Ruskin's use of institutions like the Working Men's College to spread his message of the "sanctity of work".

This returns us to our starting point with "The Challenge of Our Time", that while we need regulation for the body, and this may require enduring the factory life, it must be tempered with freedom of the spirit—something which Ruskin's answer to industrialism doesn't allow, and which an interest in art and literature doesn't compensate for, especially when men are misled into pursuing such at the expense of economic security. So while work may become increasingly unpleasant and unsatisfying it provides us with an economic base from which to create our own life of the spirit:

> The true purpose of leisure is to wake you up to the wonder of the universe into which you have been born, and to some understanding of it, and to help to speak for yourself, and to listen to others when they speak. That achieved, you are a real individual, you are a human being, you are safe, you can go into a factory if you have to and stamp as many pointers as you like without bothering.

Forster's aim in this talk comes down to this, to ensure the continuation of the individual and his spiritual freedom, while the individual maintains himself with the help of government regulation, or the regulatory tendency in what would otherwise be "soul-scarifying" factory work. Unlike Ruskin's view of education as a tool to legitimise a repressive Christian social structure, and keep men quietly in their place, Forster sees the purpose of education as helping man to "understand and enjoy the world". In other words, education should aid our pursuit of beauty and enjoyment and individual life of the spirit which is our leisure time.

Forster is inherently antagonistic to Ruskin's proposed return to feudalism, and is therefore in fundamental disagreement with Ruskin's purpose

in "Of Kings' Treasuries". Hoy, referring only to Leonard's futile attempts at gaining culture by applying Ruskin to his own situation, claims that "Forster's rejection of Ruskin is direct and, in a special sense, quite superficial." And continues

> He does not attack Ruskinian idealism systematically; he simply reacts to that nineteenth-century "clamour for art and literature" that he explicitly associates with Ruskin in this novel, in *A Room with a View*, and in "Does Culture Matter?"[32]

This is as demonstrably untrue for Forster's attack on the medievalism which underlies Ruskin's work, discussed above, as it is for the individual prescriptions offered in "Of Kings' Treasuries". Hoy acknowledges that by *Howards End* Forster sees "quite clearly that England and her poor need more than clamor for art".[33] But for Forster this required the re-education of those influenced by Ruskin's gospel of culture prior to social and economic advancement. Yet somewhat typically, Forster is prepared to make use of the prevailing fame of Ruskin's ideas on education to provide an easily recognisable frame of reference while attempting to update them.

"The Beauty of Life" (1911), aims at providing such advice as Forster feels himself capable of offering and was written in response to a suggestion by the editor of *The Working Men's College Journal* asking "Would it not be possible . . . to illustrate the beauty and the wonder of life, to show that they are always manifest wheresoever and howsoever life and force are manifested?" (*AE:*169) This idea that "the beauty and wonder of life" are always manifest seems very close to the quotation from Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* which Forster used to close chapter six of *Howards End.*

> Ruskin had visited Torcello by this time, and was ordering his gondoliers to take him to Murano. It occurred to him, as he glided over the whispering lagoons, that the power of

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[32] Hoy II, *op cit.*, p. 224.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 224.

> Nature could not be shortened by the folly, nor her beauty altogether saddened by the misery, of such as Leonard. (*HE*:53)

While this quotation was eminently applicable to Bast's situation, it also, by implication, contained the seed of Forster's criticism of Ruskin—his distance from the reality of Leonard's existence. In attempting the article "The Beauty of Life" Forster first distances himself from having his own relevance questioned.

To do this Forster invokes Walt Whitman—"a poet who was at the same time a man of action; whose enthusiasm had stood the test of hard facts". (*AE*:169) Whitman, like Dante from his earlier talk to the Working Man's College, was portrayed as a man who had experienced life from many angles and was not "praising its beauty from an arm-chair" (*AE*:170), or, one suspects, a gondola. As such he stands in opposition to Ruskin whose seat in the gondola, removed from experiences of life, likewise removes him from the insistent realities of the average man's existence, and makes his advice to men such as Leonard even less relevant than Dante's, who, with his feet in the empyrean, at least never forgets what it was to have lived like other men.

But like Dante, Whitman's praise of beauty also rings strange in Forster's ears. Forster describes Whitman as a "whole-hogger"(*AE*:170) who finds "life absolutely beautiful, in all its aspects" (*AE*:174); who

> could glorify the absurd and the repulsive; he could catalogue the parts of a machine from the sheer joy that a machine has so many parts; he could sing not only of farming and fishing, but also of 'leather-dressing, coach-making, boiler-making, rope-twisting, distilling, sign-painting, lime-burning, cotton-picking, electro-plating, electro-typing, stereo-typing' . . .. (*AE*:170)

Forster, with his inherent distrust of the machine, is able to acknowledge the beauty of farming and fishing but must ask "what about 'electro-plating, electro-typing, stereo-typing'?" No, Whitman is a "whole-hogger" and the average man must content himself with less, and so limiting his advice Forster asks, "How is

the average man to make the best of what he does see? For it is no good him pretending to see what he doesn't." (*AE*:170)

Ruskin had asked, even demanded, that his readers see the beauty that he himself saw in art and literature and nature, and those who wanted to be considered cultured found it, or like Leonard, pretended to. Forster in "Does Culture Matter?" observes that "I know a few working-class people who enjoy culture, but as a rule I am afraid to bore them with it lest I lose the pleasure of their acquaintance. So what is to be done?" (*TCD*:103) Forster's answer in this case is to communicate the value of culture through the enjoyment of it. He argues that if "the cultured person, like the late Roger Fry, is obviously having a good time, those who come across him will be tempted to share it and to find out how." (*TCD*:104) Forster in "The Beauty of Life" can be seen to be applying a similar argument in communicating the beauty of life that is available to the average man. He makes no attempt to send them off to look at art or to read books that have no practical relevance. Rather, Forster substitutes for Ruskin's advice in "Of Kings' Treasuries" something of more value to the men he had encountered at the Working Men's College:

> Be cheerful. Be courageous. Don't bother too much about "developing the esthetic sense," as books term it, for if the heart and the brain are kept clean, the esthetic sense will develop of itself. In your spare time, never study a subject that bores you, however important other people tell you it is; but choose out of the subjects that don't bore you, the subject that seems to you most important, and study that. You may say, "Oh, yes, it's jolly easy to preach like this." But it's also jolly easy to practice. The above precepts contain nothing heroical, nothing that need disturb our daily existence or diminish our salaries. They aren't difficult, they are just a few tips that may help us to see the wonders, physical and spiritual, by which we are surrounded. Modern civilization does not lead us away from Romance, but it does try to lead us past it, and we have to keep awake. (*AE*:174-5)

This is Forster's answer to Ruskin's emphasis on art and literature. He seeks to replace it with an emphasis on the beauty around us which lies behind these

material symbols of culture, not the beauty reserved for the rich man in his gondola, but beauty available to the average man without endangering his income or demanding "severest economy" to enjoy.

Leonard's little library had fulfilled Ruskin's advice to the young man setting out on life, but the spiritual, or intellectual value of it was constantly being diminished through the financial hardship it demanded. When Leonard loses employment and he must give up his books as a luxury no longer affordable, he also gives up the life of the spirit. The inherent opposition between Ruskin's advice, and Bast's economic situation is explicit in Bast's conversation with Helen Schlegel:

> " . . . I don't trouble after books as I used..I can imagine that with regular work we should settle down again. It stops one thinking."
>
> "Settle down to what?"
>
> "Oh, just settle down."
>
> "And that's to be life!" said Helen, with a catch in her throat. "How can you, with all the beautiful things to see and do—with music—with walking at night—"
>
> "Walking is well enough when a man's in work," he answered. "Oh, I did talk a lot of nonsense once, but there's nothing like a bailiff in the house to drive it out of you. When I saw him fingering my Ruskins and Stevensons, I seemed to see life straight real, and it isn't a pretty sight. My books are back again, thanks to you, but they'll never be the same to me again, and I shan't ever think night in the woods so wonderful."
>
> "Why not?" asked Helen, throwing up the window.
>
> "Because I see one must have money." (*HE*:235)

Leonard has forsaken Ruskin's pursuit of culture and now places his concern wholly on the body. He has accepted the attitude characterised by Mr Wilcox, that the opposition of the spirit and the body is "part of the battle of life" (*HE*:187), and in this battle the former is to be sacrificed to the latter.

Forster's point is that, though "Life is indeed dangerous," it is so not because it is in essence a "battle" but because it is a "romance, and its essence is romantic beauty" (*HE*:104-5), and life tends to lead us past the opportunities

provided to enjoy its romance. Contrary to the "whole-hogger", Whitman, Forster admits that life may well be the imperfect, "slapdash" (*HE*:227) creation of men like Mr Wilcox and the "beauty of mountain and river and sunset may be but the varnish with which the unskilled artificer hides his joins" (*HE*:228), yet it is necessary that the average man avails himself of that allotment of beauty that is rightfully his. So Forster's advice in "The Beauty of Life" and through the story of Leonard Bast, is an attempt to educate the average man in ways in which to find the beauty which is the "inalienable dowry of humanity . . .. The beauty of the fine day amid dingy weather; the beauty of the unselfish action amid selfishness; the beauty of friendship amidst indifference". (*AE*:171)

In place of Ruskin's gospel of "Effort and Self-Sacrifice" Forster asks for cheerfulness and courage in order to find beauty, or a life of the spirit, that may be yet compatible with the day to day life of the body. But to allow this harmony, our hope for the amount of beauty that Whitman saw in life must be tempered by a more realistic attitude: "If we hope for a great deal of beauty in life, we may be disappointed; nature has not cut her stuff thus; she cannot be bothered about us to this extent." (*AE*:171)

Forster continues:

> That is the position, as it appears to the average modern man. To him life is not all gold, as Whitman would have it; it is not even strung on a golden thread, as the great Victorian poets would have it, but it is pure gold in parts—it contains scraps of inexpressible beauty. (*AE*:172)

In updating Ruskin Forster would not have us work so hard to find the "gold" that is our due, but even while saying this he appears to again have Ruskin's "Of Kings' Treasuries" in mind. Though the conceit of comparing beauty or wisdom with gold is not uncommon, a certain correspondence of expression suggests that Forster is deliberately adapting Ruskin's simile of the prospector for his own ends. Compare Forster's comments on beauty being like gold, given above, with Ruskin's image of the value to be found in books; both, as is gold, are not to be

expected in great quantity. But again Ruskin warns his audience that the value to be found in books is only for the few, that authors

> do not give it you by way of help, but of reward; and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and the people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so.[34] She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where: you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any. (xviii:63-4)

Rather than Ruskin's emphasis on effort, Forster believes that we must shed our cowardice in order to find beauty. It is through cowardice that we become victims of what he had called in *Howards End* the "tragedy of preparedness." Forster explains that with

> infinite effort we nerve ourselves for a crisis that never comes. The most successful career must show a waste of strength that might have removed mountains, and the most unsuccessful is not that of the man who is taken unprepared, but of him who has prepared and is never taken. (*HE*:104)

"The Beauty of Life" also advises against this preparedness in terms which reflect Forster's concern with the desire to attain culture prevalent in the Leonard Basts of society:

> Why don't we trust ourselves more and the conventions less? If we first of all dress ourselves appropriately and fashionably, and then fill our minds with fashionable thoughts, and then go out in search of Romance with a fashionable and appropriate friend, is it likely that we shall find Romance? (*AE*:173)

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[34] Note the similarity of expression with which Forster and Ruskin demonstrate their awareness of nature's indifference to man: Forster tells us "nature has not cut her stuff thus", while Ruskin acknowledges that "Nature does not manage it so."

Bast's walk in woods, for which he has made no proper preparations, provides him with the one glimpse of romance his cluttered brain will allow him. Indeed, Forster sums up Bast's position as he asks his audience at the Working Men's College: "Why are we so afraid of doing the 'wrong thing,' of wearing the 'wrong clothes,' of knowing the 'wrong people,' of pronouncing the names of artists or musicians wrongly?" (*AE*:173) The obvious failure of such cowardice is seen in Bast's refusal to attempt *Tannhauser*—"Was it 'Tannhouser' or 'Tannhoyser'? Better not risk the word."(*HE*:35)—during what could have been a much more profitable dialogue with Margaret Schlegel. But as Forster concludes, the fact of Leonard actively seeking beauty precludes his finding it -- "he did pursue beauty, and, therefore, Margaret's speeches did flutter away from him like birds." (*HE*:37) This concern with pronunciation is somewhat of a test of character with Forster. Certainly the "vulgar", yet lovable, George Emerson and his father from *A Room with a View* exercise no such reserve to the discomfit of the aesthetic Cecil Vyse who George later recalls as having "winced because my father mispronounced the names of great painters." (*RV*:166) And the preoccupation with pronunciation begins with the Butlerian snob, Mr Bons, from "The Celestial Omnibus", on whose body at the end of the story is found a bijou pronouncing dictionary.

In "The Enjoyment of Literature"[35] Forster expands upon his exhortation in the 1911 article "The Beauty of Life", again warning against the cowardice of bowing to convention and of over-preparedness. Forster, fears that too many people read with "lead pencils in hand", by which he means that such readers "go through life preparing for an examination that never comes," (*HD*:231) and much energy, and most of the enjoyment, or beauty, which is to be found in both life and literature is lost.

[35] This paper was read to the BA and MA classes of the Government College, Lahore, 3 March 1913, during Forster's first visit to India. Reprinted in *The Hill of Devi and other Indian writings*, Ed. Elizabeth Heine, London, 1983.

But this subservience to the conventions of the examination room is only one aspect of the greater fear man possesses in transgressing the larger social conventions. The fear and the transgression of social conventions had, as seen in the previous chapters, been of concern to Forster since his first efforts at a novel, *Nottingham Lace*. Yet without stating as much, the early novels demonstrate the loss of beauty through adherence to social formulae as plainly as the later, more explicit work on subject, beginning with *Howards End* and continuing through "The Beauty of Life" and "The Enjoyment of Literature". The continuity in Forster's work on the subject is found in the consistent use of terms such as "prepare" and "preparedness", "fashion" and "fashionable", and it is Forster's attack on the "fashionable" in "The Beauty of Life", quoted above, which Forster reiterates for his Indian audience:

> A man said to me lately, "I have been reading Dickens but I find I have made a very great mistake. Dickens is hardly discussed at all."
>
> I replied, "Yes, but if you like Dickens what does that matter?"
>
> "Oh but a friend of mine says he is so old-fashioned. I ought to have read H. G. Wells or Bernard Shaw. Yesterday they were discussing Shaw's plays and I had read none of them. It was most awkward." (*HD*:231-2)

If this appears applicable to Bast's reading of Ruskin, not because he wants to, but due to Ruskin's fame as "the greatest master of English prose", so too, should another of Forster's "hints" to the Indian students recall the difficulties which faced Bast in his pursuit of culture *via* Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*:

> Before an Indian student can enjoy English literature he must learn the English language. That is imperative. He must know, not only grammar and syntax, but something of the spirit in which grammar and syntax are used. He must see that "I put on my hat" is a good English sentence, and "I adjusted my headgear" a bad one . . . . (*HD*:230)

So too, Bast must sees that his room is properly "dark as well as stuffy"—"Something told him that the modifications would not do; and that something, had he known it, was the spirit of English Prose." (*HE*:47)

The recurrent theme of the mispronunciation of words noted above—which forms a standard by which Forster is able to stress the social gulf which separates Cecil Vyse from the Emersons and the Schlegels from Bast—would also appear to have its roots in Ruskin's lecture. Ruskin asserts that correct pronunciation of words is the yardstick by which one may measure the gentlemen:

> A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages,—may not be able to speak any but his own,—may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly . . .. But an uneducated person may know, by memory, many languages, and may talk them all, . . . yet he has only to speak a sentence of any language to be known for an illiterate person . . .. (xviii:65)

Ruskin is so definite that the correct pronunciation of words demonstrates one's social superiority that he is able to conclude that

> this is so strongly felt, so conclusively admitted, by educated persons, that a false accent or a mistaken syllable is enough, in the parliament of any civilised nation, to assign to a man a certain degree of inferior standing for ever.
>
> And this is right; but it is a pity that the accuracy insisted on is not greater . . .. (xviii:65)

Ideas like this presented by Ruskin were taken to heart by the new-middle-class, the semi-educated white collar worker referred to by Stoll, whom Bast represents and whom Forster had met both in Italy and at the Working Men's College, and the result was likely to be widespread vulgarity[36] as men like Bast attempt to hide

[36] The idea of vulgarity as "concealing" something, as does Bast, while George Emerson's unfortunate manner is commended as coarseness is most likely derived from Ruskin, evidence of which shall be presented and discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

their ignorance through "minor cowardices" like not attempting a word of which they are unsure.

Forster, speaking of books (though it is equally applicable to the pronunciation of words) in "The Enjoyment of Literature", reminds his audience that

> No doubt it is unpleasant to let out in company that one has never heard of Pater or thought George Eliot was a man, but such misfortunes will occur and must be borne cheerfully. The world is so large and one's experience so small that it would be very queer if one did not feel foolish at times. (*HD*:232)

To Forster "ignorance doesn't matter". It would have been so much better for Bast to have attempted *Tannhauser* and failed and borne it cheerfully and courageously than to be influenced by the Ruskinian idea of perfect knowledge however limited in its range. "Ignorance", Forster reminds us, "can be cured."

> Self-consciousness and conceit are the real enemies. If you read literature to increase your own importance in society, to feed your vanity, to impress your friends or clients—seriously I beg you not to read it at all. (*HD*:233)

In saying this Forster is attempting to correct the misapplication of Ruskin's doctrine of education, while revealing that he owes a positive debt to Ruskin's attempt to improve men through education and culture however perverted the results may have been.

Both authors have highlighted the public attitude towards literature, or more generally culture, as somehow leading to social and economic advancement. Yet Ruskin attempts to combat this attitude, like Clym Yeobright of *The Return of the Native*. Yeobright, as noted above, had a conviction men wanted knowledge which brought wisdom rather than social advancement. Wisdom for Ruskin was the recognition of the chaos of modern life, and the subsequent desire for a return to feudalism, and the "Gospel of Work" as a panacea. Forster, while similarly dissatisfied with industrial society, is in basic disagreement with this

feudalism. The enjoyment of literature for Forster is a leisure activity which is valued as the life of the spirit which may support the modern worker through the unpleasantness of industrial life by which he may provide for his physical well-being. But the pursuit of the life of the spirit must be achieved without the economic sacrifices Ruskin proposed. As in "The Challenge of Our Time", he demands the "Old Morality", but is aware of the necessity of the "New Economy". However, much of Forster's reaction to Ruskin's political economy was developed in the post-war period. The implications of this view for Forster's pre-war novels, *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*, will be examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

(I)

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the development of Forster's notion of a reconciliation between "Old Morality" and "New Economy" occurred quite late in his career as a novelist. Whereas in dealing with Forster's work on women's issues we were able to work forward from *The Lucy Novels* to Forster's pre-war novels, in looking at Forster's political economy it has been necessary to move backwards from his post-war essays and thus apply his thinking to the earlier novels. Indeed, Forster's early short stories are notable for the lack of any attempt at compromise between the opposing elements of spiritual and material well-being. The central characters are forced to choose between spiritual freedom and conventional life—the life of "telegrams and anger", but a life which is nevertheless pragmatic about economic necessities. These stories demonstrate Forster working in what Levenson had referred to as "first phase", or negative liberalism, which sought to break down the regulatory forces of Church, State, and public opinion. Typical of these early stories is "Other Kingdom", written about the time that Forster first conceived of the novel which was to become *The Longest Journey*, and which is closely connected thematically with that novel. In this early story Forster demands intellectual and spiritual freedom, unconcerned by the importance of an economic basis in providing that necessary intermediate step between the inherent right feeling of the agricultural man and the conscious objectivity of the philosophic man which Hardy had noted in *The Return of the Native*. In fact, a concern with money generally precludes entry into Forster's other kingdom. In this respect he can be seen to be in agreement with Ruskin, yet by the time we come to *The Longest Journey*, and later *Howards End*, there is a

noticeable change in Forster and that desire to harmonise the spirit and body we have noted in the previous chapter is unmistakable.

A diary entry for 26 January 1908 reveals the importance of the Greek ideal to Forster's notion of spiritual freedom. The Greeks, he thought, had "nearly freed him [man] by right feeling". Forster's short stories demonstrate his faith that through "right feeling", the natural man (based loosely on the Greek ideal) could escape from the trammels of artificial society. To effect such an escape Forster relied on what Merivale has called the author's "dual vision". Pan, or some manifestation from the pagan world, leads Forster's characters into a "profound mystical experience, which has as concomitants the emotions of terror and ecstasy." This event may engender anything from a vague sense of unease to sheer panic-terror among the conventional characters, but it "reveals the inner world to those capable of perceiving it".[1] The pagan spirit retains its diabolic aspect for the majority but offers a Christ-like chance of salvation to Forster's heroes. This characteristic of Forster's short stories is revealed in "Other Kingdom" where contrary to generally accepted notions, an irruption from the pagan past, in the guise of Miss Beaumont, offers the characters Ford and Inskip an alternative to the life of conventions. In *The Longest Journey* Miss Pembroke adds a "neat little resumé" to Rickie's story of the dryad, of which "Other Kingdom" is the model. This resumé reads: "Allegory. Man = modern civilization (in bad sense). Girl = getting in touch with Nature." (*LJ*:119) It is interesting to note that it was precisely this opposition which Forster was to find in Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, and the engaged couple Mr Worters and Miss Beaumont from "Other Kingdom" are comparable to the Ruskinian couple, Henry and Ruth Wilcox, of *Howards End*. As in the later novel, the male figure, Worters, represents the chaotic world of business and finance, modern civilisation in its least pleasing aspect. The female figure, Miss Beaumont, represents instinct and right feeling, the attendant virtues of being "in touch" with Nature.

The opposition which Worters and Miss Beaumont represent is established through the allusion to the Lydian king, Croesus. During a conversation with Ford, her fiancé's ward, and Inskip, their classics tutor, references to the pursuit of Daphne by Apollo and Syrinx by Pan leads Miss Beaumont to put the question "What was it one turned into to get away from Croesus?"[2] (*SS*:63) She is corrected by Inskip, who assures her that she must mean Midas. But it is the legend of Croesus, and not Midas, which provides the necessary insight into Forster's purpose in this story. Croesus does not simply represent money as Inskip's allusion to Midas suggests. Nor does Miss Beaumont, who even refers to money as "nice", comparing it with "laughter . . . and the soul and so on" (*SS*:78), frown upon wealth. The allusion to Croesus evokes the idea that money or possessions are not in themselves happiness. Lowes Dickinson explains that "the oriental ideal of unlimited wealth and power, enjoyed merely for its own sake, never appealed to their [the Greeks] fine and lucid judgment." He continues: "Nothing could better illustrate this point than the anecdote related by Herodotus of the interview between Solon and Croesus, . . . [who] proud of his boundless wealth, asks the Greek stranger who is the happiest man on earth?" The answer comes unexpected, "Tellus, the Athenian."[3] The opposition is between Croesus' idea of happiness, and Solon's. Worters represents the former, Miss Beaumont the later. Forster may well have derived his notion of Croesus secondhand through Dickinson, rather than direct from Herodotus. Yet his preface to a new edition of *The Greek View of Life* in 1956, indicates that the model for his heroes was unlikely to have been borrowed from Dickinson. In this preface Forster implies that Dickinson's conception of the Greek ideal still revolved around being "well-to-do" (*GLD*:214), an opinion, certainly not substantiated by Dickinson's book, which sets Forster in opposition to Dickinson on this point. Forster's idea is more in the tradition of Ruskin who

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[1] Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God*, Cambridge, Mass., 1969, p. 180-1.

[2] Unless otherwise stated references to short stories are from *The New Collected Short Stories*, Ed., P. N. Furbank, London, 1985. Annotations will be to *SS* followed by the relevant page number.

feels that the perfection of "human countenance" the Greeks sought "could only be reached by continual exercise of virtue; and it was in Heaven's sight, and theirs, all the more beautiful because it needed . . . self-denial to obtain it". (v:232) As demonstrated in the previous chapter, it had been Ruskin's emphasis on self-denial which provoked Forster's criticism. Yet in his early stories Forster, too, appears content with the chance of salvation without any regard to economics.

It may seem strange that Forster should have been influenced by Ruskin apropos the Greek feeling for nature. The more generally recognised influences in this area are Nathaniel Wedd, his classics tutor at Cambridge, and Lowes Dickinson, whose *The Greek View of Life* (1896) was possibly read by Forster while an undergraduate. We may add to this Arthur Machen, the author of *The Great God Pan*, whose influence "was in the air"[4] during the period in which Forster was writing, and, of course, Forster's own firsthand study of the classics. Ruskin's influence is less obvious, but, I would claim, equally important. It stems from the time when Forster read Ruskin's chapters "Of The Pathetic Fallacy" and "Of Classical Landscape" as an undergraduate.

Forster's habit of substituting what he thought was the spirit of the Greek world for that of the Christian may have been derived from the anti-clerical Wedd, but it first surfaces in Forster's adaptations of Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* found in his essay "The Relation of Dryden to Milton and Pope" which I discussed in chapter one. As I suggested there, Ruskin's comments on the sincerity of Greek faith in *Modern Painters* may well have struck a sympathetic chord in Forster. E. T. Cook's summary of Ruskin's work concedes that the importance Ruskin placed on the vitality of faith was not limited to Christianity:

> the decadence of the art of architecture, corresponding with a decay of vital religion, that he [Ruskin] finds written on the

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[3] Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, London, 1922, p. 136.

[4] From a BBC broadcast "We Speak to India: Some Books", 3 March, 1943, in which Forster pays tribute to Machen's achievement as a writer of Panic stories.

> "Stones of Venice;" the clearness of early faith he finds reflected in the brightness of the pictures of Florence; the gladness of Greek religion that gives for him its sharpness to the "Ploughshare of Pentelicus."[5]

With this in mind, the rejection of Ruskin's medievalism by Forster would not preclude an esteem for Ruskin's celebration of Greek faith, and I believe that Forster did have Ruskin's notions of Greek life much in mind during the writing of "Other Kingdom", if not his other short stories. The sheer number of corresponding ideas as well as the general tone of the story lends ample support to this notion. However, it is the progression from his general agreement with Ruskin's conception of Greek life to an active revision of it which provides the thematic connection between the three works I will examine in this chapter; "Other Kingdom", *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*.

At the beginning of "Other Kingdom", Miss Beaumont and Worters are engaged, but due to Worters's termination of his guardianship of Ford, Miss Beaumont turns herself into a tree. This transformation, along with Forster's allusions to the Apollo-Daphne and Pan-Syrinx myths where the heroine is turned into a laurel or reed to escape the advances of the god, has led critics to dismiss this tale as a simple "reworking of the Apollo and Daphne story".[6] Thus plot rests on Miss Beaumont's escape, either from the demands of sex, or, as Stone suggests, from the Midas-touch of her fiancé who desires her as a "compliant and well-mannered piece of property".[7] Both these interpretations touch upon issues which Forster was later to develop, yet they fail to address the importance of the characters Ford and Inskip. Indeed, the escape of Miss Beaumont, the dryad, is never in doubt—she is adamant that she "won't be touched!" (*SS*:63) and one is tempted to believe her.

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[5] E. T. Cook, *Studies in Ruskin*, London, 1891, p. 15-16.

[6] P. J. M. Scott, *E. M. Forster: Our Permanent Contemporary*, London and Totowa, 1984, p. 105.

[7] Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster*, Stanford and London, 1966, p. 157.

