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E. M. FORSTER'S MAURICE

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A STUDY OF MAURICE
IN RELATION TO THE
OTHER NOVELS BY
EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER

By

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Does the new fragment add anything to what went before? Does it carry our theory of the author's talent, or must we alter our forecast?

Such questions ruffle what should be the smooth surface of our criticism and make it full of argument and interrogation.

Virginia Woolf in "The
Novels of E.M. Forster",
Collected Essays (Toronto:
Clark, Irwin & Co. Ltd.,
1925) p. 342.

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As this paper nears completion, I have a sudden desire to thank everyone in sight. Since this is silly, I shall attempt to satisfy myself by thanking only a few. First of all, grateful acknowledgement is made to Professor Berland, who listened and listened. Secondly, my parents deserve a special note of appreciation for encouraging me so faithfully. Finally, I must thank my friends at McMaster, the high-school teacher who introduced me to the novels of E.M. Forster, and Martin Halpern.

M. J. H.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL HEADNOTE

In 1965, Miss B.J. Kirkpatrick published an extensive bibliography of the works of Edward Morgan Forster, and it has already been carefully revised.¹ Despite her admirable work, plus the subsequent efforts of other scholars, a complete list of his writings is not yet possible. Back issues of various periodicals and newspapers still contain his forgotten contributions; furthermore, upon his death in June 1970, a great number of unpublished materials fell into the hands of his literary executors, and much of it remains to be edited. The Abinger Edition, for example, will include these findings, and should eventually be definitive: its editor expects it to consist of over twenty volumes.² These few facts alone should completely dispel the once-popular notion that Forster wrote very little. In his forward to Kirkpatrick's Bibliography, he remarks:

I am both surprised and glad to discover that I have written so much.³

It is quite likely that his admirers will feel much the same way, as the corpus of published works gradually expands.

To date, three full-scale works have been published posthumously. Albergo Empedocle and Other Writings (New York, Liveright, 1971) edited by George H. Thomson makes available the earliest group of uncol-

lected writings identified by Miss Kirkpatrick. It consists of thirty-six miscellaneous articles which Forster wrote and published between 1900 and 1915, and then excluded from further publications. As the editor himself points out, "not everything in this collection is of equal interest";⁴ the author was probably justified in allowing some of it to lie dormant. However, the time is now ripe for this collection, as scholars are currently taking an interest in Forster's early development, and in his long career as an essayist.⁵ In addition, these essays can be read quite profitably in conjunction with his novels, since they were written at the same time. As Thomson's excellent divisions of the materials reveal, they deal with typically Forsterian topics: Cambridge, India, culture, and England's upper middle-class are each given due attention.

The various pieces found in Thomson's collection were all written at the same time as Maurice, the second of the posthumous publications. According to Forster's own dedication, it was written from 1913 to 1914.⁶ However, unlike the former work, this novel was not published during the author's lifetime. When it appeared in 1971, a good deal of literary controversy ensued. The author himself, it seems, had been duly confused about this novel. According to an Introduction by P.N. Furbank, the novel was revised in 1919, in 1932,

and "once more, fairly drastically, in 1959 - 1960."⁷ Forster scrawled "Publishable - but worth it?" on the cover of the neatly-prepared 1960 manuscript, and most reviewers have tried to answer him.⁸ My own answer to this question would be an emphatic "Yes!", and a repetition of one of Forster's remarks about Jane Austen:

The novels are good - of that there is no doubt, and they are so good that everything connected with the novelist and everything she wrote ought certainly to be published and annotated.⁹

The publication of this novel has opened wide the gates of literary and non-literary speculation. First of all, one might consider the work's suppression during the author's lifetime. The novel is concerned with illustrating the thesis that homosexuality is normal, and can lead to happiness. In 1914, this idea was unacceptable, except perhaps in very sophisticated circles. Philip Toynbee states the situation succinctly in his review of Maurice:

The Wilde case was still reverberating and English homosexuals were living in greater fear, shame and distress than they had done even in the middle of the nineteenth century. 10

The lightest sentence for the "crime" was still ten years in prison. Furthermore, the author was very close to his Victorian ancestors, and his middle-class relatives. If one considers his high regard for tradition, and his love of others, censure of his refusal to print becomes

impossible. The good he may have done the world in speeding a change of laws and attitudes would have been negligible in his eyes, if it involved dire immediate consequences for the Forsters and Thorntons.