Miss Beaumont is not a woman who is turned into a tree, but a dryad. As such, in Forster's conception, she is from the outset possessed of the power to escape her fiancé. To understand this it is necessary to understand Forster's notion of the Greek deity, and to do this it is worth while to turn back to Ruskin and the chapters from *Modern Painters* which seem to have had such an influence upon him. In the chapter titled "Of Classical Landscape", Ruskin asks his reader to consider "What then, was actually the Greek god?" (v:224) explaining that "it is impossible to comprehend any single part of the Greek mind until we grasp this [conception] faithfully". In answer he constructs a three-faceted image of the "heathen idea of a God" who is at once;

> blue-eyed—white-fleshed—human-hearted,—capable at their choice of meeting man absolutely in his own nature—feasting with him—talking with him—fighting with him, eye to eye, or breast to breast, as Mars with Diomed; or else, dealing with him in a more retired spirituality, as Apollo sending the plague upon the Greeks, when his quiver rattles at his shoulders as he moves, and yet darts sent forth strike not as arrows, but as plague; or, finally, retiring completely into the material universe which they properly inhabit, and dealing with man through that, as Scamander with Achilles, through his waves. (v:227)

Of course dryads are not traditionally possessed of the power of either Apollo or Mars. Yet Forster is less than scrupulous in making this distinction and Miss Beaumont blurs the distinction in her response to Mrs Worter's query "I always thought gods lived in the sky". Miss Beaumont, reading from her notebook, responds:

> Gods. Where. Chief deities – Mount Olympus. Pan – most places, as name implies. Oreads – mountains. Sirens, Tritons, Nereids – water (salt). Naiads – water (fresh). Satyrs, Fauns, etc. – woods. Dryads – trees. (*SS*:62)

The distinction between gods and dryads is further blurred in Ford's allusions to Syrinx and Daphne as having changed form at will. Inskip's correction of Miss Beaumont's allusion to Croesus—"Midas, Miss Beaumont, not Croesus. And he turns you – you don't turn yourself" (*SS*:63)—also extends the notion that Miss

Beaumont as dryad is possessed of extraordinary powers. Granted that Forster conceives of his dryad as a god-like entity, an examination of his characterisation of Miss Beaumont will illustrate just how closely his conception of her follows Ruskin's notion of godhead.

First, that Miss Beaumont is introduced in human form obviously corresponds to Ruskin's "blue-eyed" god. Yet even in human form Miss Beaumont is endowed with certain characteristics which suggest her "other-worldliness". That Miss Beaumont is something more than is generally supposed by her fiancé is first hinted at through the vagueness of her personal history: she had been "picked out of 'Ireland' . . . without money, without connections, almost without antecedents" (*SS*:69). And Worters, while discoursing on the classics, further hints at her pre-Christian heritage:

> "They were written before men began to really feel. . . . Hence, the chilliness of classical art – its lack of – of a something. Whereas later things – Dante – a Madonna of Raphael – some bars of Mendelssohn—" His voice tailed reverently away. We sat with our eyes on the ground, not liking to look at Miss Beaumont. It is a fairly open secret that she also lacks something. She has not yet developed her soul. (*SS*:71)

As Ruskin suggests, Miss Beaumont can appear before, and interact with, human characters after their own nature, but Forster prefers nevertheless to offer his readers an intimation of her true nature. This is most evident in the extraordinary episode of Miss Beaumont's impersonations of a silver-birch and beech tree. Through this impersonation she confirms to the reader that she is more than Worters or Inskip take her to be, and demonstrates that she has the power to change at will: "She flung her arms up over her head, close together, so that she looked like a slender column. Then her body swayed and her delicate green dress quivered over it with the suggestion of countless leaves." (*SS*:65)

After her disillusionment with Worters, Miss Beaumont shows her disapproval with her fiancé in a manner which echoes the second aspect of

Ruskin's notion of godhead, "retired spirituality". Forster describes the uncanny nature of the weather which greets the expulsion of Ford by Worters:

> during the windy nights that followed Ford's departure we could hear their [the beeches'] branches sighing, and would find in the morning that beech-leaves had been blown right up against the house. (*SS*:80)

And later,

> a bough, a good-sized bough, was blown on to the smooth asphalt path, and actually switch-backed over the bridge, up the meadow, and across our very lawn. . . . Only the stone steps prevented it from reaching the terrace and perhaps breaking the dining-room window. (*SS*:81)

The anger of Forster's dryad manifests itself as extraordinary occurrences related to trees of which she is a spirit, just as Ruskin's Apollo looses his darts upon the Greeks in the form of plague. Both are acting in "spiritual retirement" and this is further stressed by Forster's suggestions of divine interference in the natural order which accompanies these descriptions. Inskip's remark that "the gods were good to us" is more than a figure of speech, and his complacency demonstrates both his lack of insight, and excites in the reader a susceptibility to belief which is necessary to the appreciation of the action to follow:

> the gods were good to us for once, for as soon as we were started, the tempest dropped, and there ensued an extraordinary calm. After all, Miss Beaumont was something of a weather prophet. Her spirits improved every minute. (*SS*:82)

Forster here is not indulging in what Ruskin had termed the "pathetic fallacy", instead his presentation of the weather as responding to Miss Beaumont's temper is exactly how Ruskin had characterised the Greek feeling for nature. Taking Keats as an example of the modern predilection for the "pathetic fallacy", Ruskin quotes his description of a wave breaking at sea from *Endymion*, Bk. II, ll. 350-1:

> Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
> Burst gradual, with wayward indolence. (v:221)

It is Ruskin's opinion that while Homer may have characterised this wave as "'over-roofed', 'full-charged', 'monstrous', 'compact-black', 'dark-clear,' 'violet-coloured', 'wine-coloured'," any number of epithets of which every one is "descriptive of pure physical nature", he could not, unlike Keats, imagine salt water as "either wayward or indolent." (v:222) Ruskin explains that since

> it has been received for a first principle that writers are great in proportion to the intensity of their feelings, and Homer seems to have no feelings about the sea but that it is black and deep, surely in this respect the modern writer is greater?
>
> Stay a moment. Homer *had* some feeling about the sea; a faith in the animation of it much stronger than Keats's. But all this sense of something living in it, he separates in his mind into a great abstract image of a Sea Power. He never says the waves rage, or the waves are idle. But he says there is somewhat in, and greater than, the waves, which rages, and is idle, and *that* he calls a god. (v:222-3)

There appears a definite debt to Ruskin's notion in Forster's presentation of the river which "held back its waves to watch her [Miss Beaumont] (one might have supposed), and the winds lay spell-bound in their cavern, and the great clouds spell-bound in the sky." (*SS*:82) And the depth of the impression left on Forster by Ruskin's comments is revealed many years later in a letter to Lowes Dickinson from Egypt, dated 2 December 1918,

> Today has been perfect even for an Egyptian December—the sea, in which I have bathed, a pale purple and green, and the pale blue sky lined with a few orange clouds at its base. Allenby, our victorious and decent general, is being feted in the town, and could but one yield to the pathetic fallacy it would seem that Nature rejoices and that God is appeased.[8]

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[8] In a letter to Max Beerbohm, 12 March 1942, Forster again alludes to the pathetic fallacy: "I would rather say that, with every appearance of objectivity and with some slight inclination towards it, you have fallen into the symmetric fallacy nevertheless. You do not know what that is? You have read your Ruskin merely? Very well. The symmetric fallacy is that which leads a person to be unable to conceive of Oxford without Cambridge". In *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, 2vols, Ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank, vol.2, p. 200. Note also the important connection between Ruskin's notion of the "pathetic fallacy" and objectivity which will be discussed later in relation to Rickie Elliot.

On being given permission to leave her fiancé's house, Miss Beaumont is also appeased, and the improvement in the weather, which she has apparently called forth to reveal her displeasure, reflects her own improving spirits. As much as any direct borrowing from Ruskin, Forster's deliberate eschewal of the pathetic fallacy here clearly indicates his debt to Ruskin.

The final aspect of Ruskin's notion of the gods, that of a complete retiring into the "material universe" and their dealing with man through that, is also apparent in Forster. We must remember that in Ruskin's opinion "What sympathy and fellowship" the Greeks had for nature, was "always for the spirit *in* the stream, not for the stream, always for the dryad *in* the wood, not for the wood." The stream itself was only valued for its "sound and coolness", the tree for its "leaves". (v:232) That is, as Ruskin expands later, that nature was valued for its "subservience . . . to human comfort, to the foot, the taste, or the smell". (v:235) This is found exactly in Forster's depiction of Miss Beaumont's transformation. Springing away from the pursuing Worters, Miss Beaumont sings an accompaniment to her final retirement into the physical universe: "Oh Ford, my lover while I was a woman, I will never forget you, never, as long as I have branches to shade you from the sun". (*SS*:83) These lines, which emphasise Miss Beaumont's desire to subordinate her existence in the material universe to Ford's comfort, are repeated both by Ford and Inskip at the conclusion of the story. Ford who has guessed Miss Beaumont's secret, understands their significance, understanding which Inskip, who has sided with Worters, is denied.

It is Miss Beaumont's final utterance—"Oh Ford! oh Ford, among all these Worters, I am coming through you to my Kingdom"—which has perhaps inclined critics to read "Other Kingdom" as a story of her escape. Instead, this can be read as an allusion to a conceit which Robert K. Martin suggests Forster had derived from Pater, that "the gods are in exile, still existing, but hidden away

beneath the surface of things, waiting to be called forth again".[9] This idea recurs in "Mr Andrews" (1911), where Forster imagines a heaven in which were seated "all the gods who were then being worshipped on the earth." He continues:

> A group of souls stood around each, singing his praises. But the gods paid no heed, for they were listening to the prayers of living men, which alone brought them nourishment. Sometimes a faith would grow weak, and then the god of that faith also drooped and dwindled and fainted for his daily portion of incense. And sometimes, owing to a revivalist movement, or to a great commemoration, or to some other cause, a faith would grow strong, and the god of that faith would grow strong also. (*SS*:159)

The continued presence of the gods, whether awaiting a resurgence in belief or not, is also suggested in the opening scene of "Other Kingdom". Inskip is translating a line from Virgil's *Eclogues*. His purely academic appreciation of Virgil, which denies the sincerity of Greek faith, leads him to translate Virgil's "*habiturant*" simply as "have lived". While this is not incorrect, this negation of the notion that gods have not only lived in the woods but continue to do so, which is implied in the perfect indicative, shows Inskip to be one of those whom Ruskin feels would "be seriously surprised by meeting a god anywhere." (v:320) The failure of Inskip's conception of the Greek attitude to life is an echo of the failure which Forster had noted in Virgil. In his preface to *The Aeneid* Forster argues that Virgil "loves most the things that matter least, a simile rather than the action that illustrates it, a city full of apple trees rather than the soldiers who march out of it".[10] This recalls his description of the fall in art from his essay on "The Relation of Dryden to Milton and Pope" where, echoing Ruskin, Forster asserts that when men "left the spirit for the substance . . . they fell and their works . . . have lost forever the purity and the grace that was before the fall". Inskip, through his connection with Virgil, is demonstrated as having lost the

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[9] Robert K. Martin, "The Paterian Mode in Forster' Fiction: *The Longest Journey* to *Pharos and Pharillion*," in Judith Herz and Robert K. Martin, eds., *Centenary Revaluations*, Toronto and London, 1982, p. 102.

[10] Quoted in Rose Macaulay, *The Writings of E. M. Forster*, London, 1938, p. 46.

spirit of the Classical world. The irony of Miss Beaumont's presence is enhanced by her subtle correction of his colloquial translation, "Áh yoù sílly àss, góds lìve in woóds". (*SS*:64) Unversed in Latin, she has highlighted the failure of his translation, and the attitude it denotes, with her implication that gods have, and continue to, live in the woods.

Though Miss Beaumont claims that Ford has won provided her with an escape from Worters, it is more probable that due to Worters's mistreatment of Ford, Miss Beaumont has seen the incompatibility of her proposed life with him. In this Forster implies the incompatibility of spiritual freedom with conventional life, business and finance. Miss Beaumont's decision to leave Worters creates the opposition which Forster later reconciles with Margaret's marriage to Henry Wilcox. Within this opposition Ford must choose. And it is his love for Miss Beaumont, who symbolises the sincerity and integrity which is the model for Forster's natural man, which leads him first to cross his guardian, and then to abandon Worters and set out on his own. Yet even in the delightful pun which Forster employs here—"oh Ford, among all these Worters"(*SS*:83)—we find an echo of Ruskin.

Simon believes that Forster owes his notion of comedy to Sully's *An Essay on Laughter* (1902), which argued that "the playful laugh of the common man, the great heritage of 'Merry England,' had been replaced by the hollow and cynical laugh of the educated and the world-weary".[11] Simon continues that as "In late nineteenth-century comic theory this position was unusual",[12] so Forster's use of this "playful laugh" connotes a debt to Sully. Another possible source is Ruskin who, in the chapter "Of Modern Landscape", makes the point that while modern civilisation is not "without apparent festivity", it is "festivity more or less forced, mistaken, embittered, incomplete—not of the heart. How wonderfully, since Shakspere's time, have we lost the power of laughing at bad jests!" (v:322)

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[11] Richard Keller Simon, "E. M. Forster's Critique of Laughter and the Comic: The First three Novels as Dialectic," *Twentieth Century Literature* 31 (1985), p.200.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 200-1.

This is entirely apposite with Forster's remark on Miss Beaumont's pun earlier in the story that "she was at that state of civilization which appreciates a pun." (*SS*:69) It is also the probable basis for Forster's remark in "Pessimism in Literature"[13] that:

> Now Shakespeare . . . could probably write a funny account of a motor accident. What he could not, or would not do, is to make us ashamed of our fun. Here the modern mind has progressed—if it is a progress. It has detected the discomfort and misery that lie so frequently beneath the smiling surface of things. But what it has gained in insight it has lost in power. It can be witty and sarcastic and amusing. But it can never recall joy on a large scale—the joy of the gods. (*AE*:142-3)

Returning to the story, the central concern is how Ford and Inskip respond to the crisis of Ford's pending dismissal. Mr Worters is deeply offended by what he has found in Ford's private notebook and demands an apology. When threatened with the choice between personal integrity and economic ruin, a fate which is to be shared by Stephen in *The Longest Journey*, and Leonard in *Howards End*, Ford refuses to compromise his integrity. Inskip is aware of Ford's sincerity yet he himself seems to place no value upon it:

> he has dreams – not exactly spiritual dreams: Mr Worters is the man for those – but dreams of the tangible and the actual: robust dreams, which take him, not to heaven, but to another earth. There are no footmen in this other earth, and the kettle-stands, I suppose, will not be made of silver, and I know that everything is to be itself, and not practically something else.[14] But what this means, and, if it means anything, what the good of it is, I am not prepared to say. For though I have just said "there is value in dreams," I only said it to silence old Mrs Worters. (*SS*:67)

Inskip's insincerity is obvious, so too, is the pleasure he derives from footmen and silver kettle-stands. And Inskip completes his fall from grace when he

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[13] Macaulay, *op cit.*, p. 66, believes that in "Pessimism in Literature" Forster "seeks to interpret the spirit of the age, as contrasted with that of other ages." This essentially Götzist approach further connects this article with Ruskin's *Modern Painters*.

[14] Wilfred Stone, *op cit.*, p. 63, notes that this phrase recalls the epigraph of G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*—"Everything is what it is, and not another thing".

chooses the security of Worters's patronage, and encourages Ford to apologise and do the same. As Thomson[15] suggests, Inskip is allied to Worters both by economic considerations and through a "similarity of outlook", and this colours his advice to Ford:

> I pointed to the pleasant, comfortable landscape, full of cows and carriage-horses out at grass, and civil retainers. In the midst of it stood Worters, radiating energy and wealth, like a terrestrial sun. "My dear Ford – don't be heroic! Apologize." (*SS*:77)

Inskip, as implied by his ignorance of the significance of Miss Beaumont's allusion to Croesus, accepts the view of Worters and Croesus, that happiness lies in the possession of wealth. That he succumbs to the temptation of a comfortable life is made obvious when Inskip admits later that "I am now staying on as Harcourt's secretary" (*SS*:81) and in his use of the possessive "our" when describing Worters's estate. Due to this he is unable to guess the true nature of Miss Beaumont, and is blind to the facts of her disappearance.

"My Wood" (1926) provides important evidence for the understanding of Worter's position and even more so, for the decision made by Inskip in this story. Furbank[16] informs us that after the Forsters moved to West Hackhurst in 1925, Forster purchased an adjoining wood "of some four acres, called Piney Copse" for £450, and the influence of this wood on Forster, the growth of a proprietorial spirit, is depicted "satirically" in the essay, "My Wood", reprinted in *Abinger Harvest*.

Like Worters in "Other Kingdom", whose plans for his newly acquired wood include a "rustic bridge" (*SS*:73), "an asphalt path from the house over the meadow" and a "simple fence" with a gate and a lock (*SS*:74), Forster once in possession of his own copse begins to "feel that he ought to do something to it."

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[15] G. H. Thomson, *The Fiction of E. M. Forster*, Detroit, 1967, p. 77.

[16] P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 2vols, London, 1977-78, vol. 2, p. 199.

(*AH*:22) He also feels the need to prevent trespass on what is, after all, his own wood:

> Blackberries are not plentiful in this meagre grove, but they are easily seen from the public footpath which traverses it, and all too easily gathered. Foxgloves, too--people will pull up the foxgloves, and ladies of an educational tendency even grub for toadstools to show them on the Monday in class. Other ladies, less educated, roll down the bracken in the arms of their gentlemen friends. There is paper, there are tins. Pray, does my wood belong to me or doesn't it? And, if it does, should I not own it best by allowing no one else to walk there? (*AH*:23)

Moreover, a comparison may be drawn between the effect of possession on the character of Inskip, and that revealed by Forster in this much later essay—a case of life imitating art. Prefiguring the proprietorial effect of ownership on Forster is the progressive similarity of outlook with Worters, reflected in the character of Inskip. Though he remains astute enough to realise in the case of the exiled Ford that Worters's threat to break both him and the missing Miss Beaumont "soul and body" was "impossible" (*SS*:84), Inskip remains without insight into the reality of Miss Beaumont's disappearance. His loss of insight coincides with the rise of proprietorial feelings which come with his decision to accept Worters's patronage rather than leave his employ in support of Ford's expulsion. As in "My Wood" where Forster was to describe the effect of property as producing "men of weight", Inskip's alliance with Worters also makes him by association "heavy", and in the later essay Forster takes time to explain the significance of weight:

> it was a man of weight who failed to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. He was not wicked, that unfortunate millionaire in the parable, he was only stout; he stuck out in front, not to mention behind, and as he wedged himself this way and that in the crystalline entrance and bruised his well-fed flanks, he saw beneath him a comparatively slim camel passing through the eye of a needle and being woven into the robe of God. (*AH*:21)

Inskip and Worters prefigure the weighty men of "My Wood" and represent Forster's answer to the parable of the rich man and the camel, in which

for his men of weight it is just as impossible to enter that Other Kingdom which Ford, in renouncing Worters's patronage, had succeeded in entering.

In another of Forster's early short stories, "The Other Side of the Hedge" (1904), the main character, discontented with the constant drive for progress, is seduced by a gap in the hedge. He is a young man of twenty-five years, Forster's own age at the time of writing, trudging wearily along a highway—"dust underfoot and brown crackling hedges on either side". The Forster character admits that during his passage along this highway, which represents the progress of mankind toward some ultimate goal, he "had already dropped several things – indeed, the road behind was strewn with the things we all had dropped" yet still he complains that his "muscles were so weary that I could not even bear the weight of those things I still carried."(*SS*:40) Whatever these "things" represent, material comforts, commodities, or the religious and philosophic baggage of the belief in progress in which this young man had been inculcated, this character, like the "heavy man" mentioned above, must shed those remaining to him before he is able to enter the longed-for paradise, in this instance on the other side of the hedge:

> I yielded to the temptation, saying to myself that I would come back in a minute. The thorns scratched my face, and I had to use my arms as a shield, depending on my feet alone to push me forward. Halfway through I would have gone back, for in the passage all the things I was carrying were scraped off me, and my clothes were torn. But I was so wedged that return was impossible, and I had to wriggle blindly forward . . .. (*SS*:40-1)

The similarity in expression between Forster's description of the struggle through the hedge and the fat man wedged by his possessions in the "crystalline entrance" to heaven is obvious. Once through the hedge, he comes upon an idyllic rural setting, and meets an old man who tries to talk him out of returning to the road from which he has come. Like Ford, the young man must choose between conventional society and the garden paradise, and chooses the garden.

Similarly the final glimpse we have of Ford, shows his pursuit of virtue at the expense of financial considerations. Worters and Inskip, vainly searching for Miss Beaumont, travel to "the squalid suburb that is now Ford's home", they sweep past a "dirty maid" to find Ford reading *Oedipus Coloneus*. (*SS*:84) Scott has argued that Mr Lucas, in another of Forster's short stories "The Road from Colonus" (1904), is presented with the choice of "a living death (going back to London) or perhaps dying into life."[17] This is applicable, in an economic sense, to Ford's choice in this story. Like Oedipus, "the self-blinded exasperated king who undergoes transfiguration at the sacred grove of Colonus",[18] Ford, through his relationship with Miss Beaumont whos has herself been transfigured, has come to understand the truth of Solon's words to Croesus and this strengthens him in his self-denial. Worters and Inskip, both self-blinded by money fail to realise the truth of Miss Beaumont's transfiguration.

(II)

In *The Longest Journey* Forster still believes in the exercise of virtue at the expense of financial reward. However, in this novel he finds a method of procuring financial support for his hero without compromising him. Before we continue with *The Longest Journey* there are a number of points which have arisen in the foregoing discussion which need to be clarified as they impact largely on the later novel. First, in the figure of Inskip, whose proprietorial feelings hint at a definite correspondence between character and creator, Forster appears critical of the aesthetic appreciation of the Greek notion of religion as portrayed, once removed from its original in Greek literature, in Virgil. In *The Longest Journey*, another Forster surrogate, Rickie Elliot, similarly displays a susceptibility to regard Greek faith, again removed from the original through Virgil, in purely aesthetic terms. In his essay "The Relation of Dryden to Milton and Pope" Forster had demonstrated a belief that the habit of denying the

[17] Scott, *op cit.*, p. 61.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

sincerity of Greek faith led to the loss of purity and grace in art. As mentioned in chapter two, that essay reveals a debt to Ruskin; so too, does the notion in both "Other Kingdom" and *The Longest Journey*, that Virgil's idea of Greek religion negates its sincerity.

Ruskin himself had roundly criticised the prevalent interpretations of the Greek attitude to their gods. One misconception consists of "holding the classical god to be either an idol, . . . or else an actual diabolic or betraying power, usurping the place of God." (v:223) Such was Machen's notion of Pan, and there is a number of incidents in which Forster himself parodies this notion by having Pan provide the opportunity for salvation.

The other misconception which Ruskin seeks to rectify is that shared by Inskip, and to a lesser degree, Rickie. Ruskin believes that modern man had "infected the Greek ages themselves with the breath, and dimmed them with the shade, of our hypocrisy". This leads us to

> think that Homer, as we know that Pope, was merely an ingenious fabulist; nay, more than this, that all nations of the past time were ingenious fabulists also, to whom the universe was a lyrical drama, and by whom whatsoever was said about it was merely a witty allegory, or a graceful lie, of which the entire upshot and consummation was a pretty statue in the middle of the court, or at the end of the garden. (v:223)

The characterisation of Rickie Elliot is a self-criticism of Forster's own folly in trying to recreate in his stories an Arcadian Greek paradise in twentieth-century England. In his essay "Cnidus" (1904), which was written around the time that he was working on "Other Kingdom" and had begun to plan *The Longest Journey*, Forster recalls his visit to Cnidus in 1903. Forster appears embarrassed by the flight of fancy this visit sparked, made more incongruous by the grey, cold, wet, untypically Greek, evening which inspired it. Having caught himself entertaining that habit which Ruskin condemns, the essay continues in a very unsentimental tone to censure both the trend to revive "the effete mythology of Greece", yet also the trend to deny that in Greek mythology, or at least in the sincere worship

of the earth as embodied in Demeter, there is something that does "touch the heart of to-day". (*AH*:168) This is one of the underlying themes in *The Longest Journey*, and in *Howards End* it receives what has been called by Furbank a "kind of farewell to his stories" (*SS*:7):

> To speak against London is no longer fashionable. The earth as an artistic cult has had its day, and the literature of the near future will probably ignore the country and seek inspiration from the town. One can understand the reaction. Of Pan and the elemental forces, the public has heard a little too much . . . and those who care for the earth with sincerity may wait long ere the pendulum swings back to her again. (*HE*:106)

This is the culmination of Forster's growing awareness that the sincere belief in the beneficial qualities of nature was being strangled by the literary conceit which typified the Edwardian period. Cavaliero is correct in arguing that "Forster was trying to liberate himself from a bad literary tradition" which has seen the "trivialisation of supernatural themes . . . since the seventeenth century."[19] *The Longest Journey* is the turning point in Forster's work where he deliberately moves from a dependence on classical allusion to something more immediately related to the countryside he felt worth saving.

This is evident in the change of setting between the short stories and the novels. Stape has suggested that the landscape of Forster's paradise on "The Other Side of the Hedge" is Virgilian in nature, and can be compared to Virgil's description of the Elysian Fields.[20] Virgilian or not, there is something particularly classical in the domesticity of Forster's descriptions of landscape in his stories. Ruskin has noted that what is typical of Greek feeling for nature is that "without single exception, every Homeric landscape, intended to be beautiful, is composed of a fountain, a meadow, and a shady grove." (v:234) Ruskin takes Homer's description of the island of Ogygia from the fifth book of the *Odyssey* as typical of the Greek ideal in landscape, but Forster's description

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[19] Glen Cavaliero, *A Reading of E. M. Forster*, London and Totowa, 1979, p. 40.

in "The Other Side of the Hedge", which is the model for all Forster's Arcadian landscapes, resembles Ruskin's own domestic vision more closely than it does that of either Homer or Virgil:

> The blue sky was no longer a strip, and beneath it the earth had risen grandly into the hills – clean, bare buttresses, with beech trees in their folds, and meadows and clear pools at their feet. But the hills were not high, and there was in the landscape a sense of human occupation – so that one might have called it a park, or garden, if the words did not imply a certain triviality and constraint. (*SS*:41)

In the novels, *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*, this model gives way to a fuller appreciation of the beauty of rural England. Forster seems aware of his error in applying classical allusions to a paradise he now found in the domesticity of English rural traditions. This appears a natural process in which Forster, like Rickie Elliot, first allows the imaginative borrowing from his classical education to colour his appreciation of the English countryside, but only when he has shed this taint can the Wiltshire landscape of *The Longest Journey*, or the Shropshire and Hertfordshire countryside of his youth celebrated in *Howards End*, be fully appreciated and that sincerity and comradeship which Forster had first searched for in the Greek be given a modern home. This realisation of his development is implied in Forster's remarks in *Howards End*:

> Why has not England a great mythology? Our folklore has never advanced beyond daintiness, and the greater melodies about our countryside have all issued through the pipes of Greece. Deep and true as the native imagination can be, it seems to have failed here. It has stopped with the witches and the fairies. It cannot vivify one fraction of a summer field, or give names to half a dozen stars. England still waits for the supreme moment of her literature—for the great poet who shall voice her, or, better still, for the thousand little poets whose voices shall pass into our common talk. (*HE*:264)

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[20] John H. Stape, "Myth, Allusion, and Symbol in E. M. Forster's 'The Other Side of the Hedge,'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 14 (1977), p. 376.

Through the passage of this mythological celebration of nature into the common talk and everyday life of man one may reaffirm, and reconnect with, a rural England which offers contact with "the graver sides of life" and a "feeling of completeness". Forster continues:

> In these English farms, if anywhere, one might see life steadily and see it whole, group in one vision its transitoriness and its eternal youth, connect—connect without bitterness until all men are brothers. (*HE*:266).