By 1967, his mother and other near relatives were dead; furthermore, the Wolfenden Report revising the sexual laws had been accepted, and he could, if he wished, have published the novel. His biographer Furbank accounts for the situation as follows:

Friends actually suggested it, but he firmly refused. He knew the endless fuss and brouhaha it would lead to. Also, the book had become rather remote to him. He said he was less interested now in the theme of salvation, the rescuer from 'otherwhere'; he thought it was a 'fake'. 11

This explanation does not seem completely satisfactory; he could have destroyed the manuscript, instead of preparing it so carefully for publication. One is tempted to speculate that the "eyes of the world", the conventionality that Forster denounces in each of his works, also affected his own view of the world. The bourgeois values associated with "Sawston" in Where Angels Fear to Tread and The Longest Journey are just as much a part of Forster's world-picture as the "Cambridge" ideals of "eccentricity" and freedom that these same two novels present. Thus, it is quite possible that he could never quite resolve his feelings about

his strange little thesis-novel. The rest of his fiction suggests an even more tantalizing explanation of the posthumous publication. Coupled with a reminder that Forster loved secrets and surprises,¹² an interesting theory can be developed.

In a sense, Forster is reborn through the posthumous publication of a flawed, semi-autobiographical novel. For the reading public, at the point of his death, he stops being a cozy old Cambridge don, and becomes once again an uncertain young author, still doubtful of his talents.* Doubtless, he would have enjoyed this result. The theme of inheritance, survival through one's offspring, a "divine hope of immortality: 'I continue'" runs through all of his major works of fiction.¹³ In Where Angels Fear to Tread, much of the plot involves Gino's desire for a son, and the future of that child. In The Longest Journey, Rickie and his deformed daughter both die, but their name and memory live on in the form of Stephen Wonham's child. In Howards End, the house preserves both the life of England, and the memory of Mrs. Wilcox. Similarly,

* Philip Gardner suggests that the promptitude of Maurice's publication may imply Forster's "prior wish not to slip into that temporary oblivion that has overtaken so many writers after their obituaries". cf. E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage, ed. Philip Gardner (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) p. 35.

in A Passage to India, Mrs. Moore lives on through her children, and in the memory of those she befriended in India. A Room With a View is the only novel in the canon in which the theme is not readily observable; however, the happy marriage of George and Lucy seems to ensure that their line, too, will continue. In any case, if Forster thought of his own life as a story - and many authors do - Maurice provides it with an excellent conclusion.

The Life To Come And Other Stories, which appeared in 1972, is the third of the posthumous publications. It consists of fourteen stories, only two of which have been published before; the latter are entitled "Albergo Empedocle" (Temple Bar, 1903), and "Three Courses And A Dessert" (Wine and Food, 1944). Of the remaining twelve, four were written between 1903 and 1906; thus, they are from a period preceding the publication of Forster's first novel, Where Angels Fear To Tread (1905). These were not suppressed due to their content, but because the young, un-established Cambridge graduate could not command a publisher's attention. These stories are similar in quality to those in The Collected Tales (1947), and were probably excluded because they were not commonly known. On the other hand, the remaining eight stories were suppressed because of their themes. Written at a later period of time, mainly after the

publication of A Passage To India (1924), their failure to appear in print was not due to Forster's lack of popularity. The editor suggests they were written from 1922 to 1958, and adds:

[A]ny editor who rejected a story by E.M. Forster would have done so only for the very reason that deterred him from offering them, and caused Maurice to remain unpublished for fifty-seven years: their homosexual content. 14

The content of these stories will clearly interest Forster's readers; furthermore, some of them reveal a maturity of style unequalled in his other short fiction. Thus, they are fascinating in terms of Forster's technique, as well as from the standpoint of the light they shed on his attitudes toward homosexuality.*

In conclusion, I must add a note of explanation about the thesis that follows. Initially, I intended to discuss each of the posthumous works described above. Thus, this opus was to include a thorough investigation of The Life To Come in connection with The Collected Tales, as well as an analysis of how and why Albergo Empedocle and Other Writings differs from Forster's considerably finer essays, published in Two Cheers For Democracy and Abinger Harvest. Since I

* I am indebted to the Introduction to E.M. Forster, The Life to Come and Other Stories, ed. and intro. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold (pub.) Ltd. 1972) for much of the information recorded in this paragraph.