Recalling the essay, "Cnidus", it is easy to see how Forster could at once express a distaste for the revivifying of effete Greek mythology, and for the denial of relevance in the worship of nature as the Greeks had. Demeter and Persephone offer exactly that connection of "transitoriness" and "eternal youth" which Forster finds in rural life. Yet spring on an English farm need not be clad in "classical garb" to be "yet fairer than all springs; fairer even than she who walks through the myrtles of Tuscany with the graces before her and the zephyr behind." (*HE*:266)

A second point which is first dealt with in "Other Kingdom", but which is greatly developed in the later novel, is that of reality. Ford, elements of whom are to be found in the construction of both Stephen Wonham and Stuart Ansell,[21] is placed in conflict with his guardian, Worters, by the directness with which he views life. Worters, who anticipates the apotheosis of the practical man Henry Wilcox, is characterised by his habit of using the word "practically". For Worters, "Ninety-nine years is practically for ever" (*SS*:66), "life is practically a battle" (*SS*:67), and at the culmination of Worters's failed pursuit of Evelyn—"he had practically grasped her, he had missed; she had disappeared into the trees themselves" (*SS*:83). Conversely Ford sees things straight. In relating Ford's dreams of "another earth" mentioned above, Inskip adds that one characteristic of

[21] In Forster's "Plot" for *The Longest Journey*, dated 17/4/04, the character who was to become Ansell was originally conceived as Ford. (*LJ*:xlviii) Ford's physical characteristics have been expanded in the character of Stephen while his mental attributes find their apotheosis in Ansell.

this earth is that "everything is to be itself, and not practically something else." (*SS*:67) In Ford's final interview with Worters, Forster brings this opposition of the "practical" and the "actual" back to bear on the action with increased force. Ford admits to Inskip and Worters, who are both unable to understand Evelyn's disappearance, that "I have guessed it," once more eliciting from Worters the unfortunate phrase, to be followed by Ford's final rebuff:

> "So you practically—"
> "Oh, no, Mr Worters, you mistake me. I have not practically guessed. I have guessed. I could tell you if I chose, but it would be no good, for she has not practically escaped you. She has escaped you absolutely, for ever and ever . . .." (*SS*:85)

The sincerity of response to the external world which characterised the Greek view of nature and of godhead, the portrayal of which in Forster appears to have been as much a result of his reading of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* as it was of any other influence, is for Ruskin attributable to their objectivity. In the chapter "Of The Pathetic Fallacy", Ruskin substitutes those "tiresome and absurd words" (v:204)—objective and subjective—for the phrases "it is *so*" and "it seems so to me". (v:203) This is precisely the opposition which Forster is making in "Other Kingdom". Ford sees the world as it is, Worters as it seems to him. But this redefinition is only a stepping stone to Ruskin's real purpose; to demonstrate "the difference between the ordinary, proper, and true appearances of things to us; and the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influence of emotion, or contemplative fancy". (v:204) The former is the typically Greek objective perception of the material world, the latter is the pathetic fallacy, "a fallacy caused by an excited state of feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational" (v:205), which is subjective and pre-eminently modern.

The discussion of the cow which begins *The Longest Journey* may well be overlayed with Hegelian, Apostolic, or other Cambridge influences,[22] but it

[22] Tony Brown has even suggested that Forster owes this discussion to Carpenter's article "The Art of Creation". See "Edward Carpenter and the Discussion of the Cow in *The Longest Journey*," *Review of English Studies* 33 (Feb 1982), 58-62.

must be considered whether the initial impulse in this novel, remembering that it places tremendous importance on the Greek habit of looking "very straight at things" (*LJ*:174), was dictated by Forster's reading of Ruskin. The letter to Max Beerbohm quoted above clearly demonstrates that Forster was well aware of the connection between Ruskin's pathetic fallacy and objectivity, and Forster uses the discussion of the objective and the subjective, the discussion of the cow, to differentiate Rickie's subjective view of the world, his "diseased imagination" (*LJ*:17), or as Ruskin termed it "contemplative fancy", from Ansell's objective pursuit of what is real, and Stephen's inherent perception of objective reality. It is by this distinction that Ansell and Stephen, like their precursor Ford, are identified with Forster's Greek model of the natural man and are able to see rightly. Indeed, Ansell's habit of squaring the circle of is also probably derived from Ruskin's chapter "Of The Pathetic Fallacy". Ruskin defines objectivity, which Ansell represents, as the "qualities of things which they always have, irrespective of any other nature, as roundness or squareness". (v:202) Thus Ansell's search for objective truth lies in the centre of his pattern of circles within squares.

Rickie, on the other hand, who had merely mixed up his Pan with his Poetry and who only "pretends" a belief in the mythology of Greece, loses sight of reality and echoes the lack of insight, mixed with a love of Virgil, demonstrated in the character of Inskip.

Turning to *The Longest Journey*, having introduced the opposition of objective and subjective, with Ansell a champion of the former and Rickie a victim of the latter, Forster introduces Agnes, who is to be the battleground over which the opposed forces of Ansell and Rickie are to struggle. Agnes breaks in on the discussion just as Rickie is entertaining himself with a flight of bovine fancy:

> Either way it was attractive. If she was there, other cows were there too. The darkness of Europe was dotted with them, and in the far East their flanks were shining in the rising sun. Great

> herds of them stood browsing in pastures where no man came nor need ever come, or plashed knee-deep by the brink of impassable rivers. And this, moreover, was the view of Ansell. Yet Tilliard's view had a good deal in it. One might do worse than follow Tilliard, and suppose the cow not to be there unless oneself was there to see her. A cowless world, then, stretched round him on every side. Yet he had only to peep into a field, and click! it would at once become radiant with bovine life. (*LJ*:4-5)

This is the first of a number of purple patches which dot the novel. Rickie's vision of the life of an artist, his reaction to the embrace of Gerald and Agnes, and his vision of the burnt letter ascending to heaven, are used by Forster to highlight the imaginative aspect of Rickie which stands in contrast to Ansell (Stephen is yet to appear).

With regard to Rickie's imagination, it seems more than coincidental that Rickie should have a volume of Keats in his pocket when he visits the fir dell with Ansell and other friends. It was Keats, we may recall, who is introduced by Ruskin as an example of the falseness of the pathetic fallacy. And Rickie's admiration of Keats appears particularly pointed when we remember that Stephen, who along with Ansell stands in opposition to Rickie by virtue of his objectivity, is introduced to the reader by Mrs Failing with the remark "A thing of beauty you are not. But I sometimes think you are a joy for ever" (*LJ*:87)—negating the famous opening line of Keats's *Endymion*.[23] It is also worthy of note that as well as a number of points of contact between Forster and Virgil, Stape[24] also found a number of distinctly Keatsian allusions in Forster's "The Other Side of the Hedge". The move from Keatsian subjectivity can be seen to parallel the

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[23] We may recall that Forster concluded *Where Angels Fear to Tread* with a vision of Endymion. In that novel, this is meant as a positive vision and represents Philip's salvation. The revision of Forster's use of Keats in *The Longest Journey*, seems to connote Ruskin's influence. Likewise, Caroline's certainty that in leaving Gino "All the wonderful things are over," (*WAFT*:144), is echoed in the later novel where Rickie tells Agnes to "remember that the greatest thing is over." (*LJ*:54). This also appears to be a revision by Forster of what he had come to perceive as a less than satisfactory conclusion to the earlier novel.

[24] Stape, *op cit.*, p. 377-8.

move from Virgilian aestheticism; both reveal a desire to get in touch with nature in a more direct and sincere manner.

Yet in these initial manifestations of Rickie's imaginative fancy there is no fault attributed: though at the time he feels that he has "missed the whole point" (*LJ*:5) of the question of the cow, later he is aware that "I don't believe, for instance, that quite all I thought about the cow was rot." (*LJ*:14) And he is aware that he is possessed of a creative gift, and, as Forster demonstrates, not a little insight.

Rickie's insight is evident in his ingenuous yet scathing response to Herbert Pembroke's assertion that "The Army is a most interesting profession . . . that may mean death—death, rather than dishonour." (*LJ*:13) Forster can excuse Rickie his imaginative response to life so long as it manifests itself in innocent short stories. But Rickie's decline is the product of the misapplication of his imagination in the willing falsification of the facts concerning Agnes.

"Agnes" is the creation of Rickie's fancy working on the actual phenomena that is Agnes Pembroke. Ansell appears aware of Rickie's tendency towards the imaginative falsification of this woman from the outset, and openly denies her existence (her subjective existence as created by Rickie). On Agnes' entry to Rickie's rooms where the discussion of the cow was in progress Ansell alone out of the undergraduates chooses to remain. Forster explains that he was

> the sole remnant of the discussion party. He still stood on the hearth-rug with a burnt match in his hand. Miss Pembroke's arrival had never disturbed him. (*LJ*:7)

Ansell is undisturbed because he refuses to recognise "Agnes", his refuses to entertain and later that evening continues to deny her subjective existence to Rickie:

> ". . . I don't know whom you're talking about."
> "Miss Pembroke—whom you saw."
> "I saw no one."

"Who came in?"

"No one came in."

"You're an ass!" shrieked Rickie. "She came in. You saw her come in. She and her brother have been to dinner."

"You only think so. They were not really there."

"But they stop till Monday."

"You only think that they are stopping."

"But—oh, look here, shut up! The girl like an empress—"

"I saw no empress, nor any girl, nor have you seen them."

"Ansell, don't rag."

"Elliot, I never rag, and you know it. She was not really there."

There was a moment's silence. Then Rickie exclaimed, "I've got you. You say—or was it Tilliard?—no, *you* say that the cow's there. Well—there these people are, then. Got you. Yah!"

"Did it never strike you that phenomena may be of two kinds: *one*, those which have a real existence, such as the cow; *two*, those which are the subjective product of a diseased imagination, and which, to our destruction, we invest with the semblance of reality? If this never struck you, let it strike you now." (*LJ*:17)

Heedless of Ansell's warning, Rickie's willing falsification of Agnes leads him to his destruction. Forster notes Rickie's progression towards a loss of contact with the actual through Rickie's reaction to Gerald, Agnes's lover, whom Rickie had known as a schoolboy. On meeting Gerald again after many years Rickie was surprised, and here again his insight is initially evident, to find the former bully "peevish".

> Athletes, he believed, were simple, straightforward people, cruel and brutal if you like, but never petty. They knocked you down and hurt you, and then went on their way rejoicing. For this, Rickie thought, there is something to be said . . .. But here was Dawes returning again and again to the subject of the University, full of transparent jealousy and petty spite, nagging, nagging, nagging, like a maiden lady who has not been invited to a tea-party. (*LJ*:37)

Gerald joins Agnes as a focus for the exercise of Rickie's diseased imagination after Rickie happens to see them kiss. Rickie transfigures the rather

prosaic incident into a symbol of the holiness of human passion, and in his enthusiasm transfigures Gerald along the lines of a figure from Aristophanes:

> "Do you remember the thing in *The Clouds*?" And he quoted, as well as he could, from the invitation of the Dikaios Logos, the description of the young Athenian, perfect in body, placid in mind, who neglects his work at the Bar and trains all day among the woods and meadows, with a garland on his head and a friend to set the pace; the scent of the new leaves is upon them; they rejoice in the freshness of spring; over their heads the plane-tree whispers to the elm—perhaps the most glorious invitation to the brainless life that has ever been given. (*LJ*:47)

Forster, as narrator, reminds the reader of Gerald's true nature, facts that Rickie had previously been only too aware of.

> "Yes, yes," said Mr Pembroke, who did not want a brother-in-law out of Aristophanes. Nor had he got one, for Mr Dawes would not have bothered over the garland or noticed the spring, and would have complained that the friend ran too slowly or too fast. (*LJ*:47)

Forster marks the completion of Rickie's fall after Gerald's death, bringing the innocent side of Rickie's imagination in juxtaposition with the destructive, "diseased" element. "Who wants visions in a world that has Agnes and Gerald?" muses Rickie, and Forster explains:

> And so Rickie deflected his enthusiasms. Hitherto they had played on gods and heroes, on the infinite and the impossible, on virtue and beauty and strength. Now, with a steadier radiance, they transfigured a man who was dead and a woman who was still alive. (*LJ*:60)

Returning to Ruskin, it is easy to see the respective characters of Ansell and Rickie in the differentiation of the temperaments between those susceptible to, or free from, "wilful fancy" (v:205), or the indulgence in the pathetic fallacy. The temperament of the objective man, shared through his objectivity by Ansell, is described by Ruskin as follows:

> the difference between the great and the less man is, on the whole, chiefly in this point of *alterability*. That is to say, the one

> knows too much, and perceives and feels too much of the past and future, and of all things beside and around that which immediately affects him, to be in any wise shaken by it. His mind is made up; his thoughts have an accustomed current; his ways are steadfast; it is not this or that new sight which will at once unbalance him. He is tender to impression at the surface, like a rock with deep moss upon it; but there is too much mass of him to be moved. (v:209-10)

Rickie, on the other hand, as a writer of fanciful stories is comparable to Ruskin's description of the second order of men—"the men who feel strongly, think weakly, and see untruly" (v:209):

> The smaller man, with the same degree of sensibility, is at once carried off his feet; he wants to do something he did not want to do before; he views all the universe in a new light through his tears; he is gay or enthusiastic, melancholy or passionate, as things come and go to him. (v:210)

This being "carried off his feet" is of course most noticeable in the case of Rickie's reaction to the kiss. While Rickie may safely give rein to his fancy in short stories, it is through his enthusiasm over Agnes that he falls to his utter destruction.

Having recreated Gerald after the Greek ideal, Rickie sets about finding a classical parallel for Agnes, but without success.

> She slipped between examples. A kindly Medea, a Cleopatra with a sense of duty—these suggested her a little. She was not born in Greece, but came overseas to it—a dark, intelligent princess. With all her splendour, there were hints of splendour still hidden—hints of an older, richer, and more mysterious land. (*LJ*:47)

In his imagination Agnes appears to him very much as Lucy appeared to Cecil in *A Room with a View*. Like Cecil's idealisation of Lucy, Rickie's vision of Agnes owes not a little to Pater's famous description of the *Mona Lisa*. But finally Rickie hits upon the dryad of his short story to provide a model for his "Agnes". As early as the opening scene Forster had introduced Rickie as believing or, rather, pretending, "and the line between the two is subtler than we admit" (*LJ*:4),

that the elms in the courtyard of his college were dryads. Agnes, in seeking to secure him as a husband in place of her lost Gerald, blatantly plays upon Rickie's fancy which had revealed itself to her through his short stories: "Did you take me for the Dryad?" she asks him in the dell. Rickie responds, happily confusing reality with his fancy: "I prayed you might not be a woman". (*LJ*:73) Forster prefaces this conversation by informing the reader that "A bird called out of the dell . . .. A bird flew into the dell." (*LJ*:73) This allusion is probably to the opening lines of Shelley's "To a Skylark": "Hail to thee, blithe spirit / Bird thou never wert". And, as I shall discuss below, it is the willingness to confuse the reality of his relationship with Agnes—something which he shares with Shelley's desire to transform a bird into something it never was—which leads to his downfall.

The introduction of what is without doubt meant to be Forster's own short story "Other Kingdom" as the prelude to the capture of Rickie by Agnes provides a commentary on the fate which is to befall Rickie. That Forster intends a reading of "Other Kingdom" as a commentary on Rickie and Agnes is supported by the lightly veiled reference made by Mrs Failing. Having read Rickie's short story, and on the arrival of the affianced couple at her home, Mrs Failing passes through a laurel on her way to the house and is moved to remark: "Isn't it odd, . . . that the Greeks should be enthusiastic about laurels—that Apollo should pursue anyone who could possibly turn into such a frightful plant?" (*LJ*:91) This presents both an awareness of Rickie's tendency to imaginative fancy, and is a presentiment of her initial dislike for Agnes, the dryad of Rickie's fancy.

If we accept the common reading of "Other Kingdom" Rickie's capture by Agnes parallels Evelyn's capture by Mr Worters, and we would expect Rickie to escape flying "out the drawing-room window, shouting, 'Freedom and Truth!'" (*LJ*:71) as did the heroine of the short story introduced in this novel. This interpretation is correct after a fashion, yet in the end Rickie is never able, short of the final action which results in his death, to free himself of the

insincerity taught him by the Pembrokes. As Ansell had forewarned, Rickie falls victim physically and spiritually to his diseased imagination. Rickie's faith in the fancied dryad, Agnes Pembroke, parallels Ford's love of Evelyn Beaumont. Miss Beaumont, however, leads Ford to an escape from the conventions and half-truths of Worters's way of life, while Agnes only leads Rickie into the spiritually deadening lifestyle under Herbert Pembroke's patronage and his work at the Sawston School. Unlike Ford who willingly rejects Worters's patronage and the economic security it affords, Rickie is wholly misled into sacrificing his integrity to secure financial reward so that we are not surprised to find that "His first morning's work had brought sixty pounds a year to their hotel." (*LJ*:172).

Little need be said regarding Sawston School which is the cage for which Agnes was the bait. The school is the same as that in which Edgar failed miserably in *Nottingham Lace*. But the sincere, right feeling, sensitive, intelligent and muscular Trent who came to Edgar's assistance, a character echoed in Ford and George Emerson, is in *The Longest Journey* divided into two characters, Ansell and Stephen Wonham, Rickie's half-brother. It is through their accidental coming together in the school grounds that Rickie is finally made to take notice of his fate. By this time, however, the interest of the novel has already passed from his downfall to the struggles of Stephen who must also face the choice between money and life.

Stephen is little more than a ploughboy, who revels in his body. Ansell, like Trent before him, is a draper's son who studies philosophy at Cambridge with Rickie and who has great contempt for the muscular set. Yet Forster through his allusions manages to create an ongoing link between these, on first glance, contrasting characters which reveals their genesis in the Ford character from "Other Kingdom"—Ford, it will be remembered, was a scholar, with a predilection for the "real", and possessed of physical strength gained, he supposed, "while he was reading Pindar". (*SS*:70)

Ansell and Stephen can be seen as the two sides of the Greek ideal exalted in Pindar's *Odes*. Moreover they share the objective outlook which Ruskin saw as characterising the Greek temperament. Ansell's comments concerning Agnes have been noted, but Stephen, as Mrs Failing cynically points out, is equally free from fancy.

> "You distress me. You rob the Pastoral of its lingering romance. Is there no poetry and no thought in England? Is there no one, in all these downs, who warbles with eager thought the Doric lay?"
>
> "Chaps sing to themselves at times, if you mean that."
>
> "I dream of Arcady: I open my eyes: Wiltshire. Of Amaryllis: Flea Thompson's girl. Of the pensive shepherd, twitching his mantle blue: you in an ulster." *(LJ*:88)

Stephen should not, however, be consigned to the lowest of Ruskin's orders of men, those who "feel nothing, and therefore see truly" (v:209), and who lie beneath both Ansell and Rickie. He is awake to the beauty of nature around him, and the responsive chord within his own body can be seen in his excursion with Rickie to Salisbury.

> He was tortured with the feeling that he could not get away and do—do something, instead of being civil to this anaemic prig. Four hours in the rain was better than this: he had not wanted to fidget in the rain. But now the air was like wine, and the stubble was smelling of wet, and over his head white clouds trundled more slowly and more seldom through broadening tracts of blue. There never had been such a morning, and he shut up his eyes and called to it. (*LJ*:108)

The call to nature upon the leaf which made Rickie wince reminds us of Eustace from "The Story of a Panic" (1904) and the "ear-splitting" and "excruciating" sound produced from his whistle that set the picnic party on edge moments before panic seized them (*SS*:22), and before what Merivale had called the "inner world" was revealed to Eustace.

Stephen shares with Ansell the objective view of Nature that Ruskin saw as characterising the Greeks, and he adds to it a sympathy with Nature which

Ansell is perhaps lacking, and which marks Stephen as the hero of the novel. He also shares with Ansell a quality which Mr Pembroke had thought characterised the Greek world, "a low conception of women". (*LJ*:46) Forster also introduces into his characterisation of Stephen the picture of the Demeter of Cnidus, that symbol of connection and inherent right feeling noted in his earlier essay. The statue of Demeter also connects Stephen to Ansell, who must pass it in the British Museum while contemplating the fateful visit to Rickie where he encounters Stephen by chance. During the ensuing discussion with Widdrington in the British Museum about the prospects of rescuing Rickie, Ansell also unwittingly links himself to the character of Stephen. Widdrington believes himself and Ansell to be just "philosophic youths" who "drift and criticize" but never act. Ansell disabuses him, saying "Perhaps you are that sort. I'm not. When the moment comes I shall hit out like any ploughboy." (*LJ*:180).The ploughboy of the comparison is understood by the reader to be Stephen.

Similarly, Stephen is shown as sharing Ansell's concern with moral philosophy. Ansell had taken a first in the Moral Science Tripos; Stephen proceeds to knock the bottom out of organised religion via the pocket philosophies of Miss Julia P. Chunk and Colonel Robert Ingersoll. (*LJ*:89) Both are concerned with the questions of existence which Inskip in "Other Kingdom" had been unable to answer, not having taken Moral Science Tripos. (*SS*:78) In all this Ansell and Stephen are portrayed as two complementary aspects of the single character based on Ford from "Other Kingdom". Yet what differentiates Ansell from Stephen is his economic security. Ansell, who has made the choice to study rather than pursue a more lucrative career in the Public Service, is nonetheless provided for by his father and is free from the economic uncertainty which resulted from Ford's decision to leave Worters, and which will face Stephen.

This interest in Stephen, and the question of economics which faces him, springs in part from Forster's encounter with a lame shepherd on Figsbury Rings in September 1904, but even in Forster's use of the shepherd as a model for Stephen we find echoes of Ruskin. As early as July 18 of that year Forster had

began to shape his ideas for the novel *The Longest Journey*. His diary entry for that date reads: "An idea for an entire novel—that of a man who discovers he has an illegitimate brother—took shape since Saturday."

Forster also recalls the genesis of this novel in his talk "Three Countries"[25] given in Milan and Rome during the November of 1959. In that talk he reveals that "I had drafted it out before I got interested in Wiltshire. Its theme—it's about a man who discovers he has an illegitimate brother—had already been decided upon. Its philosophy—it's about reality and the need of accepting it—had also been noted and its title had already been taken from a poem by Shelley. But all that is pretty dry." (*HD*:295)

What interested Forster in Wiltshire was obviously the shepherd he met upon the Rings, and the depth of the impression left upon Forster is evident in his diary entries from that time. One in particular dated September 12 reads:

> Today walked out to Figsbury Ring, to try and find the lame shepherd of last Friday: he had gone to Wilton, & I suppose I shan't again see one of the most remarkable people I've ever met. What strikes me even more than his offering me his pipe to smoke is his enormous wisdom: his head—whether he knows it or not—is out of the water: if only he isn't bowled over by the beastly money! . . . This 'incident' assures my opinion that the English can be the greatest men in the world: he was miles greater than an Italian: one cannot dare to call his simplicity naïf. The aesthetic die away attitude seems contemptible in a world which has such people.

In this we see the convergence of a number of themes we have touched upon already, particularly the new awareness of the importance of money, especially the notion that the pursuit of economic security is hazardous to the integrity of man, and Forster's move from the Greek ideal and the Greek paradise of his short stories to a growing awareness of the potential of the actual men around him, and of the countryside which produces them. Forster in developing the character of

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[25] Published in the Abinger Edition of *The Hill of Devi and other Indian writings*, Ed. Elizabeth Heine, London,1993.

Stephen makes it clear that while he corresponds to the Greek ideal in many aspects, in Stephen there is something that may be greater than the model the Greeks provide. Ansell is able to see this in Stephen where Rickie isn't:

> He gave the idea of an animal with just enough soul to contemplate its own bliss. United with refinement, such a type was common in Greece. It is not common today, and Ansell was surprised to find it in a friend of Rickie's. *(LJ*:212)

And again Ansell notices the possibilities inherent in Stephen, much as Forster must have asked himself about the lame shepherd:

> Was it only a pose to like this man, or was he really wonderful? He was not romantic, for Romance is a figure with outstretched hands, yearning for the unattainable. Certain figures of the Greeks, to whom we continually return, suggested him a little. (*LJ*:213)

Forster's concern has obviously switched from the man who discovered he had an illegitimate brother, to the illegitimate brother himself. This new hero is a development from the Greek ideal of Forster's short stories into something present and actual. Forster acknowledges as much in "Three Countries", and acknowledges also that (as much as *Howards End*) *The Longest Journey* is a novel of inheritance and so stands as the important link in Forster's philosophy between the fantastic short stories and the political and economic realities of *Howards End.*

> sitting upon the Rings several times and talking to the shepherds who frequented them, I had an emotion appropriate to the work in hand and particularly to the creation of one of the characters in it. Stephen Wonham. This rustic hero is not to everyone's taste. He can be boorish and a bore and when he gets drunk it is not upon wine. But he belongs to the countryside, he faces reality and he is the inheritor. The book closes, like *Howards End*, with the possession of England. Margaret Schlegel at the end of the first book sees the great meadow mown. Stephen, at the end of the second, sits on the downs with his child asleep beside him, watching her, and watching the train move away through the dying landscape and carrying back to the town the tiresomeness

> of the town. He inherits more securely than Margaret, because he belongs to the soil, and his bonds with it are physical. (*HD*:295)

Though there is a firm biographical basis for Stephen, the comparison of the rural Englishman with the Greek is not new and, perhaps not coincidentally, can be found in the conclusion to Ruskin's chapter "Of Classical Landscape". In this chapter Ruskin strikes upon a comparison between a Border farmer and the Greek ideal which may have provided the basis for Forster. Ruskin concludes that the "the easy, athletic, strongly logical and argumentative, yet fanciful and credulous, characters of mind, would be very similar in both". (v:246) What Ruskin sees as the basic requirement to bring the rural Scot up to the standard set by the Greeks is refinement or "high cultivation".

Forster takes a Wiltshire shepherd as his raw material, yet like Ruskin, believes that by adding refinement to this human animal, with just enough soul to be aware of pleasure, something resembling the Greek ideal will result. This correspondence provides another instance where Forster's knowledge of *Modern Painters* may have been of use in his work. Moreover, Forster places Stephen Wonham under the guardianship of the eminently Ruskinian Mr Tony Failing.

Although recent commentators, such as Brown and Beauman,[26] see Edward Carpenter as the probable original of Mr Failing, Holt, writing at a time when Ruskin's fame was still very much alive, does not fail to notice the connection between Ruskin and Failing, a connection he defines in terms we have already noted:

> Two other men in this novel, Stephen and Mr Failing, represent by their potentialities, if not by their achievements, the natural and genuine reaction to life which Rickie the weakling wanted to achieve but of which he fell short. Mr Failing had been a writer

[26] Tony Brown, "Edward Carpenter, Forster and the Evolution of *A Room with a View*," *English Literature in Transition* 30 (1987), p. 281, and Nicola Beauman, *Morgan*, London, 1994, p. 208-9.

> like John Ruskin or William Morris, interested in art and beauty but more interested in social amelioration.[27]

Mr Failing's father, we learn, was a parson (*LJ*:86) as wwere both Carpenter's and Samuel Butler's. However, the description of Failing given by Forster reveals marked similarities to Ruskin's career:

> Mr Failing was the author of some brilliant books on socialism . . . and for twenty-five years he reigned up at Cadover and tried to put his theories into practice. [Yet for] . . . all his tact, he would often stretch out the hand of brotherhood too soon, or withhold it when it would have been accepted. Most people misunderstood him, or only understood him when he was dead. In after years his reign became a golden age; but he counted a few disciples in his lifetime, a few young labourers and tenant farmers, who swore tempestuously that he was not really a fool. This, he told himself, was as much as he deserved. (*LJ*:97-98)

While Ruskin's books on socialism may not be brilliant, Failing's attempt to put his theories into practice do resemble Ruskin's own failed attempts at collectivism with the Guild of St George. The very name "Failing" reminds us of Ruskin's attempts, and Forster's description of Failing strangely prefigures Sawyer's portrait of Ruskin after the failure of the St George's Guild where, "his sense of failure and loss . . . condemned him to an underlying solitude".[28] The image of Failing presented to Rickie through a meeting with Mr Jackson further conjures up the spectre of Ruskin:

> He loved poetry and music and pictures, and everything tempted him to live in a kind of cultured paradise, with the door shut upon squalor. But to have more decent people in the world—he sacrificed everything to that. He would have 'smashed the whole beauty-shop' if it would help him. (*LJ*:174)

Mr Failing appears to play but a minor role in the novel. However, Forster uses Failing in a way which captures the ambivalence he felt about

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[27] Lee Elbert Holt, "E. M. Forster and Samuel Butler," *PMLA* 61 (1946), p. 809.

[28] Paul L. Sawyer, *Ruskin's Poetic Argument: The Design of the Major Works*, Ithaca and London, 1985, p. 264.

Ruskin at this time. First, as a champion of the Greek way of life he is a test by which we are able to recognise the positive characters in the novel. He is obviously admired by Mr Jackson, and Ansell, though he thought Failing's work to be "old-fashioned, and . . . picked many holes in it", felt that he made "several good remarks. Very notable was his distinction between coarseness and vulgarity".[29] (*LJ*:207) But Mr Failing's influence over Stephen is short lived.