wanted to begin my study with Maurice, however, I turned my attention towards the novels in the canon. To my surprise, I found that there was a great deal more to think about than I had expected. Thus, the topics I had imagined I would discuss in one chapter provided me with ample material for three, and there my project had to end. The omitted areas of research referred to above would undoubtedly have proved rewarding. Short fiction, in particular, is significant when it has been written by an author who also wrote novels; recurrent themes and symbols appear in a conveniently abbreviated form. On the other hand, by focussing my attention solely on Maurice, I have managed to discover new aspects of Forster's philosophy. This posthumous novel is, in fact, the worst one in Forster's canon; most of its reviewers have clearly accepted this premise, and I am following suit. On the other hand, I believe it to be the most interesting of Forster's works, and one that certainly merits detailed analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

At first glance, evaluating Maurice involves making complicated judgments. Our consciousness of the author intrudes upon our analysis at every turn. Posthumous discussions of Forster direct our attention towards his personality, because of his achievements in the world of public affairs; furthermore, the text itself contains a brief autobiographical note which we cannot easily dismiss.¹ Coupled with a current critical bias towards studying Forster's personal philosophy, these materials can lead us astray. It becomes very easy to lose sight of this novel, and see only the man who wrote it. The author's biography can often be used to illuminate a text, but it can also distort it. In this particular case, if we draw too many parallels between the author's experiences and those of the characters, the novel is reduced to what Forster himself once described as a "pathological tract"². This would be too obvious to mention, if biographical criticism of the most embarrassing kind had not appeared immediately after Forster's death. Writes Alfred Borrello:

Almost from the moment of [his] death, friends whom he cherished in life, raced into print to reveal the dark corners of his private life which he had successfully concealed from the general public. 3

There are, of course, enlightening ways of

relating an author's life to his works; if Borrello is implying that the facts of Forster's life should be concealed, he is incorrect. However, if he means that critics must guard against sensationalism or irrelevance, his remarks are justified. All considerations of material beyond a literary text itself are difficult. Thus, attempting to place Maurice in a suitable position in Forster's canon can lead to further misinterpretations. When studying six novels as a single unit, we tend to lose sight of what is unique about each of them. Maurice in particular readily disappears, because it is by no means a masterpiece. We must not forget that it is an autonomous artistic structure, as well as a new link in the chain of existing works by Forster. Lionel Trilling describes the complicated context in which a work can be analysed in a passage worth quoting at length:

The author's whole career presents itself to us not improperly as an architectonic whole of which each particular work is a part; and the shape of that career, the nature and pace of its development, the past failures and successes or those which we know are to come, the very size of the structure, the place of any single unit, the logic of the whole - all bear upon our feelings about any particular work.⁴

Trilling is correct in suggesting that these issues affect our responses to individual works of art. We

must simply make sure that our attempts to see an "architectonic whole" do not lead us astray.

Seeing Forster's work as a whole has often meant tracing a chronological development in his writings. Thus, the early works are viewed as steps in the production of the later works. Wilfred Stone's The Cave and the Mountain (1966) is a representative analysis from this viewpoint. He sets out to prove that the novels are "dramatic installments in the story of Forster's own struggle for selfhood - and a myth to support it"⁵. At the end of his work, he concludes that "between the stories and A Passage, there is an evolution of the artist from a child to a man's estate"⁶. In studies like Stone's, special attention is given to the question of Forster's apparent abandonment of novel writing so early in his career, because this event appears to be significant in terms of his literary evolution. Forster published four novels in rapid succession, beginning with Where Angels Fear to Tread in 1905. He then paused for fourteen years between Howards End (1910) and A Passage to India (1924). After that, although he was only forty-five years old with half of his life still to come, he mysteriously published no more novels at all.

This does not mean that subsequent works by Forster did not appear. As Miss Kirkpatrick's biblio-

graphy reveals, he went on to publish over four hundred pieces, including two biographies, two pageants, a libretto, and many critical articles. As one friend quipped, "When Forster stopped writing novels, he became a sage"⁷. Neither this comment nor the author's own frequent, evasive remarks about having "dried up" satisfied the mystified students of his evolution. For the next forty-five years, they continued to consider various explanations of his silence. By the sixties, two critical factions had emerged; one group attributed his silence to his disillusionment with contemporary society, while the second argued that psychological repression had caused his abandonment of fiction.* In 1959, in a television interview, the author himself supported the first view:

I think one of the reasons why I stopped writing novels is that the social aspect of the world changed so much. I had been accustomed to write about the old-fashioned world with its homes and its family life and its comparative peace. All that went, and though I can think about the new world, I cannot put it into fiction. 8

Critics who accept this explanation believe that Forster's novels deal with a pre-war, Edwardian universe⁺. Those

* One supporter of this opinion is Wilfred Stone. He describes Forster as an artist "working mole-like out of a deep and crushing psychological repression". cf. Wilfred Stone, The Cave and the Mountain (California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1966) p. 191.