As noted in the previous chapter, Forster's advice to the Working Men's College, and to Leonard Bast, with regard to appreciating the beauty of life was to keep one's heart and brain clear, and not to "bother too much about 'developing the esthetic sense,' as books term it". (*AE*:174) Thus when Stephen as a child experiences first-hand the power of Pan, and Failing seeks to explain Stephen's experience through Virgil's second-hand response to Pan, Stephen's only response was to think him "quite stupid" (*LJ*:117) And Failing's further attempt to instruct Stephen in Latin "was a failure":

> who could attend to Virgil when the sound of the thresher arose, and you knew that the stack was decreasing and that the rats rushed more plentifully each moment to their doom? (*LJ*:241)

Due to Failing's early death, and through Mrs Failing's *laissez-faire* attitude to Stephen's upbringing, Stephen's heart and brain, unlike those of the unfortunate Leonard, are kept clean.

So for all the praise of the Ruskin-like Failing, Forster conspires to keep Stephen from being spoiled by a Ruskinian education. We are left with a boy with a sincere and direct appreciation of nature, physically well-developed, and with an inquiring, if under-developed, mind. We have the making of a hero. And

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[29] This distinction is almost certainly drawn from Ruskin's chapter on "Vulgarity" in the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*. Ruskin makes the distinction between "vulgarity" and "coarseness" that "vulgarity is indicated by coarseness of language or manners, only so far as this coarseness has been contracted under circumstances not necessarily producing it." And thus the "provincial dialect is not vulgar; but cockney dialect, the corruption, by blunted sense, of a finer language continually heard" is. (vii:354-5) Notice here also that what Ruskin says of the Cockney is also echoed in Forster's criticism of the Cockney foreman who while

not surprisingly, but for the lack of a crippled leg, we have the lame shepherd Forster had met upon Figsbury Rings.

Recalling the discussion of Forster's imaginative release from the pressure of his own inability to procreate above in chapter three, it is easy to see why Forster should transpose the lameness of the shepherd, the one point which prevents him from embodying Forster's ideal, onto himself. Trilling agrees that Rickie has "a touch of Maugham's Philip Carey (for he has a club foot and an unhappy taste in women)".[30] But Trilling doesn't see that this physical similarity between Rickie and Maugham's autobiographical Philip Carey from *Of Human Bondage*, is a metaphor for their homosexuality, a similarity which continues into their private lives with both Maugham and Forster displaying a marked concern about their homosexuality preventing them from procreating. On the death of his severely crippled baby, Rickie realises that "no child should ever be born to him again." (*LJ*:184) Forster, accepting his homosexuality, was aware that he, like the lame Rickie, would have no children. And though in *A Passage to India* he is able to declare through the character of Fielding that he would "far rather leave a thought behind me than a child" (*PI*:110) this belies the emphasis he was to place on procreation in the fantastic "Little Imber" and the obvious jealousy of Stephen's chance of immortality:

> he [Stephen] would have children: he, not Rickie, would contribute to the stream; he, through his remote posterity, might be mingled with the unknown sea. (*LJ*:192)

By accepting the lame leg as a symbol of his own inability to provide genetically for the future of England Forster generates from the shepherd he met on the Rings a hero, Stephen Wonham, who will populate England with the kind of stock Forster would wish himself to be able to produce. The mythological counterparts with whom Forster connects Stephen confirm and reinforce this notion of Stephen as saviour and founder of a new race. Elizabeth Heine, in her

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allowing no swearing, "indulged in something far more degraded—the Cockney repartee." (*LJ*:246)

introduction to the Abinger edition of the novel, acknowledges the Wagnerian symbols present throughout *The Longest Journey*, especially that Rickie's association of Agnes with the "Prelude to Rhinegold" is an example of his "diseased imagination", and that the lame Rickie resembles Alberic in his theft of love from Agnes, the Rhine Maiden. But more importantly Heine also tends to confirm the critical stance which affirms Stephen as suggestive of Wagner's Siegfried. (*LJ*:xiii)

Brown[31] has argued that *The Longest Journey* can be read as a variation on the Parsifal legend, and there is much evidence to support his claim. Yet, and this is admitted by Brown, there is much in Stephen that also resembles the hero of *Siegfried*. Forster had seen the Ring cycle while he was staying in Germany in 1905, and his reaction to the performance may be judged from a letter to Arthur Cole written at that time:

> Your letter found me in Dresden, half way through the Ring of the Nibelung—the better half way, I think, for I doubt whether any thing is as stupendous as the end of Rhinegold, or as heroic as the Act I of the Valkürie. I only care about Wotan and Walhalla: Siegmund is an intruder even, though a glorious one, and as for Siegfried—words fail me, even as they failed you with another fair haired Child of Destiny. . . . To insist on marrying your half-aunt on both sides and then totally forget her — this, as far as I can make out, is all that Siegfried does after gaining the Ring, the Tarn cap, and the Sword.[32]

It seems perhaps odd that Forster should choose Siegfried as a mythic model for his hero, yet as Brown notes Siegfried appears to have been the earliest name Forster had considered using for the character who was to become Stephen, and that in his "boyish boisterousness, even loutishness"[33] Stephen recalls Forster's characterisation of Siegfried as "a cad" (*AE*:143) in "Pessimism in Literature".

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[30] Lionel Trilling, *E. M. Forster: A Study*, London, 1962, p.69.

[31] Tony Brown, "E. M. Forster's *Parsifal*: A Reading of *The Longest Journey*," *Journal of European Studies* 12 (March 1982), p. 30-54.

[32] Lago and Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 68.

[33] Brown, "E. M. Forster's *Parsifal*," *op cit.*, p. 44.

Forster's final word on Siegfried in that essay—"an upstart boy, who marries a woman ten times better than himself" (*AE*:144)—also recalls his letter to Cole.

Interestingly, in this essay for the Working Men's College, Forster has also connected the modern habit of pessimism, exemplified in Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island,* with Wagner's Ring cycle. Wagner's failure to produce a hero in Siegfried who will "fit into the spirit of modern art" is due to the Siegfried's joyfulness being inconsistent with the modern frame of mind which tends to "see in everything some latent discomfort and sorrow." (*AE*:144) As intimated by this connection of Wagner and Shaw, Forster may well have been influenced by Shaw's own exegesis of the Ring cycle, published as *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898). The disparity between Siegfried as a model for Stephen, and the Siegfried which Forster had so roundly criticised earlier, is perhaps explained by the influence of Shaw's notion of "Siegfried as Protestant":

> a type of the healthy man raised to perfect confidence in his own impulses by an intense and joyous vitality which is above fear, sickliness of conscience, malice, and the makeshifts and moral crutches of law and order which accompany them.[34]

Shaw believes that such a character "appears extraordinarily fascinating and exhilarating to our guilty and conscience-ridden generations", and in this interpretation of Siegfried Shaw also captures exactly the temperament of Forster's hero. Yet Shaw also notes that while delighting in the hero "delivered from conscience" the world has seen to it that "he has been decorously given to the devil at the end", that "mischievousness, cruelty, and utter incapacity for sympathy" are the accepted concomitants of "magnificent bodily and mental health."[35] In opposition to Siegfried is, first and foremost, Wotan. In Shaw's scheme Wotan represents social organisation, religion and law, and all those who are "forced to maintain as sacred, and themselves submit to, laws which they privately know to be obsolescent make-shifts, and to affect the deepest

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[34] George Bernard Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite*, London, 1926, p. 64.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 64-5.

veneration for the creeds and ideals which they ridicule among themselves with cynical scepticism."[36]

In striving against Wotan, Shaw believes Wagner to succumbed to "panacea mania". The conflict between humanity and government can only be remedied through Love, "the solvent of all social difficulties".[37] In this Shaw argues that Wagner was anticipated by Shelley. Shelley's Wotan was Jupiter, his Siegfried, Prometheus, but the love panacea was the same. Shaw, however, differentiates between the form of the love panacea utilised by Shelley and Wagner. The "love which acts as a universal solvent in . . . *Prometheus Unbound* is a sentiment of affectionate benevolence which has nothing to do with sexual passion",[38] while Wagner's love, a more sexual passion, perhaps the urge to procreate, can be understood as "life itself as a tireless power which is continually driving onward and upward".[39]

Forster, for his part, found a fitting substitute for Wotan or Jupiter in the figure of Ruskin. As mentioned in the introduction, it appears that Forster's object in his pre-war novels was the dethroning of Ruskin from his seat of authority. Ruskin had noted the sincerity and objectivity of the Greek ideal, but rather than use this to free society from ignorant bible worship and Mammonism, he preferred to find in it a tool to promote the re-application of medieval Christian doctrine, and a return to feudal socio-economic structures. Forster had based his ideal of the natural man very closely on Ruskin's prescription in *Modern Painters*, but could not accept Ruskin's inaction. The natural man, Forster's Siegfried, is thus placed in opposition to Ruskin. This accounts for the ambiguous nature of Mr Failing.

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

As noted above, Failing has certain positive traits, comparable to those Forster had recognised in Ruskin, yet in his dealings with Robert, Stephen's father, we see that at heart he is still ruled by religious and social prejudices. When Stephen's father admits his love for Mrs Elliot to Mr Failing, expecting a sympathetic hearing, he is turned out of Cadover. He queries Mr Failing on his ideas of the brotherhood of man: "I thought love was to bring it about". Failing has fallen to the Shelleyan panacea of sentimental love and is embarrassed when he realises his inconsistency, but feels obliged to uphold the laws of propriety. Failing rejoins without confidence that

> "Love of another man's wife? Sensual love? You have understood nothing—nothing." Then he was ashamed, and cried, "I understand nothing myself." For he remembered that sensual and spiritual are not easy words to use; that there are, perhaps, not two Aphrodites, but one Aphrodite with a Janus face. (*LJ*:233)

Forster uses the Wagnerian notion of love as life force as a weapon against the sentimental love of Mr Failing. Stephen, the product of Robert and Mrs Elliot, represents a continuation of Robert's passion. That Failing is unable to induce Stephen to accept his own position is evident in his failure to educate Stephen, and on Failing's death, Stephen as a second generation Siegfried is left to carry on his attack on the prejudices which Failing, for all his fine qualities, represented and which Rickie, as Failing's spiritual heir, himself represents.

Rickie, like Mr Failing, places his faith in the Brotherhood of Man. Ansell, early in the novel, objects warmly to his Shelleyan stance, declaring: "You think it is so splendid to hate no one. I tell you it is a crime. You want to love everyone equally, and that's worse than impossible—it's wrong." (*LJ*:20) Later it is made clear that Rickie had thought Shelley's notions "very good" (*LJ*:126), and in reply to Ansell's letter reminding him of his faith in Shelley, Rickie admits that he still hopes to love Ansell and Agnes both. But that was before his marriage to Agnes. His association with Agnes leads him to regard Shelley as "a little inhuman" (*LJ*:127), and he can even condescend to "poor

Shelley" as "one who stands out of the broad highway of the world and fears . . . to undertake the longest journey." (*LJ*:167)

Yet Rickie's realisation of his spiritual destruction at the hands of Agnes and Sawston School entails a reaction against marriage, and Rickie comes to think of Shelley once more as "a man less foolish than you supposed." (*LJ*:263) Of course, Rickie's experience of marriage, sexual relations and procreation are out of the ordinary. He has entered into the journey with unreal expectations, resulting from his idealisation of Agnes. His experiences are by no means meant to imply a preference on Forster's behalf for Shelley's brotherhood over marriage and sexual love. Rather, like his father before him, Stephen's urge to procreate stands as the example of Wagner's sexual love, of what Shaw had called "life itself as a tireless power". It is the failure of Rickie's Shelleyan desire to love everyone equally which is highlighted in the sexual passion and force of Stephen's relationship at the end of the novel. The Wagnerian hero has vanquished the Shelleyan. Yet this victory of life and sex has also conquered the Jupiter-like figure of Mr Failing, and by association Ruskin.

Beneath this primary opposition are ranged the minor obstructions of Alberic, Mime, Fafnir and so on. The comparison between Stephen and Siegfried can be expanded to allow Mrs Failing his lame guardian to represent the dwarf Mime, whom Shaw describes as a "blinking, shambling, ancient creature,"[40] who raises the orphaned Siegfried. Heine prefers to associate Mrs Failing with the dragon of Wagner's story, claiming that "Stephen's mythic model explains why he is conceived in Scandinavia; his mysterious birth and casual upbringing are very much those of the archetypal hero, as his guardian, Mrs Failing, tells us, likening herself to the dragon so often associated with Teutonic heroes." (*LJ*:xiv) Certainly Mrs Failing does associate herself with the dragon—"I have been a dragon most of my life, I think" (*LJ*:102)—but the more important point is her vague note of warning to Agnes to beware of a hero like Stephen: "Ah, wait till

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

you are the dragon!". For Forster's reworking of the Siegfried myth has Mrs Failing as Mime, from whom Stephen as Siegfried will receive the papers explaining his birth (the destructive potential represents the sword Northung) with which Siegfried destroys Fafnir the dragon (Agnes) and secure the gold which is the inheritance Agnes, wearing the helmet of respectability, is trying to hoard away from him. As Shaw suggested, society is loath to allow the hero his victory. Agnes and the man who gave Stephen a lift to Andover after his expulsion from Cadover, share the belief that Stephen is "a blot on God's earth" (*LJ*:216), and their attitude threatens to destroy Stephen.

Even Rickie, whom the hypocrisy of his life with the Pembrokes has rendered spiritually crippled, is unable to conceive of Stephen, who has rescued him from Agnes, as anything but a "force making for evil".[41] Yet Forster seems more unwilling than Wagner to have his hero destroyed by society, and through Rickie's death is able to provide his hero with the economic means to exist outside of those who see him as evil and establishes Stephen as the founder of a new race. In this provision for Stephen's well-being, while maintaining his integrity, Forster has successfully revised Ruskin's belief in virtue expressed through self-denial, and at the expense of economic support. It is perhaps the first sign of Forster's desire to harmonise Old Morality with New Economy.

In Stephen, the natural man, Forster finds his answer to the problem of who shall inherit England. This question also appears in Ruskin's lecture, "The Future of England" which was published *The Crown of Wild Olive*. As mentioned above Forster possessed a 1906 edition of this volume at his death and it is probable that he had read it while working on *The Longest Journey*. Ruskin's lecture focuses on what he sees as "a great political crisis" for England, "a struggle . . . between the newly-risen power of democracy and the apparently departing power of feudalism; and another struggle, no less imminent, and far more dangerous, between wealth and pauperism." (xviii:494) Ruskin's answer to

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

the dissatisfaction attendant to the rise of democracy was a return to feudalism, to Lords governing a country filled with "men brave, wise and happy!" (xviii:500) But the problem which Ruskin sees arising is one of scale; "What do you mean by a great nation," he asks, "but a great multitude of men who are true to each other, and strong, and of worth? Now you can increase the multitude only definitely—your island has only so much standing room—but you can increase the *worth in*definitely."

Ruskin's idea for increasing the worth of the Englishmen who may inhabit this small island is through the correct governing of men, and to govern men is to educate them, "they are one and the same word."

> Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. And the true 'compulsory education' which the people now ask of you is not catechism, but drill. It is not teaching the youth of England the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers; and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery, and their literature to lust. It is, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. (xviii:502)

This "kingly continence" leads us directly to Ruskin's other lecture in *Sesame and Lilies*, "Of King's Gardens". As demonstrated in the previous chapter Bast represents the Londoner caught between feudalism and democracy who has taken Ruskin's advice in order to increase his worth, or at least his sense of his own worth, and has not only been caught in the muddle of that abyss between the agricultural and the philosophical, but also in the economic muddle that results from Ruskin's failure to understand the importance of a tradition in the accumulation of culture, and perhaps more importantly, the economic security on which it is based. Stephen anticipates Bast and his son as the model of the future of England.

What all this Wagnerian imagery amounts to is an attempt by Forster to localise his hero. As mentioned earlier in this chapter Forster in *Howards End* is moved to ask "Why has not England a great mythology?" (*HE*:264) In fact it did

have the Arthurian tales, but these tales are Christian in essence, and Forster's early classicism is always in opposition to the Christian spirit.[42] In this novel, however, Forster reacting against his own classicism leads the reader back through Wagner's Ring cycle and Parsifal, through Teutonic mythology to the legends surrounding Arthur. Forster's movement away from the classic through the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon is represented in the vague history of Cadbury Ring itself. Was it "British? Roman? Saxon? Danish?" (*LJ*:97), did it contain the remains of soldiers or shepherds?, had they worshipped Mars? or Pan? or Erda? Forster's vagueness concerning the Rings forms a spiritual line from the early mythologies down to the soldiers and shepherds who inhabit the area still. It seems a fitting shrine to Demeter, but she is only an embodiment of the veneration of the earth which Forster attempts to relocate to a worship of England, through which men like Stephen can be produced and Ruskin's concern for the future of England answered.

The Wiltshire landscape first appears in Forster's "The Curate's Friend" (1907), as the home of kindly Faun, who rescues the Curate from a life of hypocrisy but only through the Curate's possession of a "certain quality, for which truthfulness is too cold a name and animal spirits too coarse a one". (*SS*:86) How this Faun came to inhabit Wiltshire is to Forster uncertain, "Perhaps he came over with the Roman legionaries . . ., perhaps he came to be there because he had been there always." For there is, as Forster continues,

> nothing particularly classical about a faun: it is only that the Greeks and Italians have ever had the sharpest eyes. You will find him in the 'Tempest' and the 'Benedicite'; and any country which has beech clumps and sloping grass and very clear streams may reasonably produce him. (*SS*:86)

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[42] This can be seen in "Other Kingdom" where Worters, disturbed by Miss Beaumont's unresponsiveness to his attempts at love-making, tries to keep her apart from Ford of whom he is suspicious; "She scarcely knows her Tennyson at all. Last night in the conservatory I read her that wonderful scene between Arthur and Guinevere. Greek and Latin are all very well, but I sometimes feel we ought to begin at the beginning". (*SS*:73)

Forster is here forced to appropriate Classical mythology to populate his rural paradise, yet by the time he writes *Howards End* he has rejected this classicism for the English tradition of white pig's teeth in the bark of a wych-elm.[43]

In this story Forster also introduces an earthwork, similar to that of the Rings, and which is to be the scene of the drama which unfolds. "Opposite the village," he writes, "across the stream, was a small chalk down, crowned by a beech copse and a few Roman earthworks." (*SS*:87) Again prefiguring the vagueness in his treatment of the Rings in *The Longest Journey*, Forster continues in an aside that "I lectured vividly on those earthworks: they have since proved to be Saxon." Yet for all the Classical references with which Forster half-heartedly adorns the Wiltshire landscape, it is as a shrine to the worship of England that Forster appreciates Wiltshire, "which is indeed only beautiful to those who admire the land, and to them perhaps the most beautiful in England."

> For here is the body of the great chalk spider who straddles over our island – whose legs are the south downs and the north downs and the Chilterns, and the tips of whose toes poke out at Cromer and Dover. He is a clean creature, who grows as few trees as he can, and those few in tidy clumps, and he loves to be tickled by quick flowing streams. He is pimpled all over with earthworks, for from the beginning of time men have fought for the privilege of standing on him, and the oldest of our temples is built upon his back. (*SS*:88)

This eulogy of Wiltshire, and with it rural England as a whole, reappears almost unchanged into *The Longest Journey*:

> Chalk made the dust white, chalk made the water clear, chalk made the clean rolling outlines of the land, and favoured the grass and the distant coronals of trees. Here is the heart of our island: the Chilterns, the North Downs, the South Downs radiate hence. The fibres of England unite in Wiltshire, and did we condescend to worship her, here we would erect our national shrine. (*LJ*:126)

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[43] This change is also intimated in "Other Kingdom" where Miss Beaumont, though an emanation from the pagan past, reveals her understanding of the local tradition of young lovers their carving initials in the trees. Worters is astounded by her knowledge, exclaiming: "Fancy folk-lore in Hertfordshire!" (*SS*:74)

Hints of Wiltshire are still to be found in the vision of England which greets the watchers gathered on the "final section of the Purbeck hills" in *Howards End*:

> Beneath . . . is the valley of the Frome, and all the wild lands that come tossing down from Dorchester, black and gold, to mirror their gorse in the expanses of Poole. The valley of the Stour is beyond, unaccountable stream, dirty at Blandford, pure at Wimborne—the Stour, sliding out of fat fields, to marry the Avon beneath the tower of Christchurch. The valley of the Avon—invisible, but far to the north the trained eye may see Clearbury Ring that guards it, and the imagination may leap beyond that onto Salisbury Plain itself, and beyond the Plain to all the glorious downs of central England. (*HE*:164)

Forster's love of Wiltshire is extended back to embrace his childhood home at Rooksnest in *Howards End*, and forward to embrace all of rural England and the local life and the tradition which represent the life of the spirit therein. Earthworks also figure in *Howards End*. There are the "six Danish tumuli . . ., tombs of soldiers" (*HE*:12-13), which stand by Hilton, the station for Howards End, and there is the ruined castle at Oniton which stood as a reminder to the battles between the Saxons and the Celts. Yet these remnants of a previous age are not presented with any of the vagueness of the Rings, and don't attempt to span the Classical and the Teutonic, but stand firmly rooted in British tradition. The distancing of Forster from his Classical conceits, which marked his growing love of England is most clearly demonstrated in his concern with London in *Howards End* as threatening the survival of his England. London is inexplicable to Forster,

> It lies beyond everything: Nature, with all her cruelty, comes nearer to us than do these crowds of men. A friend explains himself; the earth is explicable—from her we came, and we must return to her. But who can explain [London] . . .. (*HE*:106-107)

What is most worthy of notice here is Forster's description of Nature, "with all her cruelty", and as that from which we come and to which we must return. In *The Longest Journey*, Rickie is also made to perceive "the cruelty of Nature" (*LJ*:192), but Nature, and the associated mysteries of procreation and death, are

throughout this novel personified in the figure of Demeter (and by association Persephone). In *Howards End* Forster has left all hint of Classicism behind.

Returning to *The Longest Journey*, while Forster desires to create an English tradition through the use of the Cadbury Rings and the Wagnerian imagery, the myth which best defines the relationship between Rickie and Stephen, and Stephen's role in the novel as founder of a new race, as an answer to Ruskin's question of worth, is borrowed from Virgil; the story of Aeneas and Dido. We know that during 1904, while Forster was engaged in writing both "Other Kingdom" and *The Longest Journey*, he was commissioned by Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson to edit Virgil's *Aeneid* for the Dent's Classics series. This work on Virgil accounts for the allusions already noted in "Other Kingdom" and the novel, but whereas the references from *Eclogue II*, in which Inskip's purely academic appreciation of Virgil is revised by Miss Beaumont, and from *Georgics I*, in which both Rickie's and Mr Failing's references to "*Pan, ovium custos*" stand in a similar comparison with Stephen's inherent awareness of the true nature of Pan and the panic he spreads, in this instance Forster is using Virgil without, in the final outcome, negative connotations.

The first intimation of the importance of this myth is in the unsuccessful excursion to Salisbury. It is more than coincidental that on this excursion Rickie should be mounted on Dido and Stephen on Aeneas, and that through these horses Forster should at once evoke both the fate of Aeneas and Dido, and by association the ultimate fate of his two protagonists: "Dido was a perfect mount, and as indifferent to the motions of Aeneas as if she was strolling in the Elysian fields." (*LJ*:109) McDowell has noted that the "very names of the horses they ride over the downs to Salisbury indicate their differing destinies".[44]

Apart from their destinies, Forster also uses the examples of Dido and Aeneas to help in characterising Stephen and Rickie. The epithet consistently used with reference to Dido, "*infelix*", along with the epithets such as "ignorant

of fate" (I:299) and "doomed" (I:712)[45] with which Virgil introduces Dido in Book I, is eminently applicable to Rickie in Forster's novel. Indeed, the introduction of Dido as unknowing of fate to an audience well versed in the ultimate fate of the character is echoed in Ansell's comment as Stephen is about to confront Rickie with, what Stephen and Ansell think to be, the unknown fact of their brotherhood: "The irony of the situation appealed to him strongly. It reminded him of the Greek Drama, where the actors know so little and the spectators so much." (*LJ*:217) Forster quickly demonstrates that the irony of the situation was even greater than Ansell expected, forewarning his audience of events of which Ansell himself is yet unaware:

> Ansell prepared himself to witness the second act of the drama; forgetting that all this world, and not part of it, is a stage. (*LJ*:218)

Likewise Forster develops the comparison between Stephen and Aeneas leading to the final tragic encounter between Stephen and Rickie through the Orion symbol. Orion appears three times in the novel, each time marking crises in Rickie's relationship with Stephen. With the birth of his severely disabled daughter, and her subsequent death Rickie realises that "the lesson he had learnt so glibly at Cambridge [that he should not procreate] should be heeded now; no child should ever be born to him again." (*LJ*:184) And, after the surprise letter from Stephen to Rickie's unfortunate student, Varden, Rickie is set to ponder the cruelty of Nature, or rather is stricken with jealousy that his despised father should have produced a son other than Rickie, and that this son should have been born whole. This jealousy sparks Rickie's indignation that

> His father, as a final insult, had brought into the world a man unlike all the rest of them—a man dowered with coarse kindliness and rustic strength, a kind of cynical ploughboy, against whom their own misery and weakness might stand more vividly relieved. (*LJ*:192)

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[44] McDowell, *op cit.*, p. 63.

[45] Quotations from *The Aeneid* are taken from the Loeb Classical Library Edition translated by H. R. Fairclough.

This man would have children, and contribute genetically to posterity as Rickie never could. Stephen, like Gino of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, not only can contribute to posterity, but openly and honestly desires it. And like Gino, it is his offspring which will receive his love, not his mate and not Rickie to whom he later confides:

> I want to marry someone, and don't yet know who she is, which a poet again will tell you is disgusting. Does it disgust you? Being nothing much, surely I'd better go gently. For it's something rather outside one that makes one marry, if you follow me: not exactly oneself. (Don't hurry the horse.) We want to marry, and yet—I can't explain. I fancy I'll go wading: this is our stream. (*LJ*:271-272)

Unable to explain, or even understand his urge to marry, just as he is unaware of the attraction to the Demeter of Cnidus, Stephen steps out into the stream. This stream undoubtedly represents the stream of posterity to which it is Stephen's unacknowledged desire to contribute to. Forster makes this perfectly clear to his readers through the following action. Stephen lights a crumpled ball of paper to set adrift on the stream.

> 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 for ever. (*LJ*:272-273)

The burning paper carried down the stream represents the line that Stephen is to continue and thus he and not Rickie, who shall be the last of his line, can see it "still afloat . . . burning as if it would burn for ever."

Rickie pondering the cruelty of nature knows nothing of what Stephen is to tell him of these vague longings for procreation, nor of the truth of Stephen's birth which is to transform Rickie's jealousy into love, yet his awareness that his

line should end with him, while Stephen's should prosper produces "mysterious" dreams from which he awakes to notice for the first time in the novel "the frosty glories of Orion." (*LJ*:193) The importance of Orion in *The Aeneid* is as the harbinger of Aeneas' arrival at Carthage. This is confirmed when Ilioneus makes clear to Dido that the storm which had left them wrecked upon her shore was brought about by Orion:

> Hither [Hesperia] lay our course, when, rising with sudden swell, stormy Orion bore us on hidden shoals and with fierce blasts scattered us afar amid pathless rocks and waves of overwhelming surge; hither to your shores have we few drifted. (I:534-8)

Orion coincides with the coming of Aeneas to Carthage, and in *The Aeneid* it is only with reference to this event that Orion is mentioned. In Book IV Dido's sister Anna sees that it is "With favouring gods, . . . The Ilian ships have held their course hither with the wind" (IV:45-6), and that it is "while at sea winter rages fiercely and Orion is stormy" (IV:52-3) that Aeneas is prevented from leaving Dido's side.[46] Dido also recognises that it is through the stormy agency of Orion that her beloved Aeneas was cast upon her shores and rails against Aeneas' wish to leave and fulfil his fated voyage: "even in the winter season dost thou labour at thy fleet, and in the midst of northern gales hasten to pass overseas, heartless one?" (IV:308-11)

Orion is symbolic of Aeneas' arrival in Carthage. Thus when Rickie, while pondering the unfairness of Stephen's physical perfection, is woken by voices in his dream only to be met by a vision of "frosty" Orion this should forewarn the reader of Stephen's imminent arrival. Of course he doesn't realise the relevance of this image, but certainly the reader should. The voice in his dreams may in Rickie's mind be that of his mother, but his failure to recognise the oracular nature of that voice is implied by hios association with Dido. We must remember that Dido is unknowing of fate, particularly in the sense of

[46] For Orion as the bringer of storms see also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I. ll. 305-6.

unknowing of that which has been spoken by the oracle. In Rickie's case the voice of his dreams is probably that of Demeter, who Forster has told us, represents among other things the survival of the fittest. Thus Orion when taken together with this oracular dream, or visitation, signifies the impending arrival of Stephen and as a result Rickie's tragic ruin.