+ cf. Richard Martin, The Love That Failed, (The Hague-Paris: Mouton & Co., 1974).

who defend the second viewpoint feel that the theme of homosexuality is subtly or ambiguously present in the five published works.

What new information has come our way since Forster's death? This question is certainly not easily answered. The first public statement of his homosexuality did not occur until two months after his death, on a radio program on the BBC (August, 1970). However, it did not surprise most of his friends and critics, who already knew that "Forster was himself a homosexual and for many years a fully practicing one"⁹. Forster's associates were also aware of the fact that he had written a novel which was not to be published until he died. Furthermore, the mystery of the homosexual themes in the published fiction had been previously explored; thus, the posthumous works merely encouraged a critical viewpoint which already existed. Stone, for example, stressed Rickie's "latent homosexuality", in 1966.¹⁰ Since the posthumous publications, however, there is a tendency for critics to simply imagine homosexual relationships among Forster's fictional characters. Observing this recent development, Mr. Borrello remarks:

One shudders to think what will be
made of the Fielding-Aziz friendship
in A Passage To India! 11

Clearly, there is a need for a thorough investigation of the recent acquisitions to the canon.

Today, we know that Forster wrote Maurice during the fourteen-year gap between Howards End and A Passage To India. In addition, we have access to his private papers which reveal his frustration with the topic of heterosexual love; this information provides one more substantial explanation of his abandonment of publishable fiction. Forster regretted the conditions of his times, and longed for the freedom of expression he supported on many occasions. He fought censorship by attending tribunals, and making speeches. He defended the publication of D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterly's Lover, Radclyffe Hall's Lesbian novel, The Well of Loneliness, and other controversial works. In "Three Anti-Nazi Broadcasts", he states:

if [the writer] feels free, sure of himself, unafraid, easy inside, he is in a favourable condition for the act of creation.¹²

According to Forster, a writer needs an audience, and the freedom to say what he wants, or he becomes "afraid to feel"¹³. Clearly, this fear affected his own attitude to writing. In his private notes, he writes:

1. Having sat for an hour in vain trying to write a play, will analyse cause of my own sterility...2. weariness of the only subject that I both can and may treat - the love of men for women and vice versa. (Diary, June 1911).
2. I shall never write another novel after it (A Passage) - my patience

with ordinary people has given out
 ...(letter, 1 Aug. 1923).¹⁴

There is certainly an element of tragedy in these revelations, and one wonders what he may have written in a freer society.

There is certainly a relationship between Forster's complex attitudes toward homosexuality and his major theme, which Lionel Trilling accurately defines as a research into the "profound pathology" of "the heart untrained and untutored, the heart checked too early in its natural possible growth"¹⁵. Trilling argues that Forster's unhappiness at school led to his interest in the growth of the heart. In Maurice, Forster reveals the special torments that a traditional education holds out to a young homosexual. In a central essay entitled "Notes On the English Character" (1920), Forster blames the British public-school system for sending boys out into the world with "well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts"¹⁶. In a discussion of this article, Rose Macaulay writes:

This public school business is rather perplexing. Can it really be that boys sent to live together for a few years to do lessons and play games, turn into something quite different from what they would have turned into if they had lived at home and attended day schools?¹⁷

Forster would have answered Miss Macaulay affirmatively. In an article entitled "Society and the Homosexual: The

"Abominable Crime" (1953), he writes:

Certainly, the segregation of the sexes in boarding schools seems designated to increase homosexuality...¹⁸

Clearly, then, Forster's hatred of the British public-school system becomes more comprehensible in the light of his concern for the homosexual in society. Similarly, his other famous likes and dislikes can be explained in terms of various aspects of his complex view of homosexuality. His cynical attitudes toward clergymen, school-teachers, marriage, and other authorities can be linked with his own personal dissatisfaction with contemporary society. Malcolm Bradbury accurately observes:

The publication of Maurice is bound to remind us vigorously of the basis in his personal life and passions from which his writing arose; it gives a local justification for his liberalism and his attitude toward human feeling, toward emancipating personal relationships, the growth of the heart. ¹⁹

As we become aware of the personal hurt that motivated Forster, his works take on new meanings. Writes George Steiner:

A number of [his] most famous dicta - it is better to betray one's country than a friend, 'only connect' - take on a more restricted, shriller ambience.²⁰

While Steiner is correct, the perceptive reader will go beyond this interpretation, and preserve an earlier impression of Forster's humane fineness. The sayings

still have their universal implications. No matter what the author's personal experiences were, we must finally judge the literary product, as an independent object in the purified world of art.

The above comments have been little more than speculations on the state of the author's mind and thus of secondary importance. A literary critic's central interest must lie with the works themselves. Forster himself was aware of this, and often cautioned readers about it. At the beginning of one of his own pleas for objective literary criticism, he asks:

Do you like to know who a book's by?²¹

In "Anonymity: An Inquiry", and "Art For Art's Sake", he argues against dwelling on the author's personality while analysing his works. These essays seem prophetic in the light of the way his own writing can now be approached. Rebelling against the biographical approach to Forster, several critics have denied that he 'developed' at all. For example, Elizabeth Bowen writes:

The author of Where Angels Fear To Tread had already as much authority as the author of A Passage to India.²²

One senses her boredom with the issue of Forster's development: she would much rather read the books.

Her feelings are, in fact, reminiscent of Forster's remarks in a TV interview:

I am more interested in achievement than in advance or decline from it. And I am more interested in works than in authors. The paternal wish of critics to show how a writer dropped off or picked up as he went along seems to me misplaced. 23

Since the publication of the posthumous works, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the issue of Forster's development. Furthermore, it is necessary to investigate the relevance of information not found within the texts themselves, in order to achieve a balanced view of his art. Wilfred Stone's The Cave and the Mountain represents one comprehensive study of Forster's "inner biography", and of the relations between his life and works. However, it appeared before the author's death, and thus, its information is dated. In this thesis, the placing of Maurice in the canon will enable us to re-interpret the earlier novels, and reappraise the question of Forster's development. For the purposes of clear analysis, it is convenient to divide Forster's published works into two main groups. The first one comprises Where Angels Fear To Tread (1905), The Longest Journey (1907), and A Room With A View (1908); the second one consists of Howards End (1910), and A Passage To India (1924). By virtue of its themes and style, Maurice falls more naturally into the first section. It was, in fact, written between the two mature works, and it relates to certain aspects of these novels, as

well. Thus, its relevance to both the early and the late novels will be considered in the discussions that follow.

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY NOVELS:

I sighed as a lover.
I obeyed as a Son.¹

Maurice is essentially a thesis-novel; the idea of homosexuality stands at the center of the book. Other themes and characterizations seem "flat" by comparison, and didactic purposes rigorously control each incident that occurs. Writes Furbank of Forster:

He needed to affirm, without possibility of retreat, that love of this kind could be ennobling.²

In Aspects of the Novel, Forster describes stories in which "characters have to fall in with something else in the novel...and have, of course, to modify their make-up accordingly".³ In these cases, the author has a "pattern" in mind, to which he sacrifices the other elements in fiction, and produces a "book of the rigid type, a book with a unity, and in this sense an easy book".⁴ Maurice, with its strict adherence to a single idea is precisely this kind of a book, and at many points, the sacrifices made are too great. In Forster's other novels, the characters and situations develop in a freer environment; the themes are broader. Here, we witness an author-narrator with an idée fixe. He bends each part of the work into a proof that there is a need for a new attitude towards homosexuality.

In order to encourage this attitude, Forster creates a representative British figure who also happens to be a homosexual. All of the English males in Forster's novels share some of the national traits that are outlined in "Notes on the English Character"* but only Maurice possesses them all. He is even physically strong, which is a unique quality amongst Forsterian heroes. However, in comparison with Philip, Rickie, Henry Wilcox or Fielding, he is wooden. In his anxiety to deliver his message, Forster provides us with a hero who is occasionally more stereotype than archetype, more "flat" than "round". He is a product of the middle class, and of the public-school system: on prize day, we are told that he is honoured because he is "average".⁵ This last point seems gratuitous, and one begins to wonder what has become of Forster's usual subtlety. We learn that, like the Englishman of "Notes" who "has been taught at public school that feeling is bad form",⁶ Maurice has received a repressive education, and emerges in a "bewildered" state.⁷ It would seem that the portrait of English muddledom could not be more complete. Maurice seems to be a mere receptacle for the typically

* Lucy Honeychurch also shares some of these traits.