In the chronology of the novel months pass between this vision and Rickie's next encounter with Stephen, yet within fourteen pages Forster has contrived to have Stephen thrown out of his home at Cadover with nothing but the truth of his birth and set to wander, like Aeneas with the fall of Troy carrying his father upon his back,[47] until he happens on Ansell in Rickie's garden. Due to Agnes's interference Rickie doesn't meet Stephen but through Ansell comes to learn the truth of Stephen's birth. Stephen is sent away and wanders, again like Aeneas, until ten days later he appears a drunken hooligan trying to wreck Rickie's house.

Rickie, because he had hated his father and had loved his mother, who he now realised was also Stephen's mother, has transformed Stephen in his imagination, welcomes him and hopes to make him stay. He is no longer jealous of Stephen's wholeness for through his wholeness Rickie's mother may also be perpetuated, and like Dido, makes plans to assist Stephen's happiness if only he would stay. In his subjective recreation of facts Rickie perverts the meaning of his earlier dream into a symbol of Stephen as the means whereby the line from his mother may be continued, yet like Dido, he is still unaware of his role in the tragedy that is to follow: "Surely that dream was a vision!" and as on that previous night "he hurried to the window—to remember, with a smile, that Orion is not among the stars of June." (*LJ*:251)

if we remember the relevance of Orion to Dido and Aeneas, the fact that Orion is not among the stars at this time should warn the reader that Rickie's

[47] The image of Aeneas carrying Anchises on his back had already inspired a youthful article published in the King's College magazine *Basileona* (1900) titled "The Pack of Anchises".

hope of keeping Stephen from leaving is misplaced. Without the storms of winter, and even in spite of them, there was nothing to prevent Aeneas from fulfilling his fate. So too, Stephen leaves Rickie, and Rickie follows.

The final appearance of Orion, and the conclusion of the tragedy comes on the night in which Stephen and Rickie had set the "mystic rose" adrift on the stream. Since their meeting Rickie had been of assistance to Stephen in finding him a position in Scotland, and Stephen had become a much heavier drinker. On the night in question, however, Forster through the stream symbolism has demonstrated that Stephen's fate was to be, like Aeneas, the furtherance of his race, but not as is made clear by Stephen's indifference to his origins, the deliberately conceived continuation of his mother's line. Indeed Stephen had left Rickie because, in "a rare flash of insight" (*LJ*:255), Stephen saw that Rickie viewed him not as a man, but as the continuation of his mother. Rickie's concern with Stephen's drinking was not produced through any concern for Stephen as a man:

> I see your game. You don't care about *me* drinking, or to shake *my* hand. It's some one else you want to cure—as it were, that old photograph. You talk to me, but all the time you look at the photograph. (*LJ*:255)

Stephen's drinking is a symbol of his heroic nature, that element of his personality which refuses to accept the dictates of society. It is deplored by Rickie who sees it as degrading their mother, and on this night Rickie has won from him a promise not to drink. Yet like Aeneas' promise to Dido, it is a promise that Stephen breaks.

Rickie, devastated by Stephen's breaking of his word, is granted a final vision—"The shoulders of Orion rose behind them over the topmost boughs of the elm. From the bridge the whole constellation was visible, and Rickie said, 'May God receive me and pardon me for trusting the earth.'"(*LJ*:281) The "earth" here is obviously Stephen, and this vision of Orion appears to Rickie as a

rebuke for believing that through Stephen his mother's line may have been continued. Rickie recognises that

> the woman he loved would die out, in drunkenness, in debauchery, and her strength would be dissipated by a man, her beauty defiled in a man. She would not continue. That mystic rose and the face it illumined meant nothing. The stream—he was above it now—meant nothing, though it burst from the pure turf and ran for ever to the sea. The bather, the shoulders of Orion—they all meant nothing, and were going nowhere. The whole affair was a ridiculous dream. (*LJ*:282)

It was to be expected that Stephen, like Aeneas, would break his promise and pursue his own fate. And as Aeneas' betrayal cost Dido, Stephen's betrayal leads Rickie to sacrifice his own life. Yet though Rickie is disillusioned, his final act, the saving of Stephen on the level-crossing, which provides Stephen with the means to establish himself and achieve his destiny—the furtherance of his line which Forster had selected as that most suited to be the future of England. And in this final act Rickie validates what would otherwise have been another example of his "diseased imagination", his image of Stephen as Aeneas.

In the final scene Forster presents Stephen preparing to spend the night sleeping on the downs with his child instilling in her that connection with the land and its traditions which unconsciously had led him to hang the Demeter of Cnidus in his room. But Stephen is no longer unconscious to his desire to procreate, nor of the salvation which had been afforded him through Rickie's death, "He was alive and had created life . . . he believed that he guided the future of our race, and that, century after century, his thoughts and his passions would triumph in England." (*LJ*:289) And as an acknowledgment, perhaps, of the debt he owed Rickie in providing for this continuation, he gave his child "the name of their mother" (*LJ*:289), and thus fulfilled Rickie's vision of him as Aeneas continuing his mother's line.

(III)

We have already spoken at length on *Howards End*, both in chapter three and in the previous chapter. What remains is to demonstrate the position *Howards End* fills in the progression from "Other Kingdom" through to Forster's notion of Old Morality reconciled with New Economy. The preservation of Stephen's heroic nature is only accomplished through his inheritance of Rickie's money, and a share of the rights to Rickie's stories. Forster has allowed Rickie the only chance of immortality that he himself could hope for—the publication of his stories—and through this provided for the true inheritor of England which was itself Forster's aim. We can plainly see in the final chapter that the money he has received allows Stephen to fulfil his desire for family life and to maintain his integrity in the face of social pressure as represented by Herbert Pembroke. The continuation of men like Stephen may have been Forster's concern, but this is only achieved through that reconciliation of spirit and money which Forster petitioned for in "The Challenge of Our Time." Earlier Stephen had, like Ford of "Other Kingdom", sacrificed economic considerations to integrity by refusing the allowance offered him when he was expelled from Cadover. But this novel is a step forward from the Ruskinian choice of paradise-come-what-may offered Ford and Inskip in that it recognises the importance of a regular income to the sustaining of a noble character. It is the first step in Forster's reconciliation of Old Morality and New Economy.

One can be certain that Stephen would have gone under if left penniless, being to proud too accept the support of Mrs Failing. In his diary entry concerning the lame shepherd, Forster had already remarked that he feared for this model of his hero, and could only hope that "he isn't bowled over by the beastly money!" Similarly, Forster's fear that Stephen would be corrupted by the daily struggle for in a living among the Cockney labourers he met in London, led him to provide a fortuitous inheritance at the close of the novel.

The only answer to the problem of providing for his heroes economically while maintaining their integrity in Forster's novels appears to be a comfortable inheritance. This is not surprising remembering Forster's own personal

experience. From an early age Forster was well aware of the virtue of a timely inheritance. In his biography of his great-aunt Marianne Thornton, Forster notes that the £8000 left him on her death "has been the financial salvation of my life" and in his awareness of the value of this legacy, particularly with reference to the novels, Forster is worth quoting at greater length.

> Thanks to it, I was able to go to Cambridge—impossible otherwise, for I had failed to win scholarships. After Cambridge I was able to travel for a couple of years, and travelling inclined me to write. After my first visit to India and after the first world war the value of the £8000 began to diminish, and later on it practically vanished. But by then my writings had begun to sell, and I have been able to live on them instead. Whether—in so stormy an age as ours—this is a reputable sequence I do not know. Still less do I know how the sequence and all sequences will end, with the storm increasing. But I am thankful so far, and thankful to Marianne Thornton; for she and no one else made my career as a writer possible, and her love, in a most tangible sense, followed me beyond the grave. (*MT*:289)

Forster also has Margaret Schlegel speak at length on the value of money in the attainment of culture by the likes of Leonard Bast:

> Give them a chance. Give them money. Don't dole them out poetry books and railway tickets like babies. Give them the wherewithal to buy these things. When your socialism comes it may be different, and we may think in terms of commodities instead of cash. Till it comes, give people cash . . .. (*HE*:125)

Howards End, Forster's second attempt at providing a home for the future of England, can also be seen to rely upon the notion of inheritance to achieve the reconciliation of spiritual freedom with economic well-being.

In *Howards End* we see Forster moving backwards through his memories of England to his earliest and most enduring vision, that of the idyllic farm life of his childhood, and what he has attempted to procure as an inheritance for Stephen Wonham in the earlier novel is now superseded by the house, Howards End. Rather than Margaret Schlegel, the true inheritor in this novel is the child of Leonard Bast. In *The Longest Journey* Forster had moved some way

from the paradise of his early stories, from Rickie's "Virgilian counties" (*LJ*:176). The home which Stephen inherits is "not paradise, and can show the vices that grieve a good man everywhere. But there is room in it, and leisure." (*LJ*:270) Yet in Howards End he is to move even more firmly into dealing with the political realities of 1910, and it may be for this reason that he sees this second attempt as less successful than the first, that Stephen inherits more securely than Margaret, who at the end of the novel expresses Forster's anxiety at the unlikelihood of houses like Howards End surviving, but also his vague hope:

> Howards End, Oniton, the Purbeck downs, the Oderberge, were all survivals, and the melting-pot was being prepared for them. Logically, they had no right to be alive. One's hope was in the weakness of logic. (*HE*:337)

Howards End is greater in scope and, by necessity, more urgent, and therefore the result is less convincing in Forster's own eyes. In *The Longest Journey* Forster attempted to prevent the disassociation of a man from the place he belonged and in doing so realised the necessity of economic support in providing spiritual freedom. *Howards End*, however, attempts to reconnect a family with the countryside from which it has been spiritually and physically severed by economic considerations.

The Wiltshire of *A Longest Journey* presented a more enduring image to Forster than a small farm already threatened with inundation by the expanding tide of London, yet in "The Challenge of Our Time" (1946) Forster uses the impending destruction of the model for Howards End to justify his writing of the novel thirty-six years before. Part of the difficulty in the reconciliation of "Old Morality" with "New Economy", Forster found, was deciding where the realm of the spirit is to end and that of the body to begin, and Forster takes as an example the farm at Rooksnest. Forster informs us that due to the area being commandeered as the site of a satellite town the "people now living and working there are doomed; it is death in life for them" (*TCD*:57). The destruction of Rooksnest as Forster remembered it was complete. Of course Forster recognises

that "working-class friends in north London who have to bring up four children in two rooms" require the housing that is to be provided, but he must still "wonder what compensation there is in the world of the spirit for the destruction of life here, the life of tradition."(*TCD*:57).

Even while writing the novel Forster must have felt, much as Levenson supposes, that "historical probability insists on the obsolescence of the small farm and consigns it to the gaping suburban maw, while symbolic possibility suggests that on the basis of the farm England might be restored."[48] Forster's awareness of this collision of the "historical" with the "symbolic" is evident throughout the novel. It should be added, however, that Forster's liberalism was of a much more robust nature than Levenson allows. Howards End is not merely a symbolic home to which "the spirit of disillusioned liberalism"[49] may withdraw but, as demonstrated in Forster's work on gender issues discussed in chapter three, represents a number of hopes founded in Forster's liberalism destined to become political realities.

Our present concern, however, is with *Howards End* as an attempt at reconciling the spiritual and economic first intimated in *The Longest Journey* and given its fullest expression in "The Challenge of Our Time". Taken as a step in this development, *Howards End* reveals Forster to be almost deliberately modelling Leonard Bast on the vision of the typical Londoner which greeted Stephen Wonham in *The Longest Journey*. On his expulsion from Cadover Stephen travels to London where by necessity he takes a job. Forster's description of what Stephen finds there certainly points forwards to his description of Bast:

> His companions were hurried and querulous. In particular, he loathed the foreman, a pious humbug who allowed no swearing, but indulged in something far more degraded—the Cockney

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[48] Levenson, "Liberalism and Symbolism in *Howards End*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 21 (1985), p. 315.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 311.

> repartee. The London intellect, so pert and shallow, like a stream that never reaches the ocean, disgusted him almost as the London physique, which for all its dexterity is not permanent, and seldom continues into the third generation. . . . Tony Failing had once put the thing into words: "There's no such thing as a Londoner, He's only a country man on the road to sterility." (*LJ*:246)

As far as intellect and "Cockney repartee" are concerned, Forster exposes Leonard's shortcomings with painful honesty when he is questioned about his overnight disappearance:

> "I still don't understand. When did you say you paid this call?"
>
> "Call? What call?" said he, staring as if her question had been a foolish one, a favourite device of those in mid-stream.
>
> "This afternoon call."
>
> "In the afternoon, of course!" he replied, and looked at Tibby to see how the repartee went. But Tibby, himself a repartee, was unsympathetic, and said, "Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoon?" (*HE*:115)

As for his sterility, as noted at the end of chapter three, without the erotic force represented by Helen overcoming his reserve and producing a son, Leonard would still be hiding from his wife's sexuality in the pages of Ruskin. Physically as well as intellectually Leonard is a perfect match for Stephen's workmates, down to being a third generation Londoner. He was, we recall, "the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization had sucked into the town". (*HE*:113) Margaret's response to the degenerate Londoners she sees around her is to question "the quality of the men born". (*HE*:107) This question of the worth of modern Englishmen lies at the centre, as noted above, of Ruskin's lecture on the future of England from *A Crown of Wild Olive*.

There is no reconciliation of the spirit and the body in Bast as there was in Trent and Ford and George Emerson, and may have developed in Wonham. Neither has he managed to attain the purely aesthetic outlook of Cecil Vyse and Tibby Schlegel, which though shown in a disadvantageous light through comparison with the former characters still provided the starting point from which the character of Philip Herriton developed. Bast is lost in no-man's-land

yet, as Margaret informs us, "Hints of robustness survived in him, more than a hint of primitive good looks" (*HE*:113). One feels that there is yet an element of Stephen Wonham surviving in the degraded figure of Leonard Bast, something which Forster would like to save, but of course, Forster can't allow Bast to be saved. As noted at the end of chapter three it is his death at the hands of Charles that allows for the breakdown of the Wilcox patriarchy and provides economic and political power to be passed to Margaret and provides for her spiritual and material inheritance of Howards End.

Yet as with Stephen's refusal of money from both Mrs Failing and Agnes, Forster has Bast refuse Helen's offer of help both before and after her seduction of him. Bast maintains his integrity by his refusal of charity. Helen explains to her sister, "If it was only a question of money, we could do it ourselves. But he wants work, and that we can't give him" (*HE*:225) But Forster is unwilling to provide him with a timely inheritance to save him from the crippling effects of poverty. Instead, he uses Leonard's death, and the subsequent transfer of Howards End to Margaret Schlegel that his reconciliation of spirit and body is achieved. At Howards End that hint of Stephen Wonham that remained in Bast and which was passed on through his illegitimate son, can be cultivated through a reunion with the rural tradition from which it has been separated. Again mirroring Stephen's position at the end of *The Longest Journey*, Bast's son is not to be a mere ploughboy but is ensured both economic security and the opportunity for the slow accumulation of culture coupled with the traditional life of the country which represents also the life of the spirit.

Bast's child in such an environment may develop the broad chest and straight spine denied his father through his disconnection with the land, and perhaps denied Forster through his loss of Rooksnest as a home. For this hope for a return to physical strength has grown from Forster's own awareness of his deficiencies in this respect as demonstrated in another short story, the autobiographical "Ansell". This short story written around 1902-3 and abandoned by 1904, strikes a similar tone to *Howards End* in that it too is

concerned with Forster's recreation of his boyhood life at Rooksnest, and the impact of the loss of this life upon him. In this story the narrator gains reconnection with the land, and the physical benefits attributed to such a life, through a timely mishap which destroys the notes for his dissertation on the Greek optative. This narrator, who by his own admission had "fallen behind in the athletic race" (*LTC*:3) and made a show of being indifferent to "the slope of my shoulders and the curve of my back and the contraction of my chest" (*LTC*:4), is found at the conclusion of the story swimming and shooting and riding with Ansell and forgetting his book-learned Greek in the real enjoyment of the brainless life.

Chronologically, this story belongs before "Other Kingdom" in that it attempts no reconciliation of the physical and spiritual. Scott, noting that Forster neglects the material side of life, complains that if "the . . . half-unnamed narrator, has at the end lost his hoped-for employ as a Fellow at his university college . . . on what material basis will he live in the future?"[50] It is precisely the move from this type of story to a growing awareness of this need for material support shown in the rural novels which highlight Forster's development away from Ruskin. Yet in its demonstration of his feelings for Rooksnest, this story points to why Forster felt that the future of England lay in farms such as he grew up on. For beyond the personal level and men like Bast's son, it is the farms and countryside in which they are to be raised which provides for the future of England—in this Forster and Ruskin are in agreement. It is perhaps this accord which led Forster to echo Ruskin's image of Torcello from *The Stones of Venice* in his description of Howards End.[51] Just as the Venetians had once found refuge at Torcello, Bast's child, Helen, Henry and Margaret find security and hope for the future in rural England.

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[50] Scott, *op cit.*, p 104-5.

[51] Gay, "E. M. Forster and John Ruskin: The Ambivalent Connection," *Southern Review* (Adelaide) 11 (1978), p. 289.

The future survival of the house at Howards End is assured through the reconciliation of money and the spiritual life. It is only through the Wilcoxes and their money that the house is saved, and the traditions and local life represented by Ruth Wilcox can be passed on to Margaret, and it is her money, and that of Helen, which ensures the farm's survival in the future. Certainly, the hope of saving England through the preservation of such farms appears tenuous in the face of historical fact. Yet it was a hope in the regenerative and corrective power of the rural England which Forster shared with Ruskin. Indeed, Forster himself chose "hope without faith" as the motto for his work in the pre-war period and taking the results of the discussion in chapter three together with all this, the survival of Howards End can be shown as the culmination of Forster's concerns in the pre-war years, concerns which are notable for the consistent yet constantly developing use of Ruskin to set the frame of reference. In moving forward into the final chapter which shall place these pre-war works in the wider scheme of Forster's life, we may leave this final image of the house and farm as a symbol of Forster's work as a novelist in this decade before the war. It represents the connection of both the masculine and feminine, and also of first-phase liberalism with second-phase liberalism, of the New Economy with Old Morality.

CHAPTER SIX

The examination of Forster's pre-war novels has confirmed his comments made in the retrospective "Three Generations" in that they can be read as primarily concerned with social amelioration through a liberal exaltation of the individual and the deification of personal relationships. In so far as they are concerned with the betterment of society they also represent the continuation of the tradition which Forster saw as "stretching back to Ruskin & Carlyle" (*TG*:274). Yet more than a mere continuation of this tradition, the prominence of Ruskin in Forster's early education was to lead him to adopt particularly Ruskinian terms to define the parameters of his work towards the improvement of society.

Although it produced the bulk of his creative writing, this pre-war era was, however, only the first of the three "generations" into which Forster divided his working life to 1938. It is therefore necessary to place this work in perspective with a brief look into the subsequent periods of Forster's writing life. Although *Maurice* and *A Passage to India* have received most recent critical attention they fall outside the main focus of this thesis and will be dealt with only briefly.

The hopes for the future of mankind, evident even amid the cheerless realities represented in *Howards End*, passed with the war of 1914-18 into what Forster describes as a "civilisation of disillusioned people". He continues:

> The 'war to end war' had obviously done nothing of the sort, the homes for heroes weren't being built, the British Empire was larger than ever but no safer, & no happier and though Mr Lloyd George pointed to the Welsh mountains and Ramsay

> MacDonald rather later said 'up and up and up and up' neither of them led us to the Hill of the Lord. (*TG*:279-80)

The effect of this disillusionment was magnified by the burgeoning respect for scientific achievement which undermined the assurance of pre-war society. The men of this new generation, explains Forster,

> can't understand Einstein but they gather that now it doesn't do to dogmatise about time and space as formerly. They can't check the conclusions of Freud by experiment: but they gather that it doesn't do to regard an individual as if he is a solid and an unalterable entity. Neither the universe, nor human beings, are what they seem, and the postwar observer bears these uncertainties in his mind. (*TG*:282)

The new generation was a relativistic age devoid of the sureties of religious faith which Forster had himself rejected at an early age, and without the consolation which belief in personal relationships had afforded the pre-war generation. Forster's concern with the harmony between body and spirit is still present. So too are the Ruskinian terms in which Forster's updated vision of society were presented. Yet the treatment of the characters in the fiction from this period reflects Forster's own transition into this relativistic age in which he could no longer hope for the progressive improvement of society to some attainable perfection but, and at best, only for the improvement of self. His novels of this period therefore can in some ways be read as a recanting of his expectation that personal relationships might achieve something outside their "appropriate sphere", and thus relationships are dealt with on a more intimate level which actively attempts to remove them from the larger concerns of sex, race and economics.

Written towards the close of the pre-war period, between 1913 and 1914, *Maurice* provides a transition between the two periods in Forster's work. Like many recent critics who emphasise homosexuality in Forster's work Summers sees a marked similarity in plot between *A Room with a View* and *Maurice*, the former novel articulating "the ideology of the early English homosexual rights movement", and the later mirroring "a significant debate

within the Uranian movement".[1] This debate, as described by Robert K. Martin,[2] enacts the opposition of "two kinds of homosexuality". The first is that of J. A. Symonds, embodied in the character of Clive Durham, which maintains that homosexuality is "reserved for a tiny elite", and which depends on the renunciation of physical passion".[3] The second is that of Edward Carpenter, which is reflected in the relationship between Maurice and Alec Scudder, and which "rejects the idea of the superiority of homosexuality"[4] and accepts lust as part of "the physical expression of homosexuality."[5] While such a debate may have been in Forster's mind,[6] this desire to connect the body and soul, the physical and the spiritual, is, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, the underlying theme in all Forster's work and covers his writings on women's issues and on social justice in general.[7] In *Maurice*, this division is again discussed in terms which lead us back to Forster's earliest concerns with medievalism, its division of these two aspects of life, and its celebration of the spiritual over the physical, as found in "Old Lucy" and the "Dante Notebook". These works were produced before 1903 and therefore predate Forster's

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[1] Claude J. Summers, *E. M. Forster*, New York, 1983, p. 146.

[2] Robert K. Martin, "Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of *Maurice*," in Jeremy Tambling, ed., *E. M. Forster*, London, 1995, p. 100.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[6] A diary entry for 10 January 1912 reads: "J. A. Symonds. Feel nearer to him than anyone I have read about. Too near to be irritated by his flamboyance which I scarcely share." I believe that Forster saw himself as the model for Clive Durham. Indeed to read the failure of Clive's Hellenism as self-criticism (rather than as a sudden about face on his obvious admiration for Symonds) would complete a tradition in which Philip Herriton, Rickie Elliot, and Cecil Vyse, all displaying a notable homosexual sensibility, play the role of Forster's alter ego in a similar strain of self-deprecation.

[7] Summers, *E. M. Forster*, *op cit.*, p.5, feels that it was Forster's homosexuality which "gave him that feeling of standing 'at a slight angle to the universe' . . . [and] fuelled his anger at social and political injustice, making him contemptuous of conventions that separate individuals and impede instinct." In response to this accent on Forster's homosexuality one can only suggest, as Huxley did *à propos* of D. H. Lawrence, that, like Lawrence, Forster was "an artist first of all, and the fact of his being an artist explains a life which seems, if you forget it, inexplicably strange." Forster's feeling of standing at an angle to the universe is perhaps equally a product of his being an artist as it is of his homosexuality. Aldous Huxley, *The Olive Tree and Other Essays*, London, 1947,p. 201.

contact with Carpenter by a number of years. Contact with Carpenter would therefore have been more likely to confirm Forster in his opinions than to have been the stimulus for any dramatic change of ideas, though in the notion that homosexuality was but another of the marginalised elements seeking a reassessment of society's values Forster comes closest to the Carpenter tradition. And in spite of Forster's obvious admiration for Carpenter in the Terminal Note to *Maurice*, the value of such an influence must always be diminished by the relative lateness of Forster's introduction to Carpenter. A fine example of the importance of recognising the timetable of Forster's association with Carpenter can be found in Beauman's biography, *Morgan*. Beauman asserts that Forster's remarks on "petty unselfishness" in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* demonstrate the influence of a Carpenter article in the *Independent* of May 1904 which "censured so-called 'unselfish people'".[8] Turning to "Old Lucy", which Stallybrass maintains was written by 1902, we find Mr Arthur censuring Lucy for "doing things you don't care for to help people you don't like in objects that don't interest you", and continuing to note that "unselfishness and the demands that unselfishness makes . . . are crimes". (*LN*:45)

In the novel, the necessity of connecting and harmonising the physical and the spiritual, divided through medievalism, is obvious from the outset. The two dreams which "interpret" the young Maurice lead us to the typical Forsterian opposition.

The first, in which George the garden boy "headed down the field towards him, naked and jumping over the woodstacks" (*M*:15), is of a physical nature and establishes Maurice's inchoate sexuality which he is yet to "connect . . . with Mr Ducie's homily"(*M*:15) on the mystery of sex. Nor does Maurice connect the obscure physical desires in this dream with the spiritual longings which engender the second dream in which he "scarcely saw a face, scarcely heard a voice say, 'That is your friend'". (*M*:15) In this second dream

[8] Nicola Beauman, *Morgan*, London, 1994, p. 208.

Forster intimates the dilemma confronting man in the new age, the desire for a "friend", for spiritual fulfilment in an age which has negated the hitherto accepted spiritual agents.

Maurice, raised in the Christian tradition, at first tries to convince himself that the friend of his dream "must be Christ"; then sceptical he tries to locate him as a Greek god, "such as illustrates the classical dictionary". (*M*:15) Yet even as a youth he suspects that this friend is "just a man" (*M*:15) and his progress to the complete realisation of this, along with the spiritual fulfilment it engenders, provides the plot for this novel. Similarly it is the failure to arrive at this realisation which prevents the final consummation of the relationship between Fielding and Aziz which is at the centre of the action in *A Passage to India*. In this later novel the characters still seek the answer to the problem of the "unattainable Friend, . . . the eternal promise, the never-withdrawn suggestion that haunts our consciousness" (*PI*:106) in the competing religions: Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Only Fielding has acquired the necessary knowledge, but friendship cannot be consummated in the individual.

However, this knowledge is as yet only guessed at by the young Maurice, and it is still disconnected from the physical side of his nature. Forster uses the scission in Maurice's subconscious, as interpreted by these dreams, to demonstrate the failings of either aspect divorced from the other. As he developed, Maurice's physical nature "became obscene" (*M*:16) and turned to the pornographic. The spiritual element favoured the barren chivalry of Dante and Ruskin which Forster had censured in the earlier novels. The dream which left him "longing to be kind to everyone, because his friend wished it, and to be good that his friend might become more fond of him"—from which Maurice found himself making "a religion of some other boy" (*M*:16)—is not far removed from the idealistic love Forster was later to denounce in an entry in his *Commonplace Book* for 1928:

> Disentangling from the beloved early, he [Dante] made a good job of his idealism and star stuff. He could rest in the faith that

> he must grow worthier of her [Beatrice], and never experience the doubt that she might be unworthy of him, the doubt that torments all domestic idealists and often leads them into cruelty towards their passion's poor occasion.[9] (*CB*:39)

Alone either element of Maurice's being contributes to an erroneous basis for a relationship, yet once connected each provides the corrective for the other. This is as true of heterosexual relationships in Forster as for those sought by Forster for his homosexual hero. Maurice's idealism is as poor a prescription for successful personal relationships as Mr Ducie's authorised Christian version in which Forster encapsulates the failure of the Victorian model he had been updating in his earlier novels:

> He spoke of the ideal man—chaste with asceticism. He sketched the glory of Woman. . . . To love a noble woman, to protect and serve her—this, he told the little boy, was the crown of life. (*M*:8)

Maurice then is a story of an awakening in the tradition of *A Room with a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. As such it is characterised by the fusion of the carnal and the spiritual elements embodied in Maurice's dreams, a fusion brought about through contact with Clive Durham. With the arrival of Durham in Maurice's life to precipitate his development, the

> idealism and the brutality that ran through boyhood had joined at last, and twined into love. No one might want such love, but he could not feel ashamed of it, because it was "he", neither body or soul, nor body and soul, but "he" working through both.(*M*:54)

It is striking that in this novel Maurice should have deliberately sacrificed his Christian faith for the hope of a relationship with Clive. This places him most firmly in the pre-war milieu, which Forster, updating Ruskin, had characterised as having "hope without faith". Yet trouble arises for

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[9] Forster provides a second version of his complaint in a letter to Lowes Dickinson dated 4 August of the same year: "Oh what a nuisance it is—I mean idealistic love. Dante, probably because Beatrice died, made something of it, but to most of its practitioners it seems to bring misery and sterility. This dreadful business of trying to be worthy of

Maurice, trouble which had confronted Caroline, Lucy and Margaret. The now complete Maurice finds in Clive another medieval in the tradition of Gino Carella, Cecil Vyse and Henry Wilcox—particularly analogous to the cultured prig Cecil—who is unable to respond in kind because of his disunity of body and soul. Initially Forster is sympathetic to Clive and describes the adolescent austerity which leads him to resolve that his homosexual "impulse . . . should not ever become carnal" (*M*:61). Clive's self-denial is subsequently moderated by his reading of that "temperate pagan", Plato, to a new resolution not "to crush it down, not vainly to wish that it was something else, but to cultivate it in such ways as will not vex either God or Man". Forster concludes by assuring the reader that this progression from asceticism had resolved itself into "Harmony". (*M*:62) Yet this harmony seems deficient in respect for the physical element in love. Plato seems to have led Clive past the physical, not through it. This initial sympathy with Clive turns to a poisoned attack once Forster has revealed his true nature and recalls the similar treatment of Mr Beebe in *A Room with a View*, who also appears sympathetic only to be finally dismissed as "suddenly inhuman" in his contempt for the physical.