"English emotions" which Forster compares to fish "moving far below, distorted and obscure".⁸

As we read, however, certain vivid details stand out like jewels in the morass of descriptions of Maurice Hall. The first scene, for example, is marvellously handled. The pompous Mr. Ducie attempts to teach the unwilling pupil about that anachronism, "the mystery of sex",⁹ and the result is a complex mixture of comedy and pathos. Forster's double-edged satire is so often missing in Maurice that it is particularly welcome when it appears. As Noel Annan observes in discussing this novel, tracts are seldom funny;¹⁰ they have too many serious points to make. Here, however, Forster manages to combine a serious critique of the Victorian approach to sexual education with some amusing dialogue. "...one mustn't make a mystery of it. Then come the great things - Love, Life", pontificates Mr. Ducie, "...All's right with the world. Male and female! Ah wonderful!"¹¹ One remembers "the exhortations to be patriotic, athletic, learned and religious, that flowed like a four-part fugue from Mr. Pembroke's mouth" in The Longest Journey.¹² The subject matter has changed from esprit de corps to sex, but the teaching method satirized is much the same.

For an insight into the serious side of this opening gambit of Maurice, we need only compare it with

a similar scene in Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson. In this biography, Forster relates that Goldie "never heard one sensible word from any grown-up person on the subject" of sex.¹³ A "pompous fattish man" named Ernest Coleridge taught him at his first school, and insisted on explaining "the mystery of sex"¹⁴. Forster writes:

Later on, hearing that he had had a bath with another boy, he called him to his study and cross-questioned him. ¹⁵

According to Forster, this incident was only one in a series. The main result of Goldie's education was confusion and repression. The morality imposed upon him harmed him; like Maurice, he was particularly disturbed by "vague and alarming sex talk".¹⁶ Writes Forster:

He became more devout...liking to feel good, and sometimes longing to be bad. He was in a complete muddle, without any standards except what were imposed from outside and even his rebellions were conventional.¹⁷

Maurice, who spends his years at public school in a "trance" is similarly muddled.¹⁸ Like Goldie, he is good and bad by turns: he is "religious" and "obscene"¹⁹. Maurice differs from Goldie in that he is physically capable of defending himself. Temperamentally, however, he is equally vulnerable. Of Maurice, Forster writes:

The boys had showered presents on him, declaring he was brave. A great mistake - he wasn't brave: he was afraid of the dark.²⁰

Despite his popularity, it is clear that Maurice is mentally antagonized by school. The following description of Goldie Dickinson summarizes his situation:

Goldie was not normal. He suffered from torments which assail the spirit, from moral bullying, of which there was a great deal, and from his own timidity.²¹

The dissatisfied heroes of Where Angels Fear To Tread and The Longest Journey also find their school days enervating and painful. Like Maurice, they "receive upon undefended flesh the first blows of the world".²² Rickie spends his days at school in "a hell no grown-up devil can devise",²³ due to the cruelty of his fellow-students.* Similarly, Philip suffers due to his "weakly build".²⁴ However, for each of the boys it is the spiritual tyranny that affects him most, and not the fights with bullies. Conformity, a mechanical adherence to custom, stifles individuality in the schools Forster depicts. Mr. Pembroke, for example, teaches that "without innumerable customs, there [is] no safety, either for boys or men."²⁵ His desire to "organize" his students hides his detestable eagerness to produce the "average gentleman".²⁶ As the philosopher Ansell tells us:

* For further examples of Forster's awareness of the horrors of boarding-schools for the physically weak, cf. The Longest Journey, p. 200, and also Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (London: Edward Arnold (Pub.) Ltd., 1934) p. 5 where Forster reports that Goldie said: "At school a timid boy like me has no aid and no hope."

the human soul is a very delicate thing, which can receive eternal damage from a little coaching.²⁷

Descriptions of confused mental states riddle each of the early novels, and Maurice. In "Notes On The English Character", Forster writes:

A public-school education does not make for mental clearness and the (Englishman) possesses to a very high degree the power of confusing his own mind.²⁸

In Where Angels Fear To Tread, he subtly emphasizes the problem of the "undeveloped heart" in a brief sketch of Philip before his looking-glass:

[His] face was plain rather than not, and there was a curious mixture in it of good and bad...but below the nose and eyes all was confusion, and those people who believe that destiny resides in the mouth shook their heads when they looked at him.²⁹

The author detests spiritual muddledom, and he reveals that the repressive methods of the public schools encourage it. Rickie, for example, creeps out of an enormous public school "cold and friendless and ignorant...preparing for a silent journey".³⁰ His boyhood is described as a "dusty corridor" from which he must exit. In Maurice, the confusion is presented in terms of Maurice's lack of a sexual identity. For years after the insufferable instructions of Mr. Ducie, he remains hopelessly "bewildered" about his homosexual temperament.³¹ The sexual frustration produced in these

children by the boarding-school system is intense, and can lead to violent forms of rebellion:

if you herd together human beings before they can understand each other the great god Pan is angry and will in the end evade your regulations.³²

In Forster's early novels, the public-school system is a major symbol of the rigidity of conventional morality, but it is not the only one. Lucy Honeychurch, the sole female protagonist in this group, suffers from a spiritual perplexity similar to that of Philip, Rickie, or Maurice. Evidently, she is not the product of a boys' boarding school. Thus, her problems must stem from other sources. Lucy's situation parallels that of the male in that she is the child of a middle-class, suburban household, and its values have been inflicted upon her. Upon further examination of these novels, one can see that parental and familial relationships are explored in depth. In fact, the family unit provides Forster with his other major symbol of society's oppression of the individual. Mrs. Herriton speaks for Forster when she declares:

All a child's life depends on the ideal it has of its parents...Destroy that, and everything goes...morals, behaviour, everything.³³

By internalizing conventional morality, parents often perpetuate an unconsidered adherence to a rigid set of values. In Angels, Philip's attitudes towards his mother influence

his entire life. In Journey, Rickie's early relations with his parents have a pronounced affect on his subsequent development. As for Lucy in A Room With A View, her personal ethics evolve from her associations with three very different families. Finally, in Maurice, Forster opens his work with a thorough account of his hero's youth; the early chapters are reminiscent of a psychologist's casebook. In each case, Forster satisfies the modern reader's belief that motivation is related to early experiences; clearly, we are justified in reading these works in the light of developmental psychology.

Forster formed his conclusions about family life by examining his own experiences, and those of his contemporaries.* Wilfred Stone writes:

Never were children more cruelly suffocated by morality and over-privilege than the poor little rich children of Forster's class and generation.³⁴

In Marianne Thornton, Forster coolly discusses the drawbacks of his own upbringing. According to his own account, he lost his father at an early age, and took up residence with his mother, "Aunt Monie" (Miss Thornton), and other aunts. As a child, he was molly-coddled: he was forced to play "eggy peggy", and

* He was particularly conscious of the biography of his friend Dickinson.

compelled to wear "corkscrew curls".³⁵ Due to the whims of his endearing but domineering aunt, he was rarely allowed to assert himself. Marianne loved him dearly, and left him eight thousand pounds in her will;³⁶ unfortunately, the love she provided was suffocating. She inhibited the actions of Forster's mother, as well. The "beautiful young widow" was urged to "bury herself in the wilds for the sake of a supposedly delicate son".³⁷ Mrs. Forster was not strong enough or rich enough to break the Thornton connection; she also loved Marianne, despite her faults. Thus, she and her son suffered considerably. The little boy took to writing "long stories about things that have never happened except inside (his) head".³⁸ As he grew up, he transformed his childhood anxieties into the stuff of creative fiction.

In Angels, Journey, Room With A View, and Maurice, Forster depicts the struggles that occur between the generations. In each case, a young person is pitted against the forces of conventional authorities. All too often, the familial guidance provided for these characters is of the wrong kind. Smothering and destructive, inhibited and inhibiting by turns, it impedes the road to full development. Forster's compassion is extended to those for whom youthful rebellion is impossible; he understands that the limitations placed

on true growth early in life can be debilitating. However, he reserves his admiration for those who learn to express their own natures, even when this involves sudden and radical forms of protest. In Two Cheers For Democracy, he writes:

The people who touch my imagination are obstinate suddenly - they do break step ...Here and there, as I rake between the importancies, I come across them - the people who carried whimsicality into action, the salt of my earth... the solid fellows who suddenly jib. 39

Forster's first two heroes fail to find happiness for themselves. Despite their virtues, they ultimately prove too weak to vanquish their moral and sexual confusion. By contrast, Lucy Honeychurch and Maurice Hall rebel, thereby discovering ways of living and loving that suit their own needs. Like Philip and Rickie, they are restricted by their families, and by conventional morality, but eventually, they resolve the inner conflicts that threaten to destroy them.