Clive describes his relationship with Maurice in terms which lead us back through Forster's acknowledged connection with Carpenter to his initial antagonism to the medievalism of Dante and Ruskin. In *A Room with a View*, Forster had used Michelangelo as a symbol of the possible unity of body and soul in opposition to Giotto, as symbolic of Ruskin's ascetic neo-medievalism, and the equally barren aesthetics of Walter Pater. Clive, in a speech which recalls vividly the supercilious Cecil Vyse, his pseudo-Meredithian delight in the Comic Muse and his affected cosmopolitan naughtiness, makes a case for the superiority of his feelings for Maurice over those of his sister, Pippa, for her fiancé:

> I'm a bit of an outlaw, I grant, but it serves these people right.
> As long as they talk of the unspeakable vice of the Greeks

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another human being, and probably spoiling or queering it by one's efforts; and then the reaction, the discovery that the other human being is itself unworthy".

> they can't expect fair play. It served my mother right when I slipped up to kiss you before dinner. She would have no mercy if she knew, she wouldn't attempt, wouldn't want to attempt to understand that I feel to you as Pippa to her fiancé, only far more nobly, far more deeply, body and soul, no starved medievalism of course, only a—a particular harmony of body and soul that I don't think women have even guessed. But you know.(*M*:81)

The irony here lies in the fact that Clive's love resembles closely that combination of aestheticism and medievalism found in Cecil Vyse, down to the failed attempt at circumventing the demands of the body through a sublimation of the carnal to the ideal. Cecil, though described as "medieval", had disguised his inherent asceticism by subsuming it in his idealism. The subsequent elevation of his beloved removes at once the pressure of consummating his physical longings. Though an effective bulwark against licentiousness, such an approach has the obvious drawback of rendering Lucy, who initially attracts him for her Leonardoesque qualities, unable to live up to the high ideals which Cecil demands of her—her womanly passions and fits of temper are irreconcilable with his image of the beloved. For the heterosexual Cecil this image is supplied by da Vinci's, or more exactly Pater's, *Mona Lisa*. For Clive it is found in the work of Michelangelo. Michelangelo had supplied the model for the hero in *A Room with a View*—George is constantly referred to as Michelangelesque. Lucy felt Michelangelo's art to be reminiscent of the beloved, not *vice-versa*, and in both George and Michelangelo's art Forster found a reconciliation of Giotto's spirituality and Leonardo's humanism, of Ruskin's asceticism and Pater's aestheticism.

Clive's mistaking of Maurice for a Michelangelo, "that man over the bookcase" (*M*:82) at Penge, demonstrates that the trap of the purely aesthetic, intellectual path to love is as open to homosexuals as it is to the heterosexual Cecil, and leads in both to impotence. Forster's knowledge of Michelangelo came through Symonds' translation and the use of Michelangelo as a negative in this novel may be read as a demonstration of Forster's move away from the barrenness of Symonds' brand of homosexuality. However, the Cecil–Clive

comparison suggests a unity in Forster's use of art in opposition to life which appears contrary to the notion of a sudden about face. Clive's discourse on the "precise influence of Desire upon our aesthetic judgements" (*M*:83) at this point also displays the sterility of his feelings for Maurice and echoes certain concerns which Forster had puzzled over since 1910.

Forster's diary entry for 25 August of that year poses the problem to be worked out:

> The sexual bias in Literary Criticism, & perhaps literature. Look for such bias in its ideal & carnal form. Not in experience which refines. What sort of a person would the critic prefer to sleep with in fact.

This idea appears to have been developed to some degree in an unfinished article known under the title "On pornography and sentimentality" which Heine believes to have been written sometime between 1910-12,[10] and in which Forster probes the relationship between the "ideal" and "carnal" elements of sentimentality in art, the first producing "art", the second producing pornography.

In the later novel, Clive's discussion of this subject wholly ignores the carnal element of Forster's article. Clive comes to love the Michelangelo by two paths, the "common" road which would appear to represent a purely aesthetic judgement, and another "private" road which represents the sentimental, or more precisely the "ideal" element of the sentimental, in that Clive loves the painting "because, like the painter himself, I love the subject." (*M*:83) Maurice by sharing a certain aesthetic quality with the Michelangelo over the bookcase becomes Clive's beloved. Maurice is the ideal incarnate and Clive's love for him is predicated upon a basic physical correspondence with the ideal. This emotion rejects the existence of any extraneous element, such as personality, which would distinguish Maurice from the ideal. So Clive while disclaiming "starved medievalism" (*M*:81) yields to its sublimation,

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[10] See *Arctic Summer and other fiction*, Ed. Elizabeth Heine and Oliver Stallybrass, London, 1980, p. xvi.

starved aestheticism, a trait common to both him and Cecil Vyse in *A Room with a View*.

Maurice, on the other hand, who had managed to reconcile the ideal and carnal aspects, as represented by his two dreams, after two years under Clive's influence appears in danger of learning too well Clive's idealism. The danger of Maurice either succumbing to Clive's aestheticism, or having his unity of being refracted in the prism of Clive's Hellenism, is evident in the incident with Dr Barry's nephew.

Dickie Barry, who lay "with his limbs uncovered . . . embraced and penetrated by the sun" (*M*:134) in Maurice's guestroom, becomes a test of Maurice's unity of spirit after his break up with Clive. "To anyone he would have seemed beautiful," explains Forster, "and to Maurice who reached him by two paths he became the World's desire." (*M*:134) Already Maurice has caught the trick of Clive's aestheticism. The two paths here echo Clive's admiration for his Michelangelo, and provide no room for the physical. Thus Maurice's ~~his~~ admiration for Dickie is expressed in an adolescent worshipping of the young man as a "god".[11] (*M*:135) Maurice's unity has been splintered and the physical side of his nature has reverted to the pornographic and the obscene. While separated from Dickie his "emotion had become physical" (*M*:136) and Maurice is left to face the fact his life was now in "pieces". (*M*:138) Yet he is aware of the truth of what has happened:

> His feeling for Dickie required a very primitive name. He would have sentimentalized once and called it adoration, but the habit of honesty had grown strong. . . . 'Lust.' He said the word out loud. (*M*:138)

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[11] Notice here the repetition of Maurice's interpretation of his dream about his friend. Then this friend was thought to be Christ or a classical god, now Dickie is first the "World's desire" obviously meant to imply Christ though the nearest the Bible offers is the Old Testament reference, Haggai 2.7 where the prophesied Messiah is referred to as the "desire of all nations". Forsaking Christianity, Dickie is at least a god of some form. The possibility of a regression to his adolescent disunity is certainly reinforced by this echo.

As for Clive, while Forster had attempted, however half-heartedly, to portray Clive's love for Maurice as greater than that of either "saint or sensualist" (*M*:89), with his turn from Maurice he is shown greatly at a disadvantage. In doing this Forster's treatment of Clive tends to place greater emphasis on his aesthetic, intellectual outlook and Clive is shown more and more to be fit only for books and art. Clive's earlier admission, that he "had no right to move out of my books and music" (*M*:56), recalls Cecil pleading guilty to the charge of being "no good for anything but books". (*RV*:168) Clive now finds a greater pleasure in his books, and "That Clive should occasionally prefer them" (*M*:100) shows a move away from Maurice over the two years, probably due to Maurice's inability to meet the standards of Clive's idealism. As Forster's censure of idealism in his *Commonplace Book* suggests, the beloved's perceived unworthiness leads the practitioner into cruelty towards his "passion's poor occasion". So Clive comes to act brutally towards Maurice, and this cruelty is to Maurice "the most serious of all the symptoms"(*M*:101) of their imminent rupture.

Eventually Clive breaks with Maurice and if this novel makes an advance on the earlier novels it is in the treatment of what remains in life for those suddenly denied faith as Maurice is now denied his faith in "his friend". In its treatment of Maurice's disillusionment the novel is far superior to the early novels and reflects Forster's progression into the relativistic age, and provides an important link with his last work, *A Passage to India*.

Maurice's awakening from the "Valley of the Shadow of Life" (*M*:14), which lies between the sunlit eminences of childhood and realised adulthood, is a more fully explored version of the awakening of Caroline Abbott and Phillip Herriton, and his fall into darkness after the loss of Clive likewise develops the theme of benightedness which had also threatened to enclose Lucy Honeychurch and George Emerson as it had Charlotte Bartlett. With the loss of Clive Maurice, like both Lucy and George Emerson, appears ready to "go under" in his disillusionment. But Maurice in his crisis finds

something which Forster had not guessed at, or was as yet unconcerned with, in his earlier novels, that there is a strength which comes from within and which can support an individual when, as is the case with Maurice and with the post-war generation, both religious faith and faith in the salvation offered by personal relationships are lost.

Maurice appears without hope and without faith, and suicide is an attractive option until during an interview with his dying grandfather he is assured of the existence of a light within which may provide enough purpose to substitute for the external influences Maurice had until then relied upon, God and Clive. In "Three Generations" Forster takes Proust as the example of the second period, the period of disillusionment, and has this to say on his behalf:

> Proust was introspective and morbid and unhappy and limited, but he had vitality . . . he was inquisitive about tomorrow, he and his characters cling to existence though logic indicates suicide[12], and though disease drags them down they still keep an eye open, half an eye, and scan the little unremunerative levels of the sea. They are bound on a sort of an adventure—not an adventure of the swashbuckling sort but an adventure of the disillusioned postwar world, where the whole man moves forward to encounter he does not know what; certainly not to any goal.

So too does the disillusioned Maurice move forward:

> he had no one. No one except his mother mattered and she only a little. He was practically alone, and why should he go on living? There was no reason, yet he had a dreary feeling he should, because he had not got Death either; she, like Love, had glanced at him for a minute, then turned away, and left him to "play the game". And he might have to play as long as his grandfather, and retire as absurdly. (*M*:129)

This description of Maurice, like that with which Forster begins the next chapter, demonstrates how closely Forster's recollections of the period were

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[12] Forster obviously had the conclusion of *Howards End* in mind here as it recalls his comment on places such as the house at Howards End as having "Logically, . . . no right to be alive. One's hope was in the weakness of logic." (*HE*:337)

lifted from his work of the time, and how closely the description of Maurice prefigures Forster's remarks on Proust:

> When he came home and examined the pistol he would never use, he was seized with disgust; when he greeted his mother no unfathomable love for her welled up. He lived on, miserable and misunderstood, as before, and increasingly lonely. . . .
>
> But a change there had been. He set himself to acquire new habits, and in particular those minor arts of life that he had neglected when with Clive. Punctuality, courtesy, patriotism, chivalry even—here were a few. (*M*:130)

If we recall the comparison between Forster's "Three Generations" and Ruskin's three types of his own generation from the introduction, it is possible to see that Maurice and, though "plodding" is not apt, Proust are comparable with what Ruskin described as "the plurality, in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can what practical work lies ready to their hands." (v:322) And this situation clearly demonstrates the move which Forster noted in "Three Generations" from a concern with the betterment of society to that of the betterment of self. This "light within" (*M*:129) to some extent replaces the external illumination of either Christian faith or hope predicated on a belief in the enlightening power of personal relationships and would have provided Maurice with the strength to pursue his future without the salvation of his relationship with Alec.

Moreover, Maurice's attempt to "cure" his homosexuality also supports the assertion that this novel, or at least the characterisation of the hero, is moving towards post-war relativism. Cavaliero believes that Lasker Jones is meant to represent the "impersonality of scientific method . . ., and demonstrates the impossibility of there being any help, other than love," for homosexuality.[13] I would suggest, however, that Maurice's visits to Dr Barry and to Mr Lasker Jones demonstrate the very belief in the scientific achievement which Forster saw as characterising the post-war period. And the

[13] Glen Cavaliero, *A Reading of E. M. Forster*, London and Totowa, 1979, p. 137.

use of dreams through which Forster interpreted the psychological condition of Maurice as a youth hints at a Freudian influence far removed from the oracular dreams with which Rickie is visited in *The Longest Journey*.

Closing the novel at this point would seem to be the prescription for a work of the second period. However, Forster himself is not yet without hope. Rather than allowing this novel to "resolve into dust or mist" which he suggests might have been a "wiser" denouement,[14] Forster, in the Terminal Note to the novel, found that to him personally "A happy ending was imperative."

> I shouldn't have bothered to write otherwise. I was determined that in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows . . .. (*M*:236)

Scott also finds the conclusion of this novel, Maurice and Alec losing themselves in the greenwood, unconvincing and asks: "By what manner, even in a perpetuated 1913 . . . could two men of such dissimilar background, speech-accents and the rest of it, do that?" Such a conclusion he feels is part of "the book's whole day-dreaming weakness".[15] Yet this happy ending, as with the conclusion to *Howards End*, demonstrates Forster's hope in the face of logic and seeks a happiness he admits is unlikely yet, in relationships such as that between Carpenter and Merrill, was demonstrably possible. As Martin suggests, "Carpenter gave him testimony to a love between two men, a love that had survived by moving outside society".[16]

This is not so in his last novel, *A Passage to India*. This novel, written with full consciousness of the relativism that pervaded the post-war era, demonstrates a conscious move from the politicising of personal relationships which had characterised the pre-war era. Instead, it aims to highlight the

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[14] From a letter to Lowes Dickinson dated 13 December 1914. See *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, 2 vols, Ed. Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank, vol. 1, p. 216.

[15] P. J. M. Scott, *E. M. Forster: Our Permanent Contemporary*, London, 1984, p. 137

[16] Robert K. Martin, *op cit.*, p. 110.

problems which confront the sensitive individual in the new era where Victorian values, and the pre-war liberalism which enthroned the individual in their place, had been invalidated. As Bradbury suggests, *A Passage to India* shows Forster to be "a writer who has experienced the full impact of what modernism means".[17] Yet Forster, as Bradbury also acknowledges, retains a sense of his Victorian heritage. Ruskin is part of this heritage, and though he only appears briefly in the chapter on Venice in this novel, he is part of the tradition which Forster shares with his hero, Fielding. And it is Fielding who must come to terms, like his creator, with an age which offers no final salvation for its characters but the vitality, the desire to continue symbolised by the "light within". Whereas *Maurice* leads the reader through the protagonist's willing sacrifice of religious faith to the hope of a relationship which may prove his salvation, on to his complete disillusionment and beyond, in *A Passage to India* Forster at once evokes the formlessness of the new era as characterised by the town of Chandrapore. It should be mentioned at once that the city of Chandrapore is as much a creation of Forster's imagination as was Monteriano. Neither are meant to be read as India or Italy, and whereas the earlier creation was used to evoke the life of the Middle Ages, Chandrapore characterises the post-war period. What is most striking about Forster's description of this city is the obvious apotheosis of the ever expanding "rust" of London, which had threatened the traditions which he had sought to preserve along with the house at Howards End, in the "mud" of Chandrapore which negates the very existence of such traditions:

> Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. There are no bathing-steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. The streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away . . .. In the bazaars there is no painting and

[17] Malcolm Bradbury, "Two Passages to India: Forster as Victorian and Modern," in Oliver Stallybrass, ed., *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, New York and London, 1969, p. 126.

> scarcely any carving. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving. (*PI*:2)

The sense of the formlessness of Chandrapore is developed both by the fact of the Ganges not being considered "holy" at this point in its course and by the poverty of painting and carving within the bazaars. Holiness would imply the existence of a god who provides form in an initial act of creation, and by inference, the existence of divine law and a sense of good and evil, right and wrong. The lack of painting and carving likewise demonstrates an absence of human creativity. As Forster was to remark in his 1946 article "The Challenge of Our Time", the products of human creativity, art, provide "little worlds . . ., possessing internal harmony, in the bosom of this disordered planet". (*TCD*:57) Furthermore, in exploring the existence or non-existence of form in *A Passage to India* Forster anticipates a later address, the 1949 "Art for Art's Sake" reprinted in *Two Cheers for Democracy*. In this article Forster declares that the artist, "creates through his sensitiveness and his power to impose form. . . . And form is as important today, when the human race is trying to ride the whirlwind, as it ever was in those less agitating days of the past, when the earth seemed solid and the stars fixed, and the discoveries of science were made slowly, slowly." (*TCD*:92)

This article, "Art for Art's Sake", provides a commentary on the various aspects of the new relativistic society Forster is attempting to portray in *A Passage to India*. The significance of the lack of art in Chandrapore, demonstrating the analogy between the city and the post-war intellectual climate in general, is revealed in Forster's concluding remarks.

> Works of Art, in my opinion, are the only objects in the material universe to possess internal order, and that is why, though I don't believe that only art matters, I do believe in Art for Art's Sake. (*TCD*:93)

Antagonistic to, but never seriously threatening to impose form on Chandrapore proper, is the Civil Station. This outpost of Imperialist, quasi-Christian attitudes is made worthy of notice by its formality:

> It is sensibly planned, with a red-brick Club on its brow, and further back a grocer's and a cemetery, and the bungalows are disposed along roads that intersect at right angles. (*PI*:3)

The Anglo-Indians who inhabit the Civil station are comparable to the Jingoistic herd dismissed by Forster in the introduction to "Three Generations", those "People who didn't think—cavalry officers, aristocratic maiden ladies and so on". They believed in "Kipling, the tribes without law, and the white man's burden", and unlike the more thoughtful element of society "went on believing in them and I dare say do so still". (*TG*:273) For all the power they seem to possess, Forster shows them to be ludicrous anachronisms. The futility of their position in Chandrapore, or the post-war world, is demonstrated in Ronny Heaslop's fruitless attempts at imposing order:

> Every day he worked hard in the court trying to decide which of the two untrue accounts was the less untrue, trying to dispense justice fearlessly, to protect the weak against the less weak, the incoherent against the plausible, surrounded by lies and flattery. (*PI*:44)

This futility is also constantly reinforced by the "overarching sky" (*PI*:3), the very magnitude of which renders insignificant all human action. At the unsuccessful "bridge party", which only succeeded in reinforcing the racial ill-will it was proposed to relieve, the compass of the sky acts as a commentary on the inadequacy of their attempt, while trivialising the very differences upon which the initial prejudices of race are constructed:

> Some kites hovered overhead, impartial, over the kites passed the mass of a vulture, and, with an impartiality exceeding all, the sky, not deeply coloured but translucent, poured light from its whole circumference. It seemed unlikely that the series stopped here. Beyond the sky must not there be something that overarches all skies, more impartial even than they? Beyond which again. (*PI*:34)

The detachment of the sky and its series of concentric spheres, each more impartial the further removed from mundane existence, is echoed in the

sun which is to drown Chandrapore in its power. But it is "power . . . without beauty", for beauty implies form, just as god implies form, and the sun neither condescends to the one or exults as the other:

> If only there had been beauty! His cruelty would have been tolerable then. Through excess of light, he failed to triumph, he also; in his yellowy-white overflow not only matter, but brightness itself lay drowned. He was not the unattainable friend, either of men or birds or other suns, he was not the eternal promise, the never-withdrawn suggestion that haunts our consciousness. (*PI*:106)

Nature, the sky and the sun, refuses all subservience to human comfort as had the classical landscapes of Forster's early stories. Nor does it lend itself as an object of worship as the Romantics had conceived it. It is neither human nor divine and it cannot provide the "friend", or spiritual fulfilment that Maurice had sought. Instead it provides an example of the impartiality which man must learn in order to engage in relations with other men, a lesson which is ignored but for Fielding. Again we find in "Art for Art's Sake" a fuller explanation of the importance of the sky in this new generation. Forster, asking where order is attainable in this disordered world, is forced to admit that it is not to be found "in the astronomical category, where it was for many years enthroned."

> The heavens and the earth have become terribly alike since Einstein. No longer can we find a reassuring contrast to chaos in the night sky and look up with George Meredith to the stars, the army of unalterable law, or listen for the music of the spheres. Order is not there. (*TCD*:89)

Order, as imposed through art, has already been dealt with. But there is one other option—religion. Forster's scepticism with regard to religion—"The existence of divine order, though it cannot be tested, has never been disproved" (*TCD*:90) therefore the claim must be "allowed on the evidence of the mystics" (*TCD*:92)—is demonstrated in the effect of the Marabar caves.[18]

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[18] Wagner, "Excremental and Spiritual in *A Passage to India*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 21 (1970), p. 360, also notes the link between *A Passage to India* and "Art for Art's Sake", but finds that Forster's refusal to deny religion demonstrates a "too benevolent neutrality moving ever so slightly to the border of positive commitment." God

These caves are the apotheosis of the impartiality which characterised the sky. The "sun-born rocks" which accommodate the caves are a part of the Indian sub-continent which has "been land since land began",

> They are older than anything in the world. No water has ever covered them, and the sun who has watched them for countless aeons may still discern in their outlines forms that were his before our globe was torn from his bosom. If flesh of the sun's flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills. (*PI*:116)

Distilled and reduced in magnitude the impartiality of the sky and sun, the relativism of an age in which "Geology, looking further than religion, knows of a time [before] . . . the gods took their seats" (*PI*:116), it is the original stuff of the universe devoid of imposed form which is housed in the hollow rocks which make up the Marabar caves.

Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow* (1921) provides a hint to better understanding the significance of the caves. Huxley also introduces the theme of the incompatibility of the overarching sky with the insignificance of human endeavour in an extract from his hero's "slim volume" of verse:

> ". . . But silence and the topless dark
> Vault in the lights of Luna Park
> And Blackpool from the nightly gloom
> Hollows a bright tumultuous tomb."[19]

This notion of man hollowing out, illuminating, rationalising a tiny cave of understanding from the unknowable eternity of the universe is dealt with at greater length by Mr Scogan later in the novel. Scogan, reacting against the indifference of nature and the universe to human considerations, praises Cubism for producing art "exclusively" from the human mind, comparing it to travel by the Tube.

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or religion does not, however, satisfy Forster's desire for a "friend" and this novel, like *Maurice*, should therefore be read as moving away from religious commitment.

[19] Aldous Huxley, *Crome Yellow*, London, 1952, p. 6.

> Nature, or anything that reminds me of nature, disturbs me; it is too large, too complicated, above all too utterly pointless and incomprehensible. . . . That is why I always travel by Tube, never by bus if I can possibly help it.[20]

The Tube represents something human, "friendly and comprehensible", and Scogan takes the Tube as a simile for all human thought:

> All philosophies and all religions—what are they but spiritual Tubes bored through the universe! Through these narrow tunnels, where all is recognizably human, one travels comfortable and secure, contriving to forget that all round and below and above them stretches the blind mass of the earth, endless and unexplored. Yes, give me the Tube and Cubismus every time; give me ideas, so snug and neat and simple and well made. And preserve me from nature, preserve me from all that's inhumanly large and complicated and obscure.[21]

Forster's caves are similarly a symbol of the human carving out "tunnels" or caves of the comprehensible from the endless and unexplored. A later remark by Forster, demonstrates just how closely his purpose echoed Huxley's: "I tried to indicate the human predicament in a universe which is not, so far, comprehensible to our minds."(*PI*:328) For just this reason it is perhaps fitting that the model for the echoing caves is in fact a human product. Noble, though reluctant to pursue the point to its conclusion, notes that during his stay with Masood in mid-January 1913, Forster visited the Golghar in Bankipore. Noble explains the importance of this visit:

> This giant granary, in the shape of the bulbous half of an egg, had proved unusable. Its extraordinary feature according to contemporary guidebooks was a "reverberating echo, which answers to the slightest sound."[22]

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[22] R. W. Noble, "*A Passage to India*: The Genesis of E. M. Forster's Novel," *Encounter* 54 (Feb 1980), p. 52.

Mukherjee[23] has also commented on the lack of correspondence between the caves as they exist and the caves as Forster presents them in his novel, and the purpose of the adaptations to nature is probably the desire to include the echo Forster had noted at the Golghar. The echo provides an element in Forster's caves which Huxley's Tube simile lacks—the ability of the caves to force an awareness of the narrowness of life as pursued through such neat, snug tunnels upon the occupant. Huxley's creation, Scogan, seems content to acknowledge that man creates these tunnels. By his own admission, he hasn't the "courage" or the "time to start wandering in that labyrinth" which exists outside the Tube.

Forster, however, is intent upon demonstrating both to his characters and to his readers the insignificance of these caves, and this is for one very good reason. Forster's purpose in this novel is to demonstrate the failure of politicising human relationships. If man is to pursue life through the insulating walls of his own creation, particularly along tunnels carved out of the inexplicable universe through religion, what is to happen to individual relationships? The answer is demonstrated if one strikes a match:

> The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers . . .. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves. (*PI*:117-8)

The flame and its echo are unable to unite because they exist in different media. Though almost identical, the fact that one breathes air, the other stone, prevents them from uniting. Similarly, throughout the novel Forster presents the three religions, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism as echoes of each other, yet because the individuals are content to exist only within the tunnels or caves hollowed from space by their own philosophies or religions, they, like the flames, are unable to unite.

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[23] Sujit Mukherjee, "The Marabar Mystery: An Addition to the Case-Book on the Caves," *College English* 27 (1966), p. 502-3.

Indeed, the caves, and the second section of the novel in which they appear, and the case against Aziz which dominates it, are aimed at demonstrating the failure of the tunnel or cave carved by the Christian Anglo-Indians to provide a framework for the reconciliation of ethnicity, religion and nationality. Yet Forster's critique, as will be explained below, is not solely one of the shortcomings of Anglo-India or the jingoism it represents. The first section of the novel, "Mosque", and the third section, "Temple", look backwards and forwards respectively at the prejudices inherent in religious society, here specifically the Moslem and Hindu attitudes, which prevent union on a personal level in Chandrapore, or later, in Godbole's Native State.

Introduced into the typical Anglo-Indian environment are two atypical women, Mrs Moore and Miss Adela Quested. Their desire to "see India" separates them at once from their countrymen, and their conviction that "the English *are* out here to be pleasant" and that only "Goodwill and more goodwill and more goodwill" (*PI*:45) can work any permanent success in India immediately demonstrates them to be part of what Forster termed in "Three Generations" the "thoughtful" element of pre-war society. Indeed, the ingenuousness displayed in their attitude towards the Indians and their subsequent difficulties should be read as self-criticism on Forster's part. From the vantage point of 1924 Forster is censuring the naivety of his own liberal attitudes during his earlier visit to India in 1912. He repeats this note of censure again in "Three Generations":

> I remember well my first visit to India in 1912, when I thought that if the English would only behave more politely to the Indians, the difficulties between the races would be solved. Good manners were to do the trick. I see now how superficial my conclusion was . . .. (*TG*:275)

Victorianism and pre-war liberalism converge in the characterisation of these women. While sharing Forster's pre-war belief in the expediency of good manners, they also maintain a diffident Christianity which is to be tested in the

caves. It is their essential correspondence to Forster's own pre-war self that makes them, above all other characters, susceptible to the echo of the caves.[24]

Mrs Moore's motto is "God . . . is . . . love" (*PI*:45), and it is her interest in the spiritual which allows her to connect both with Aziz' Moslem sensibilities and with Godbole's mysticism. In her old age, suffering the anxiety of imminent death, she finds consolation in the idea of ghosts, of a continuation of life after death. Yet these ghosts appear not to conform to any Christian tradition, rather they are drawn from classical conventions where they appear as thin, unsubstantial creatures, little more than shadows. This concern with ghosts, particularly the conception of them as "shadows" or perhaps "echoes" of life, is appropriate to Forster's tremendous preoccupation with echoes and distortions of various kinds in this novel. The final negation of Mrs Moore's belief in survival after death is itself accomplished through her encounter with the echo in the Marabar caves, where she is forced to confront the likely truth of there being no continuing existence on the other side of the grave. A spiritual breakdown is the result, yet the final irony of Chandrapore, and the relativistic age, is her deification as "Esmiss Esmoor" (*PI*:214) by the Hindus. Through this deification Forster provides Mrs Moore with a type of after life, borrowed from Butler's notion of a "vicarious existence".[25] Forster's belief that "people are not really dead until they are felt to be dead" (*PI*:242) certainly recalls Butler's discussion in *Erewhon Revisited*. This immortality is offered Mrs Moore independent of Christian, Moslem or Hindu notions of the immortality of the spirit, and is the only reward compatible with a relativistic age.

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[24] There is evidence to suggest that Forster had the mother and wife of his friend Malcolm Darling at the back of his mind in constructing these characters. In *The Hill of Devi* these women, both sympathetic to Indians, are characterised by their spirituality (*HD*:21) and unconventionality (*HD*:26) respectively and their relationships with Maharajah of Dewas Senior which Forster saw first hand during his first visit to India may well have suggested the model for the relationships between Mrs Moore, Adela and Aziz.

[25] We may recall that Forster had always enjoyed Butler's work and that in 1914 had even considered writing a critical study of Butler. (*PI*:xii)

Similarly, Adela arrived in India in order to marry and accepts marriage on traditional Christian terms. For all her uneasiness about Ronny as a future husband she never seriously questions the institution of marriage and the Christian precepts upon which it is based until her complacency has likewise been disturbed by the echo in the cave. Adela appears almost unaware that love has any place in human relationships, of which marriage is but a formalised type, and certainly she has overlooked the sexual aspect.

Adela discovers that she intends to refuse Ronny only after her admission to Aziz that "she didn't mean to stop in India". (*PI*:75) Her uncouthness in breaking this news before discussing it with Ronny shocks even herself. But the idea of an intimacy with Aziz which this admission generates leads her into feelings of infidelity and the sense of sexual confrontation in the cave. This is symbolised in the incident with the field glasses. As Boyle suggests the field glasses "function . . . as a symbol of . . . shallow rationalism"[26]. But not Adela's. Rather the field glasses, borrowed from Ronny, demonstrate that with their engagement Adela has accepted Ronny's view of life, has placed herself under Ronny's guardianship. With Ronny's field glasses she reassures herself that Aziz' snake is only a "the withered and twisted stump of a toddy-palm". (*PI*:132) The cave must have worked upon Adela as it had on Mrs Moore, making her question general assumptions about marriage, and revealing it as little more than the sexual act. Shock, embarrassment at her discussion of marriage with Aziz moments before, a feeling of unwanted intimacy with the man, and the breaking of the field glasses, of the symbol of Ronny's protection of her, lead Adela to the wrong conclusion. Yet as with Mrs Moore it is the irony of relativism that the Indians should then gossip about this frigid heroine as Fielding's mistress.

Like Maurice during his crisis of disillusionment, both these ladies respond to their predicaments in a manner typical of the new era. Adela feels

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[26] Ted E. Boyle, "Adela Quested's Delusion: The Failure of Rationalism in *A Passage to India*," *College English* 26 (1965), p. 479.

that "personal relationships", the misunderstanding of the nature of which had led to her breakdown, are useless. She feels that she is "not fit for personal relationships" (*PI*:188) and the value added to life by her belief in them has been lost. Yet, like Maurice after his break-up with Clive and before the salvation found in Alec, she will continue to do whatever she can and believes that she shall return to England and "settle down to some career." (*PI*:250) In confirmation of this intention we are later told that "Her first duty on returning to England was to look up those other children of Mrs Moore's, Ralph and Stella; then she would turn to her profession." (*PI*:254)

Mrs Moore, likewise, has lost the spirit which had hitherto provided purpose in her life. With the negation of her Christianity in the caves, "Her Christian tenderness had gone, or had developed into a hardness, a just irritation against the human race". (*PI*:190) She does not look for death as Maurice initially had, but in her desire to fulfil her duties and then retire there are echoes of Maurice's reaction to the loss of Clive.

> No doubt you expect me to die, but when I have seen you and Ronny married, and seen the other two and whether they want to be married—I'll retire then into a cave of my own" (*PI*:191)

Both women seem prepared to continue their duties, yet both are left with neither faith nor hope.

We are given a final glimpse of Mrs Moore as she departs India and is mocked by voices of "the Hundred Indias", which represent the multitude of political, racial and religious divisions in the country—"So you thought an echo was India; you took the Marabar Caves as final?" (*PI*:200) Mrs Moore is seduced by these promises of a philosophy of life to replace her lost Christianity. The reader, however, should remember that like the goblin footfall in *Howards End*, the echo in the caves at Marabar assures us that all these Hundred Indias will themselves dissolve into the familiar "ou-boum". (*PI*:138)

In contrast to the pre-war attitudes of these women, Forster found the basis for his hero, Fielding, in a Forster who had the advantages of a second visit to India and a fuller awareness of the short-comings of pre-war liberalism. After the chaotic conclusion to the Aziz case Fielding makes a trip back to England passing through Venice. In his reaction to Venice is found a chronology of influence comparable to that of Forster:

> then came Venice. As he landed on the Piazzetta a cup of beauty was lifted to his lips, and he drank with a sense of disloyalty. The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt, stood in the right place, whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong. He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills; indeed without form, how can there be beauty? Form stammered here and there in a mosque, became rigid through nervousness even, but oh, these Italian churches! (*PI*:270)

Gay, in concluding her examination of Forster and Ruskin, notes that "In the world of *A Passage to India*, of course, Ruskin is left far behind: his ideas are given one affectionate page out of 300-odd."[27] The page referred to is that quoted from above, and certainly this passage—"San Giorgio standing on the island which could scarcely have risen from the waves without it, the Salute holding the entrance of a canal which, but for it, would not be the Grand Canal!" (*PI*:270)—may well be considered "quite a Ruskinian outburst".[28]

These remarks about San Giorgio certainly recall the chapters "Torcello" and "Murano" in Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*.[29] Yet the full power of this outburst is hidden if we accept the suggestion that the attitudes which lie behind it have simply been left behind, and that this is but an "affectionate" acknowledgment of the debt owed to Ruskin in Forster's pre-war work.

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[27] Penelope Gay, "E. M. Forster and John Ruskin: The Ambivalent Connection," *Southern Review* (Adelaide) 11 (1978), p. 295.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[29] The same chapters from the second volume of *The Stones of Venice*, sub-titled "Sea Stories", from which Forster took his quotations in *Howards End*.

Rather, this return to Venice provides Forster with a means of delineating in one short passage the philosophical progression which we have seen as the main plot in *Maurice* and which Fielding also shares with his creator.

Fielding recalls the beauty of Ruskin's Venice, beauty interpreted through moral considerations, how in "the old undergraduate days he had wrapped himself up in the many-coloured blanket of St Mark's". (*PI*:270) Yet moving beyond Ruskin's moral interpretations of the art and beauty of Christian Venice, Fielding has found "something more precious than mosaics and marbles", his humanist sympathies reject those undergraduate pleasures, and find in Venice a "harmony between the works of man and the earth that upholds them".(*PI*:270) It is the order, and harmony which is lacking in Chandrapore and its environs and what he fears his Indian friends "would miss"—the "joys of form"—humanist, liberal, pre-war, Bloomsbury "form" now lost to the post-war civilisation. This "affectionate page" does not represent what Price calls an "escape from anxiety into assurance"[30], but encapsulates the progress in Forster from Ruskin to Fry and leads the reader beyond to the new generation from which Forster and Fielding may look back with longing, but through which they must continue forward like Proust and Maurice.

In fact the move from Fry's notion of "significant form", a notion Forster saw as characteristic of Bloomsbury, can be further noted in the unfinished novel, *Arctic Summer*, which Forster had begun between the war and the final work on *A Passage to India*. Furbank rightly suggests that the hero of this novel sets about an "unlearning of Fry's doctrines"[31], or rather a

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[30] Martin Price, "People of the Book: Character in Forster's *A Passage to India*," *Critical Inquiry* 1 (1975), p. 615. Nicholas Potter, "Crisis of Reasonable Form," *Durham University Journal* 83 (1991), p. 213, is also aware of the importance of this chapter on Venice, noting that it reveals Forster's lack of faith in "the satisfactions of 'reasonable form'".

[31] P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 2vols, London, 1977-8, vol. 1, p. 207.

questioning of the validity of the formalist approach.[32] Fielding is shown to have achieved such a state, and such a reading of this chapter from *A Passage to India* at once lends credence to Furbank's interpretation of *Arctic Summer* as part of a logical progression, and in turn is supported by it.

This novel, then, is not about "exploding Western notions of form".[33] These notions have already been exploded by the war and by the work of men like Einstein and Freud. What it amounts to is a struggle for friendship, no longer politicised into an agent for social amelioration, but restored to its place as a means of personal salvation. Fielding, free from the deification of personal relationships which characterised the liberal attitude of Forster's first visit to India, is open to such relationships. The consummation of his desire for intimacy on a human level is however withheld from him, a humanist echoing of Godbole's milkmaid and her thwarted desire for intimacy with Shri Krishna, ever withheld yet remaining a never-withdrawn promise.

The possibility of a relationship between Fielding and Aziz as the crux of the novel is introduced in the second chapter. Aziz, together with various Moslem friends, is "discussing as to whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman." (*PI*:5) The general consensus is that it is impossible. Even Hamidullah who had been well received at Cambridge many years before,[34] and who later in the novel longingly recalls that "Politics had not mattered in Mr and Mrs Bannister's rectory" (*PI*:98) while he was at

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 199, Furbank also notes that in this unfinished work Forster is concerned with "the chivalrous man, the knight-errant, who wants not to work but to fight for his faith." One can only speculate asked how much this character owed to Forster's prolonged interest in Ruskin. Certainly the hero's chivalrous attitude to women, his preference for sentiment in art, and the notion of knightly virtue all correspond to Forster's perceived image of Ruskin.

[33] Gay, *op cit.*, p. 295.

[34] Compare this with Forster's comments in a letter to Masood dated 5 December 1914: "I have just been to Oxford for a week end, but saw little; an Indian to tea—Hindu, I forget his name. The Universities grow more & more concerned about your compatriots; it is indeed a problem. We have lost the art of digesting you that we had in your father's time. I can hardly hear of any cases in which an Englishman & Indian have become real friends." Lago and Furbank, *op cit.*, vol. 1, p. 216.

Cambridge, feels the truth of this assertion. And though he disagrees it is "with so many reservations that there was no friction between them." (*PI*:5) What was important was the sense of security against the British presence that they found in the unity of their belief. The glories of Islam may be decayed but they can still "regain their departed greatness by hearing its departure lamented" (*PI*:10) in Aziz' recitations.

Like the Anglo-Indian's refusal to distinguish between Indians, these Moslems believe all English "are exactly alike". (*PI*:6) Thus at the Bridge party Adela finds herself striving against "the echoing walls of their civility." (*PI*:37) In response to the perceived unity of Anglo-India, the Indians present a unified front of inaccurate aping of European manners. Whatever Adela tried in her attempt to overcome this barrier to inter-racial communication "produced a murmur of deprecation". (*PI*:37) This murmur is an anticipation of the horror in the Marabar caves, which for Mrs Moore conveyed that "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 and bluff—it would amount to the same" (*PI*:140-1), and should warn both Adela and the reader of the futility of inter-racial intercourse as long as races consent to interact on a racial rather than an individual level.

The accusations made against Aziz by Adela after her breakdown in the caves only succeed in causing the Anglo-Indians and Moslems to further close ranks against each other. Only Fielding, who supports Aziz out of a belief in his innocence gained through personal experience of the accused, remains immune to the racial demands of the situation. Yet in the end it is Aziz' constant demand for Fielding not only to support him as a friend but to embrace Islam, or at least the politics of an Moslem India, which prevents their further friendship.

The case provides one point of reconciliation, however qualified, that of Hindu and Moslem "entente". (*PI*:255) In the early chapters Forster had clearly demonstrated that Aziz was unreceptive to Hindu India, and to Professor Godbole. Godbole, similarly, accepts Aziz and all that is not Hindu on sufferance. As with the echo between Islam and Anglo-India, there is an echo between the religions which warns of the difficulties of integration, while implying the inherent correspondence of the prejudices of each faction. Aziz' lamentation on the passing of Islam, "Gone, gone", (*PI*:257) is echoed in Godbole's hopeful hymn to Shri Krishna, "Come, come". (*PI*:72) The respective calls also represent the past and the future of India—Anglo-India being its present—and thus the structure of the novel with its three sections, Mosque, Caves, Temple, represents both historical periods and the faction in power during each. Moreover both the "Gone, gone" and the "Come, come" suggest the "bou-oum" or "ou-boum" (*PI*:138) echo of the caves which casts its shadow over the whole novel.

Yet the Moslem faction who supported Aziz saw in the recruitment of a Hindu lawyer an opportunity to rally a broader base of support against the ruling British. In this alliance between Moslem and Hindu lies the suggestion of the growing Indian nationalism which Forster would have encountered in his later visit. While this detente may secure freedom for India from the British, the inherent religious antagonism between the cultures results in the permanent division of the sub-continent. The political realities of India and Pakistan have tended to justify Forster's concerns.

The conclusion of the story moves from Chandrapore to Godbole's native Hindu state. Many critics find that Forster manages a reconciliation of sorts in the action of this final section. Yet the immersion of Fielding and Aziz represents no more than a demonstration of the unity of the Anglo-Indian and the Moslem in being outside the comprehension of the Hindu mind. Forster himself explains that the division apparent in the Hindu state was "between Brahman and non-Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the

running". (*PI*:282-3) Fielding and Aziz are only united in that they don't count.

That the Hindu state is equally unsuitable for the development of personal relationships on an individual basis is intimated almost immediately by the last of the triangle of echoes between Christian, Moslem and Hindu. The "God si Love" of the Hindu festival certainly provides an echo of the "God . . . is . . . love" Christianity of Mrs Moore spoken of earlier. Similarly the missionaries in Chandrapore, who during conversation with Hindu friends had sadly excluded the possibility of Heaven for "oranges, cactuses, crystals and mud" (*PI*:32) but felt wasps to be a borderline case, are recalled in Godbole's own reverie. Here he recalls Mrs Moore and a wasp and "imitating God" he strove to love her and it and include them in salvation. Yet like the missionaries, Godbole also fails to find room for including "the stone where the wasp had clung—could he . . . no, he could not, he had been wrong to attempt the stone". (*PI*:277) Indeed, Emmett rightly believes that Forster's choice of the "festival honouring the birth of Krishna" is a deliberate "parallel with Christmas" and that these echoes between Christianity and Hinduism provide a repudiation of "the whole idea that the book's structure is a progression leading to Hinduism".[35]

Though Hinduism aims at including "all spirit as well as all matter" in salvation, and "sacrificing good taste . . . achieved what Christianity has shirked: the inclusion of merriment"(*PI*:279), it still fails, or at least Godbole as its representative in this novel fails, to include the stone which Christianity had, along with oranges and cactus and mud, also excluded from communion with God. Indeed the whole failing of Hinduism, of Islam and Christianity is in the deification of the "World's Desire". (*PI*:280) We recall in *Maurice* that the hero must progress from a belief that his "friend" is God, or a god, to an understanding that he is just a man. Forster finds his own "god" in the punkah-

[35] V. J. Emmett Jr., "Verbal Truth and Truth of Mood in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*," *English Literature in Transition* 15 (1972), p. 209.

wallah of low birth at the court house, (*PI*:207) but Godbole, Aziz, the Anglo-Indians are denied communion with their desire, because by politicising their search, they are denied the knowledge that their hopes may only be satisfied through personal relationships on an individual level.

Fielding, like Forster, is caught in this second generation between the herd instincts of religion and Imperialism of the pre-war period and the coming Nationalism and Communism and Fascism which he saw as marking his third generation. This coming together in political rather than religious or social groupings is intimated in the Hindu-Moslem entente during the trial. Fielding alone, in the novel, recognises where salvation lies, and strives to awaken Aziz to the truth of personal relationships. But Aziz is unable to separate his relationship with Fielding from his relationship, as Moslem, with Englishman or Christian: "India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one!" Only then, continues Aziz and "you and I shall be friends." (*PI*:312)

Aziz' politicising of relationships keeps he and Fielding apart, and, in a scene which recalls Philip and Caroline at the conclusion of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, circumstances, "the earth . . ., . . . the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House" (*PI*:312) work to prevent union.

This anticipation of Nationalism in Aziz' final speech leads us prophetically into the third generation of Forster's paper. The motto for this age is "Faith without Hope". Forster explains:

> Faith in two senses of the word. Firstly, willingness to follow a formula, and to condemn those who don't follow it. The party spirit, the sorting out of people into friends and enemies: that kind of faith. And then—much more important and significant—the faith that though the world must go wrong it will never the less go right (*TG*:285)

It is the party spirit which is at the heart of the going wrong. When Forster sees it in action in Barcelona, Nuremburg and Moscow, he sees in those cities "forgetfulness of self, obedience to a movement, and the strength that comes from mass". (*TG*:286) Quoting Day Lewis, Forster sadly acknowledges that in such a climate people seem to have "something more important to do than to save our own souls".(*TG*:286)

Both liberalism, and the emphasis on the individual on which it was based, were gone. And while personal relationships continued "they have become private, they are denied political value and they enter less and less into serious art." (*TG*:285) Forster, who had attempted to remove personal relationships from the political arena in his later novels, to place greater emphasis on the individual and personal salvation, now finds that politics has done his job for him. Yet the party spirit, in relegating the importance of personal relationships, also relegated the importance of the individual. Thus Forster sums up the three generations of his writing life as the "tragedy of the individualist—a tragedy in three acts", with the final act demonstrating the twilight of the individualist "in an age where everyone is joining up and getting together". (*TG*:287)

The corollary to the devaluation of the individual is to be felt most, Forster fears, in the realm of art. Unlike the two earlier "generations", the character of which he had illustrated by its typical writers, Meredith and Proust, this third period Forster is unable to think of "any great writer who illustrates it . . . for no serious person has the time to be a great writer." Instead of what we perceive as "Works of Art", this period, and likewise Forster, produces "propaganda" (*TG*:286).

As a result of his own turn to the production of individualist and humanist propaganda, and his inability to write novels in a civilisation he no longer understands, Forster is led to wonder if "there will be any more literature."

> The human race may be sweeping away from it. I very much doubt whether the particular form of literature which has interested me, namely the novel, is likely to survive. The novel has always been the stronghold of individualism: it expresses the writer's outlook, it deals with characters and the relation between them, it makes a great fuss over love affairs and social nuances, I don't think people will have patience to write that sort of thing any more, even if they have the time. They'll have a different education that prepares them to encounter change. (*TG*:286)

Though proven by time to have been unfounded, these fears about society and its traditions as Forster knew it, are voiced more fully in a contemporary article, later collected in *Two Cheers for Democracy*, "Does Culture Matter?"[36]

Believing that the inhabitants of this third generation have no patience, and no time, for novels, Forster takes the opportunity for this article to question if not only novels but "culture" as a whole has any value for the new generation. He acknowledges that "Many people despise them", and "that cultural stuff takes up a great deal of room and time" but is left unconvinced by the argument that "we live in a new world which has been wiped clean by science and cannot profit by tradition." (*TCD*:99) Indeed Forster's own work in this period consists of an attempt at both preserving tradition in various forms, and the production of propaganda in support of its preservation by others.

The former produced *Alexandria*, which in part answered the omission he noted in the conclusion to *Pharos and Pharillion* that "A serious history of Alexandria has yet to be written, . . . how varied, how impressive, such a history might be." (*PP*:99) *The Hill of Devi*, likewise, attempts a "record of a vanished civilization." Forster continues:

> Some will rejoice that it has vanished. Others will feel that something precious has been thrown away amongst the rubbish—something which might have been saved. (*HD*:4)

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[36] First published in *Time and Tide*, 16 November 1935.

And in *Marianne Thornton* Forster delves amongst the "rubbish" of his own family history in search of that "something precious" that might be worth saving.

"Does Culture Matter?" is a fine example of his non-fictional propaganda, and provides an apology for the continued existence for culture in the form of the "Brandenburg Concertos, or for solitary readings of Dante". (*TCD*:99) Forster finds that the emphasis placed on mass amusements at the expense of more traditional artistic forms and artefacts themselves threatens to create a "split" between work and play and with it the negation of the chance of "creating a life which is all a piece." Not that the past achieved this unity (though it is the unity that Ruskin sought in all his works on political-economy), but Forster believes that tradition and culture "can help us to do it". (*TCD*:101).

It is worth noting the correspondence here between Forster's line of thinking and Ruskin's conception of life unified through work explored in chapter four. Forster goes so far as to make explicit reference to the "clamour for art and literature which Ruskin and Morris thought they detected" (*TCD*:103), art and literature which was, as evidenced by *Sesame and Lilies*, meant to prepare the youth of England for a life in which both the body and the spirit would be fulfilled by work, thus removing the necessity for cheap amusements which are in themselves but a panacea for the general dissatisfaction of the age. In *Sesame and Lilies*, the return to a more vital Christianity as expressed in art and literature could, in Ruskin's view, provide a corrective to the "moral state of our English Industry and its Amusements!" (xviii:97) While he has no faith in Ruskin's method of disseminating culture to this effect, Forster is nevertheless again working in the Ruskinian tradition. Indeed, in his position as the spokesman for the liberal tradition he was trying

to save, Forster has fulfilled his early efforts at imitating Ruskin and, to one observer, appears to have assumed his master's mantle of "sage".[37]

Forster's answer is simply enough. He hopes to communicate culture and the traditions which interpret it through example. And typical of Forster, in thus updating Ruskin he has, probably unconsciously, chosen the figure of the late Roger Fry as an example of "the cultured person . . . [who] is obviously having a good time", and hopes that "those who come across him will be tempted to share it and to find out how."(*TCD*:104).

It is fitting that Forster should thus reintroduce that pair of influences which had provided the antagonism from which much of his work was born. Yet this article provides further evidence of Forster's relationship with Ruskin. Throughout this thesis Forster has been shown to be updating Ruskin, dethroning his Christian tenets to replace them with liberal ideals. Yet in doing this Forster is not some crude iconoclast and we find that much of Ruskin is often harmonised into Forster's liberal vision. In this article Forster is not only working to preserve culture in the Ruskinian tradition but assumes that Ruskin is part of that tradition which he wishes to preserve.

Forster uses Dante as an example of that "old stuff" which must be ferried across the river of transition between the world Forster knew and the new "age of unrest" (*TCD*:100). But saving his works is not nearly enough, this new age also needs "the power to enjoy and understand them." (*TCD*:101) Forster invokes the Soviet Union and the American Mid-west of Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* as examples of the corruption which may result from this loss of understanding. In these societies Dante is regarded as either comic or sadistic. He concludes:

> Certainly Dante wrote over the gates of Hell that they were made by the power, wisdom and love of God . . . and neither the Middle West nor the Soviets nor ourselves can be

[37] W. J. H. Sprott, "Forster as Humanist," in Oliver Stallybrass, ed., *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, New York and London, 1969, p. 73.

> expected to agree with that. But there is no reason why we should not understand it, and stretch our minds against his, although they have a different shape. The past is often uncongenial as far as its statements are concerned, but the trained imagination can surmount them and reach the essential. (*TCD*:101)

Although in the years following this article there are a number of sympathetic references to Ruskin in Forster's *Commonplace Book*, much of what Ruskin wrote was, nevertheless, uncongenial to Forster's liberalism—uncongenial for the same reason Dante was. In a letter to Eric Fletcher dated 26 April 1950, Forster mounts a defence of Ruskin which recalls strongly his comments on Dante in "Does Culture Matter?".

> I was interested and repelled by the Ruskin book; Peter Quennell is a fish-like repellent observer, I think. The danger of such studies is not that they give us psycho-analytic & physical details about the authors—that's all right in itself—but that they deflect weak-minded readers from the created result. Not being all that weak-minded, I am not put off the Stones of Venice by being told that Ruskin tossed himself off, but some readers might be deflected or disgusted by the information and not read him in consequence, or read him wrongly.[38]

Forster, at sixty-nine years of age, is still interested enough in Ruskin to read Quennell's study. Certainly that says a lot for the importance of Ruskin in Forster's mind. The unfailing interest in Ruskin is also demonstrated in Forster's reading of Ruskin's *The Pleasures of England* in 1942 and *Praeterita* in 1948-9 among other works. Forster's *Commonplace Book* also bears witness to Forster having read James' *The Order of Release* in 1948, the year of its publication. Forster's response is again sympathetic to Ruskin: "[*The Order of Release*] attempts to rehabilitate his [James'] own grand parents, and denigrate R[uskin] but has the opposite effect." (*CB*:180)

While in the post-war world Ruskin has become more and more uncongenial to many, it matters to Forster that he is still worth reading and

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[38] Lago and Furbank, *op cit.* vol. 2, p. 240.

reading correctly. As with Dante, whose name Forster had linked with Ruskin's in some of his earliest work, we should, he still felt, stretch our minds against him. In doing so we might yet find in him the motive for achieving "a life which is all of a piece" (*TCD*:101) which Forster believed Ruskin had been unable to provide for his own generation. This continuing awareness of the value of Ruskin colours what may be Forster's last reference to Ruskin. Forster selected Kenneth Clark's *Ruskin Today* as his choice for book of the year 1964 and praises the author because he "excludes the silliness of a great Victorian writer and presents an anthology of his other aspects."[39]

[39] E. M. Forster, "Books of the Year: A Personal Choice," *Observer*, 20 December 1964, p. 7.

CONCLUSION

This has been a study of influence, and as such stands in opposition to Forster's vision in his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). In this work, derived from the Clarke Lectures he gave at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1926, Forster attempting to discover what it is that constitutes a novel, seeks to "exorcise . . . [the] demon of chronology" (*AN*:21) and "its emphasis on influences and schools". (*AN*:16) Rather than visualize British novelists as part of a stream, Forster asks his audience to imagine them "seated together in a room, a circular room, a sort of British Museum reading-room – all writing their novels simultaneously." Forster continues that the novelists

> do not, as they sit there, think 'I live under Queen Victoria, I under Anne, I carry on the tradition of Trollope, I am reacting against Aldous Huxley'. The fact that their pens are in their hands is far more vivid to them. (*AN*:16)

By this sleight of hand Forster nicely avoids the complications inherent in an historical approach to the novel, an approach which he felt himself unqualified to pursue. His justification is that he hopes by employing this "imperfect vision" to avoid a "serious danger, the danger of pseudo-scholarship." (*AN*:17) Forster believes the genuine scholar, Sir Walter Raleigh, is offered as an example, having once mastered his subject is free to "contemplate the river of time . . . see the facts, the personalities, floating past him, and estimate the relations between them". (*AN*:17) But the pseudo-scholar refuses to "sit down alone and struggle with the writer, and rather than ascertaining the facts of his subject would prefer to relate a book to the history of its time, to events in the life of the author, to the events it describes, above all

to some tendency." (*AN*:21)

While this vision of novelists writing oblivious to their place in a tradition helps Forster simplify his subject, it is plainly contrary to his true feelings on the subject of influence. Not only has Forster admitted his place in a tradition stretching back to Ruskin and Carlyle in "Three Generations", and the value of Ruskin, Wordsworth and Samuel Butler in his "Housman" memoirs, his entries in his *Commonplace Book* about the time he was preparing his Clarke lectures indicate that he was anxious about his relation to the creative work of his immediate predecessors:

> the literature of the immediate past cannot free us from the tyranny of time. Its limitations evoke our own, date us, and we retort by accusing it of dating. Impossible to read a Meredith as simply and fairly as a Fielding, with one eye fixed on the author's interests and the other on his achievement. (*CB*:7-8)

Forster's inability to consider Meredith's work fairly is easily explained by Bloom's concept of the "anxiety of influence". Bloom, in arguing for the existence of a Canon, believes that "Great writing is always rewriting or revisionism and is founded upon a reading that clears space for the self, or that so works as to reopen old works to our fresh sufferings."[1] Thus, according to Bloom, Forster's novels are the embodiment of the anxiety he felt concerning Meredith and his other Victorian predecessors. Forster complained that the

> *Immediate Past* is like a stuffy room, and the succeeding generation waste their time in trying to tolerate it. All they can do is go out, leaving the door open behind them. The room may be spacious, witty harmonious, friendly, but it smells, and there is no getting round this. Hence the letters to The Times on the one hand and broken windows on the other. 'What a pity the young are not more tolerant.' Quite so. But what a pity there is such a thing as death, for that is the real difficulty. (*CB*:7)

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[1] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, New York, San Diego and London, 1994, p. 9.

In a literary sense this can be read as Forster's concern with the search for immortality through the act of creation and how it necessarily demands that the aspiring artist come into conflict with his predecessors—what Bloom describes as the "conflict between past genius and present aspiration, in which the prize is literary survival or canonical inclusion."[2]

Forster's own anxiety to gain literary immortality may have induced a reaction against those novelists whom he found "smelled" most to him—"H. James, Meredith, Stevenson" (*CB*:7). Yet what this thesis demonstrates is that in the liberal, humanist work towards social amelioration which motivated his novels, Forster was also forced into a struggle with the authority of Ruskin in that field, and can only make space for his modern vision through a revision of Ruskin. Thus Ruskin's influence was even more central to Forster's career as a novelist than that of a mere intellectual father-figure. Like Proust, who began his career with a translation of Ruskin's *Bible of Amiens* and *Sesame and Lilies*, Forster's early contact with this master of English Prose appears to have sparked his first serious creative work—the "Normandy Journal". This desire to imitate soon developed into a kind of dialogue, changing over time, in which Ruskin sets the terms in which Forster defines a modern vision of society, with particular reference to the desired application of neo-medieval and neo-feudal structures which characterised Ruskin's work.

Ruskin's position as arbiter of taste, and prophet of what Spears calls an English Eden,[3] made it necessary for Forster during the "first generation" of his creative life to reject him, at least partially, to provide space for his own creativity. It is indeed notable that as Forster grew closer to Ruskin's image of the womanly ideal through the novels *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View* and *Howards End*, so he sought to distance himself from Ruskin's

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8-9.

[3] J. L Spears, *Dreams of an English Eden*, New York, 1984.

prescriptions for the working classes which culminated in the anti-Ruskinian Leonard Bast. This ambivalence shows Forster's concern not to work absolutely within the framework Ruskin's work provided.

The "second generation" sees a decline in Forster's concerns with social amelioration and, consequently, the figure of Ruskin shifts into the background. In the transitional novel, *Maurice*, Ruskin is still used to define the neo-medieval opposition of body and soul which Maurice seeks to overcome. But by the time of *A Passage to India*, the major novel of this second period which represents Forster's reaction to post-war relativism, Ruskin as prophet of societal salvation is lost among Forster's search for personal salvation. Nevertheless, this novel does rely on Ruskin and also Fry to explain the aesthetic and social tradition which Forster's hero, Fielding, shares with his creator but which now appears to be incompatible with a new generation.

In the "third generation" Forster's concern resembles that which agitates Bloom in his work on the nature of a Canon. Forster can not, as Bloom can not, "be certain that fresh generations will rise up to prefer Shakespeare and Dante to all other writers."[4] Forster is not even certain that the novel can survive the growing pressure from mass entertainments. In such a climate, he finds himself forced into the role of spokesman for a way of life, and a tradition, which is seen by the majority as increasingly uncongenial. His response is to enlist eminent men of the stature of Ruskin, Dante and Roger Fry, even though they were in conflict with each other, as benign allies in his endeavour to hand down the tradition he had made himself a part of through his earlier revisions of these men, and of Ruskin in particular. Forster's final references to Ruskin are an acknowledgment of his importance, and therefore they should encourage us to approach Forster's work after a fresh reading of Ruskin, a reading cleansed of anti-Victorian prejudice. Only thus will we understand why Forster gave

[4] Bloom, *op cit.*, p. 16.

Ruskin a central place in the tradition to which he felt he belonged—that tradition which at the end of his life he was trying to defend.

APPENDIX

THREE GENERATIONS

Period I. In the early years of this century the general outlook of people might be summed up in the words "Hope without Faith." We had not any deep convictions about the future, we were not cheerful about life, but we did expect that things would get better. We began the century with a false start—Jingoism and the Boer War—and soon became ashamed of it. We began by thinking we should paint the world red, red being in those days a most respectable colour, and indicating the British Empire. Kipling, the tribes without the law, the white man's burden,—these things were genuinely believed in for a few years by thoughtful people; but only for a few years. People who didn't think—cavalry officers, aristocratic maiden ladies and so on—went on believing in them and I daresay do so still, but thoughtful people soon saw that they didn't do. It was no good talking about the tribes without the law when the tribes said they had laws. It was no good taking up the white man's burden when it didn't want to be taken up. Many of us soon saw that this crude imperialism had an economic side and we were put off. <Did you ever read an early novel of Hillaire Belloc called *Mr Burden*? It came out at the beginning of the century, and had an enormous influence. After one had read *Mr Burden* Kipling sounded very tinny. It's a brilliant satire on colonial exploitation, its ramifications at Oxford, in the City, and so on. It's a destructive book, and it left the scene free for something new—>[1] for the attitude which I have just defined as "Hope without Faith", and which, in its political manifestations, has been called liberalism. We were all of us, in a sense, liberals. We thought that evolution, speeded up here and there by the efforts of individuals, would gradually make the world

[1] Forster has inserted square brackets in pencil here and later in the manuscript to mark passages for deletion in the 1939 version of the talk. To avoid confusion these square brackets have been replaced with angle brackets.

better. We weren't gay about it—that's an odd thing as I look back. We were distinctly gloomy. All thoughtful people tended to gloom—it was part of their prerogative, it was a tradition stretching back to Ruskin & Carlyle. The prophet would sit oppressed by the woes of the world and the follies of mankind, while his womenfolk busied them noiselessly about the house, taking care not [to] disturb him, last they drew the divine bolt upon themselves. Today the prophet has often to do his own house work, and has less time to specialise in despair. It was a despairing age—and yet it hoped. How can I bring it before you? I think best by a remark which was made to me over 30 years ago by a fellow-undergraduate, and consequently a great pessimist, and I was a pessimist too, so far as my abilities allowed. "I suppose" he said tragically "that actually the worst of all things would happen, and that the world will get tediously better and better." Imagine if one could make such a remark today. It would be like the millennium opening. In the terrors of today—how unreal and affected such a remark sounds. Yet my friend was quite genuine over it. We supposed that evolution, speeded up by the honest thought and decent work of a few individuals, would slowly ameliorate the world. We had no conception of the horrors which science had in store for the human race. Indeed we never thought of science. Science was something which made smells in laboratories, and we never dreamed that those smells would one day escape & poison cities and be used as blackmail by tyrants. Liberalism failed to foresee the future, and though I am still a sort of a liberal it is not because I am impressed by its record for perspicacity.

Though one shouldn't use the word "faith" about this early period, we had of course our tenets, our gadgets, our nostrums with which we hoped to improve society. The chief of this was our belief in personal-relationships, and I want to say something about it.

Personal relationships have of course existed as long as people existed, and you may wonder why I refer to them in connection with any particular period. They [*sic*] point is that at the beginning of the century, they were

exalted into something political, and it was felt that if they were solved the problems of civilisation would be solved too. Liberalism exalts the individual—that is why it appeals to me—and the liberalism of those days hoped that by exalting the individuals the community would be benefited. There's something in this but not as much as we hoped. I remember so well my first visit to India in 1912, when I thought that if the English would only behave more politely to the Indians, the difficulties between the races would be solved. Good manners were to do the trick. I see now how superficial my conclusion was: I was completely ignoring the economic factor for instance. But my mistake is typical of the period. We deified personal relationships and expected them to function outside their appropriate sphere. By this time I was writing novels and I remember a sentence in one of them: personal relationships are the only things that matter, for ever, and ever. I still believe this as regards the private life. My own relations with people have brought me the only happiness I have found worth having or recommending—not a flash-in-the-pan happiness either, solid achievement. What about the community though? Will it benefit? Not necessarily, and people who feel as I do, and place the individual first, are not always good citizens and are never good party men. Our early training has been too strong for us.

However this insistence on the personal led to some useful social work being done, especially as regards sex. We began to break away from our Victorian taboo, and to discuss more freely. From the present day point of view, we were furtive and flustered. <The relation between the sexes was still a difficult topic, such problems as menstruation, homosexuality and abortion were never alluded to and a play by Edward Garnett which referred delicately to the last named subject was barred by the censor.> Still we did move from sniggering to sense and we did achieve a political sex-measure which had great symbolic value: votes for women. Whether the vote in these huge modern electorates has any value may be doubted, but it's valuable symbolically: it enheartens the people who exercise it. For instance: it's lamentable today that

the vote should have been withdrawn from the natives of the Cape in South Africa. Few of them possessed it and it wasn't directly useful, but it enheartened them, and fitted them for our civilisation. And it was fine when women got the vote in England. They actually got it during the war, but the movement to give it them sprang up during the period I'm talking of: it sprang up out of our belief in the individual and out of our refusal to divide the community into masculine and feminine. (Would that we had gone further, and refused to divide it into rich & poor)

Now the freeing of women had, as a pendant, the freeing of the young. The wife escapes from her husband, the children at the same time revolt against their parents. My goodness how we used to discuss & complain of our parents! Even when beloved, they seemed like ogres, because they had such uncanny power. Samuel Butler's great novel *The Way of All Flesh* gives a good example of patriarchal tyranny. That power has gone today. The young make their own friends at an early age, they are independent, and there's not the friction between them and the elder generation which was so common at the beginning of the century. When I was young, the battle was still active. It was partly won by mechanical aids—by the help of such inventions as the telephone and the bicycles which have between them done so much to disintegrate family life. But it was also won by this passion for individualism which dominated the period. When the father said "I must lead my own life" and the mother said "I too must lead my own life, give me the parliamentary vote" they were not in a strong position when their sons and daughters said "We too must lead our own lives. Give us a latch key." They had to give it. And though family life still survives in England it does so because its economically convenient or is based on affection: not because it's felt to be holy.

If you want to recapture that vanished age, read George Meredith and particularly the *Egoist*. Meredith is a fine novelist, and a neglected one. The variety of his characters, the fertility of his plots, the frequent excellent [*sic*] of

his English make him good going, but I refer to him here because he is typical pre-war period. <He's a little too Victorian perhaps, a little too behind-hand just as Samuel Butler is too ahead, still he does pretty well to illustrate what I've been saying.> Hope—my goodness, he's got a proper belly-full of hope, and it is hope without faith, the creed of the optimistic evolutionist. Clouds gather, dogmas fail, but the Meredithian hero or heroine marches on suffering, but solid & undismayed. That the personality itself may split, society itself crack—that could not occur to him, living as he did through a period of peace diversified by a few picturesque little wars. He loved to champion oppressed Nationalists. One of his novels is about the unification of Italy, and there is a big scene there in the opera house at Milan, where the heroine sings of the resurrection of her country:

> I enter the black boat
> Upon the wide grey sea
> Where all her dead sons float
> There hear my voice remote:—
> Italia Italia shall be free.

Italia is free and with what results? We know, Meredith couldn't. The future, to him, was bound to get brighter sometime, and the noble men and women whom he delighted to create found their highest activity in speeding the future up, so that it brightened ahead of schedule. Vittoria hurries up the unification of Italy, Clara Middleton the emancipation of women.

Here he illustrates another of our points: the women's movement. <It appears in his novels very attractively & gallantly: a generous uprisal against Victorian slavery.> He thought that women would be greater as soon as they were freer, and his expectations I think have been justified. Ibsen had thought the same, but Ibsen, a wretched Scandinavian, was not going to be listened to by the English, whereas Meredith, with his Surrey woods & Sussex downs, struck a homely and healthy note. He was a great help in preparing the public for the suffrage movement, he died before the political struggle started, but left people feeling that though an Englishman's home is indeed his castle, he

shouldn't keep his wife in the dungeon. Clara Middleton escapes from a prospective dungeon, that is the main theme of the *Egoist* and if you will read—or re-read—that great novel, you will see how generously and ingeniously Meredith delivers her. Patterne Park is the name of the dungeon—an exquisite gentleman's residence—but it is none the less the castle of Giant Despair.

He illustrates, also, the enormous importance which we then attached to the sense of humour. People who accept the 'comic muse' as he calls it, are all right and will help to get the world right. People who deny the comic muse are all wrong. I must guard against a misunderstanding here. Meredith had a natural sense of humour, he can be most amusing, can produce witty situations as well as witty talk; for instance there are delightful scenes towards the end of the *Egoist* when a dozen people or more roll together in Patterne Park drawing room and build up pyramids of misunderstanding. But he also had a theory about humour, that it is a good and a healing thing, and he proses on too complacently on this. At the end of the *Egoist* the Comic Muse accompanies in spirit the emancipated heroine & hero on their honeymoon to the Alps, and compresses 'her lips' as she gazes at the grosser characters below. It is a well-written epilogue & was much admired at the time, but the glamour has gone out of it now: the Comic Muse looks too like a governess and the merits ascribed to her are really and merely the merits of common sense. The fetich of humour—D. H. Lawrence killed it though you can still find its corpse weekly in *Punch*—this fetich is enthroned in Meredith's novels, and at the time we all bowed our knees there to. We weren't content to find fun funny, we required it to be cleansing and helpful, and the expression 'clean fun' is the unfortunate legacy of our hopes <—and has naturally evolved the 'dirty joke' as its corrective.>

I won't talk about Meredith's emphasis on the individual, because most novelists emphasise the individual, it helps them to get on with their novels. He does of course stress them and has no doubts as to their solidity. A

word though on his attitude to science. Sir Willoughby Patterne, the Egoist, has a laboratory installed in Patterne Park, and Meredith particularly ridicules him on that account. The ridicule is well placed and appropriate in the book; still it is symbolic of the age, and of the failure of its intelligentsia to take science seriously. All through the early part of the century, the cultivated intelligent person was interested in literature & human beings, and those are still my own interests because my mind was formed at that time. He was not interested in politics unless he specialised in them, and paid no heed to science or 'stinks' at all; it played no part in a gentleman's life. Meredith illustrates our limitations here. He was not, to be sure, unaware of politics, but he did regard science as a target for the comic spirit and endowed Sir Willoughby Patterne with a laboratory in order to make him look extra absurd.

So much for my first period. We were hopeful yet gloomy. We thought that individualism, personal relationships, and the sense of humour were not only good in themselves but would lead to the improvement of the world. We liked the idea of freedom—women were to be free, young people free, and nations free. We paid no attention to the natural forces which were unchaining with the help of science. We thought that gentle slow-going England would last forever. We were so hopeful that when the war of 1914 did come we called it the War to end War.

[Period] II. So much for the first civilisation through which I've passed and to which I've given the motto of Hope without Faith. The war ended it. After the war begins a second phase, which covers the twenties. I'll give it the motto Curiosity—explaining later. It began with the establishment of peace—if Versailles can be called a peace—and it petered out about 1930 when the chief constructive effort of Versailles, the League of Nations, was seen to be a failure. It's a civilisation of disillusioned people. The 'war to end war' had obviously done nothing of the sort, the homes for heroes weren't being built,

the British Empire was larger than ever but no safer, & no happier and though Mr Lloyd George pointed to the Welsh mountains and Mr Ramsay MacDonald rather later said 'up and up and up and up' neither of them led us to the Hill of the Lord. Disillusion after victory is a normal phenomenon: it occurs all through history. Century after century men have killed their enemies successfully only to find they are left with something hostile which they can't kill, which they can't exercise with triumphal processions and boastful words. We were feeling like that in 1919. We didn't care to reconstruct. And the civilisation which sprang up was not interested in social work, like its predecessor, not interested in morals or questions of belief & disbelief. It was a private civilisation, if you like a selfish one, though I intend to say a good many kind things about it. Even if you are disillusioned about society and the progress of the human race, even if you see no purpose in the universe, their are two important things you can do if you possess sufficient vitality: you can have a good time and you can try to understand. The post-war people came out strong in both these ways. They enjoyed themselves and they tried to understand.

As regards enjoyment, I hope I don't shock you by saying a good word for it on a platform. Pleasure in private—oh yes that's quite all right. But in public "Oh no we never mention her, her name is never heard", not at least in England. And I'll grant that people only take to pleasure in large numbers when they are disillusioned. That was their condition in the twenties. Of the problems which had perplexed the previous age, some (like the women's movement) had been solved, others seemed insoluble. Just a few people (I would instance Lowes Dickinson) threw themselves into the one constructive effort of the age, the league [*sic*] of Nations, but the rest weren't going to bother, they doubted whether they league [*sic*] would work, and life being so uncertain they preferred to have a good time while it lasted. It's the age, in Germany, of the youth-organisations, who wander about cheaply, cheerfully and aimlessly over the stricken face of the land. In England, a richer country,

and a victorious one, it is the age of the night club, and the so called Russian Ballet: pleasures that are with us still: but at that time they were symptomatic, their roots were deep in the social conditions. It wasn't just the upper & middle classes who were out for pleasure: the working classes also enjoyed themselves when a boom permitted them. They ate salmon & drank champagne—and people who had had salmon & champagne themselves all their lives were terribly shocked at the self-indulgence of the poor. I remember in the suburbs where I lived a yarn about a miner who could suddenly afford a piano and so bought two pianos, one for each side of the room, and people who knew one ought only to have one piano in a room, and couldn't play upon that, despised the miner, and were glad when the boom ended and both his pianos were taken away. It was a boom for everyone, a flash in the pan; people were cynical and lived, many had suffered in the war, they were fed up with ideals, particularly liberalism, they wanted the quick return, the night club, the two pianos at once, and, not being a moralist, I'm glad they sometimes got what they wanted. Liberalism—only too well defined by Lord Bryce as "that great party with all its future in front of it and all its past behind"—liberalism, advancing slowly towards a respectable and receding goal—liberalism, the hope of my own youth—it meant nothing to that post war young. It was full of hope, blown out with hopes like an old gentleman with fat. Whereas they never thought of hoping: they were after something else: immediate sensation. They turned to enjoyment just because they were unsure. The postwar civilisation was conscious of the clouds which had passed: and it was aware subconsciously of the far greater storm which is gathering today. It was a fool's paradise but I would rather live in a fool's paradise than a fool's hell.

But let us turn from pleasures to a more reputable subject: intelligence. Our motto for this postwar age is "curiosity". Disinterested curiosity. The disillusioned enquirer has one great advantage over the idealist: he doesn't want to prove anything, and is likelier to get at the truth. His disadvantage is that he may grow weary and stop, whereas the idealist pounds ahead. But until

he grows weary he is the better enquirer, indeed the man who is disillusioned and yet retains vitality, represents, in my judgement, a very high type of man. The age we are examining tended towards the type. It wasn't interested in social or political work, it was interested in the truth, it had got the scientific spirit, and this contrasts with the pre-war age.

In saying this, I don't of course mean that everyone practised science—that was only done in laboratories and only those who go into them can have precise & practical [*sic*]. But I mean two other things, both of them important. In the first place people tried to examine facts dispassionately, and in the second place they had a respect for the findings, or the supposed findings, of science which they hadn't had before. They can't understand Einstein but they gather that now it doesn't do to dogmatise about time and space as formerly. They can't check the conclusions of Freud by experiment: but they gather that it doesn't do to regard an individual as if he is a solid and an unalterable entity. Neither the universe, nor human beings, are what they seem, and the postwar observer bears these uncertainties in his mind. <Do you want an example of him? Gerald Heard. Heard is a man of no scientific training, but he tries to examine facts dispassionately and he respects the findings of science. You can't imagine making that bad pre-war mistake, and restricting culture to literature, as George Meredith did. Another example? Aldous Huxley. Huxley, in his earlier work a social satirist, has turned in his later to hunting for the truth.>

The spirit of this period comes out in its literature, and particularly in the work of Marcel Proust. I'll use him as an example, as I used George Meredith for the pre-war period. Proust's epic (*Remembrances of Things Past* is the translation) is an epic of curiosity. It's one of the most self-centred books ever written, the author was an invalid and a snob he knew only a small section of French society, he wasn't interested in the fate of civilisation or the destiny of the universe, he didn't want to make people better and happier, but he was curious, he examined each fact dispassionately as it passed under his eye, he

wondered what fact would come next, and his curiosity led him to write a masterpiece. He wants to understand, he's sensitive and therefore able to understand, and he has the power to record. That's his equipment and its characteristic of the period we are analysing. You didn't want to come to conclusions, you didn't want to do good, you wanted to know, and in that respect you had vitality. Proust was introspective and morbid and unhappy and limited, but he had vitality—he couldn't have written a million words if he hadn't—he was inquisitive about tomorrow, he and his characters cling to existence though logic indicates suicide, and though disease drags them down they still keep an eye open, half an eye, and scan the little unremunerative levels of the sea. They are bound on a sort of adventure—not an adventure of the swashbuckling sort but an adventure of the disillusioned postwar world, where the whole man moves forward to encounter he does not know what; certainly not to any goal.

Many of you will have read Proust, but those who haven't—I am not going to recommend him. He will not help you in what I suppose to be your problems, he will take up too much of your time, and you have not much time. He represents an age which has just closed, and age of private lives, and I think that's even more remote from you than is the pre-war age, which at all events did emphasise external problems. The night club of the body and the intellect has been closed, perhaps for ever; the capers of the ballet have been stilled a new civilisation is opening, it promises to be a grim one. Listen to one of its poets. [At this point Forster quotes from W. H. Auden's *The Orators*, (1932)] Contrast these lines of Auden with the 'Italia Italia shall be free' which inspired Meredith. Contrast both of them with the exquisite in-turned vision of Proust, which like a sea anemone, gathers all that passes for its nutriment, and never turns outwards like a rose. The civilisation Proust represents is self-centred, it retreats from public affairs. It doesn't however retreat from reality: its curiosity saves it from that. I must leave it now, but let me remind you in

case you despise it, that it believed in tolerance, and that scarcely anyone dares to believe in tolerance today. "All leave is cancelled". Tolerance isn't safe.

So to sum up the twenties—I'd assign them a love of pleasure, an interest in science, the habit of tolerance, and an indifference—often cynical—towards public affairs. I'd give them a motto: curiosity. They retain the belief in humour, typical of prewar times, but they're humourous because it amuses them to be so, not for high moral reasons, like George Meredith's comic muse.

[Period] III. So I come to today—to civilisation which began about six years ago, and which will end as soon as one major European power bombs the capital of another. Events move quickly, and perhaps by the time I read this paper there will be great changes. Events move quickly, and the first point I want to make is an obvious one: man is developing his inventions, more rapidly than he is developing his mind, and consequently suffers an increasing mental strain. In the olden days, the changes were gradual; change from paloeolithic to neolithic, from neolithic to metal occupied generations. And in my own youth—the telephone, the bicycle arrived slowly, we had time to assimilate them; then came the motor car, aeroplanes, the wireless; television and the conquest of the stratosphere are at hand. All these discoveries react upon the mind, and they all take place in the life of a single man. I feel I can't adapt myself any more. And those of you who are younger than I am—you'll be subjected to far greater strain than myself, for you'll have to adapt yourselves at an increasing rate. I don't envy you. It looks as if the human race has gone too far in the last few years and found out more than it can assimilate. I am sorry to have lived on into these 1930's—not because they are dangerous, but because I am not equipped to understand them. I will talk to you about them, and suggest a motto for them as I did for the two previous periods, but I don't know what they mean. War—the war that passeth all understanding—seems to block every vista of enquiry.

Let us look at this age in relation to its predecessors. Liberalism, of course, has gone, and so has the emphasis on the individual which underly

liberalism [*sic*]. To express oneself, to develop ones personality to have a good time—these activities are still pleasant but they are no longer reputable. Personal relationships continue, but they have become private, they are denied political value and they enter less and less into serious art. The sense of humour—that too is sent to a back seat. Twenty years ago all England laughed at the Kaiser, but we don't laugh much at Hitler today. We know that, however keen may be our sense of humour, he will not disappear. And as for curiosity—the characteristic of the last epoch—most people are too busy to be curious. They see the need of action, political action. They must do something, and quickly, lest the world smash, and the people in such a state cannot pause to examine the nature of a psychological motive or the construction of a flower. Tolerance—that too has had to go, for it is a menace to solidarity, and free speech and unbiased criticism—they have to go for the same reason. Today "all leave is cancelled", we must get together into larger units for the purposes of defending ourselves, we must obey orders, and now I will suggest the motto for this age; a motto which may at the first hearing surprise you; it is Faith without Hope. The first age was Hope without Faith, the second Curiosity, this is Faith without Hope.

Faith in two senses of the word. Firstly, willingness to follow a formula, and to condemn those who don't follow it. The party spirit, the sorting out of people into friends and enemies: that kind of faith. And then—much more important & significant—the faith that though the world must go wrong it will never the less go right; the religious feeling. "Nothing can save us but a miracle," writes a friend of mine, a young left-wing novelist, and adds: "Very well then, I demand a miracle." Whether he will get his miracle only time, that dull realist will show, but his spirit is the spirit of the moment.[2] The gaiety that isn't frivolous, the courage, the indifference to death—they're grand, and how favourably they compare with the qualms and doubts of our youth, when in

[2] An asterix at this point marks a note by Forster included at the foot of the page: "and all this aspect of it seems to me splendid".

spite of our ultimate hopes for humanity we were gloomy and afraid of dying. Today people are not afraid of dying—they are afraid of being killed but that's different. They haven't time or inclination to consider what used rhetorically to be called 'beyond the grave'. Probably this is a momentary glory which will not last: still I note it as it passes, like any other sunset. When I look at Barcelona or Moscow, and—as my early training obliges—when I look also at Nuremburg or Rome, I see in all those places forgetfulness of self, obedience to a movement, and strength that comes from mass. And those individuals who have not yet effaced themselves have at any rate the desire to efface themselves, and gain strength from that. "We have something more important to do than to save our own souls" writes Day Lewis. The individual doesn't matter.

That seems to me the spirit of the age, and I expect that with the out break of a general war the spirit will rapidly vanish and give place to muddle & horror. While it lasts it is exhilarating. I don't know of any great writer who illustrates it, as Meredith and Proust illustrated its predecessors, and that's not surprising, for no serious person has the time to be a great writer. The serious person produces propaganda, party pamphlets, not what we are accustomed to call 'Works of Art'. I wonder indeed whether there will be any more literature. The human race may be sweeping away from it. I very much doubt whether the particular form of literature which has interested me, namely the novel, is likely to survive. The novel has always been the stronghold of individualism: it expresses the writer's outlook, it deals with characters and the relation between them, it makes a great fuss over love affairs and social nuances, I don't think people will have the patience to write that sort of thing any more, even if they have the time. They'll have a different education, an education that prepares them to encounter change. With the world rushing ahead so quickly, education in the old sense isn't any help, and unless it slows down again there must be a fundamental change in human values. This factor of pace—I want to

emphasise it. It's absolutely new in the history of man, and it's what makes the present age feel so queer.

This paper is a retrospect not a confession. I've not concealed my opinions, but am not specially concerned to put them forward. My aim has been historical: to analyse the civilisations through which I've lived. You can sum it up, if you like, as the tragedy of the individualist—a tragedy in three acts. In the first act the individualist hopes to improve society, in the second act he tries to improve himself, in the third act he finds he's not wanted, and has either to merge himself in a movement or to retire. One has to face facts, and it seems to me that my particular job is to retire. It has been well said that you can make a bundle of sticks, but not a bundle of eels, and individualists are like eels, looking this way and that, and useless to any party whether of the left or of the right. They were at one time valuable to the community and they are important to themselves, but in an age where everyone is joining up and getting together they have become unseasonable. So I'll take my leave. I'll do so in the words of another contemporary poet, William Plomer. They keep on haunting me. Good bye to the Island is the name of the poem.

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