In Where Angels Fear To Tread, the most manipulative figure of all is Mrs. Herriton. At home in Sawston, she rules with an iron hand. We learn that she is intelligent, but society has sorely limited her sphere of action. In Edwardian times, a comfortably rich widow led a most unsatisfactory life. Like Forster's own mother and aunts, Mrs. Herriton's widowhood leaves her lonely and bored. In a moment of re-

sentment, Philip discovers that his mother's life is meaningless: she is a "well-ordered, active, useless machine".⁴⁰ Like so many other suburbanites in these novels, she behaves like an automaton. As a mother, she mechanically dispenses guidance, and rigorously controls the conduct of her offspring. Philip thinks of his various friends and relations as participants in an amusing puppet show.⁴¹ With Mrs. Herriton pulling the strings, however, the results can just as easily be tragic. She abuses each child placed in her care - her "refining influences" extend to male and female alike.⁴² The first person to come under her control is her eldest daughter, Harriet. She accepts the moral preachings of her mother in a suitably mechanical fashion:

Harriet's education had been almost too successful...As Philip once said, she had 'bolted all the cardinal virtues and couldn't digest them'.⁴³

Mrs. Herriton's handling of her daughter resembles Goldie Dickinson's parents' treatment of him. Once again, the biography helps us to comprehend the serious side of Forster's message. In that work, he writes of the "narrow vein of piety" in Goldie's mother that encouraged the son's "morbidity". He adds:

The piety of his parents was in [Goldie's] later judgment, unhelpful. It checked his instincts for enjoyment and gave him nothing with which to take their place. ⁴⁴

Like Goldie, Harriet's natural instincts are repressed: when she travels in Italy, she merely obeys her mother; she never finds time to enjoy being a tourist. Amidst the most beautiful settings, she is plagued by a myriad of minor annoyances. For example, on a visit to Juliet's tomb in Verona:

Harriet's sketch-book was stolen, and the bottle of ammonia in her trunk burst over her prayer-book, so that purple patches appeared on all her clothes. Then...Philip made her look out of the window because it was Virgil's birthplace, and a smut flew in her eye...⁴⁵

Again and again, Forster reveals that this representative Sawstonian does not belong in Italy; even the death of Gino's baby does not jar her out of her complacency. Like so many other unsympathetic Forsterian characters, her ability to comprehend life is minimal. After the dramatic events in Italy, we learn that:

...Harriet, after a short paroxysm of illness and remorse, was quickly returning to her normal state. She had been "thoroughly upset" as she phrased it, but she soon ceased to realize that anything was wrong beyond the death of a poor little child...⁴⁶

Unlike Harriet, Lilia rebels against Sawstonian stuffiness. Widowed by Charles Herriton, she spends three years in Sawston "continually subject to the refining influences of her late husband's family", and learns to bicycle, "for the purpose of waking the

place up".⁴⁷ Once in Italy, she marries the first man she sees, in an impulsive attempt to escape from her mother-in-law. Lilia's experience in Italy proves as unsatisfactory as Harriet's: her marriage to Gino enslaves her far more effectively than Sawston ever did. Forster writes:

Lilia had achieved pathos despite herself, for there are some situations in which vulgarity counts no longer. Not Cordelia or Imogen more deserves our tears.⁴⁸

She is, indeed, a vulgar character:

As Mrs. Herriton had often observed, Lilia had no resources. She did not like music, or reading, or work. Her one qualification for life was rather blowsy high spirits, which turned querulous or boisterous according to circumstances.⁴⁹

Yet it is from this simple-minded girl that we first learn just how harmful Mrs. Herriton can be. In an outburst to Philip, she expresses her outrage succinctly:

"For once in my life I'll thank you to leave me alone. I'll thank your mother, too. For twelve years you've trained me and tortured me, and I'll stand it no more...when Charles died I was still to run in strings for the honour of your beastly family, and I was to be cooped up at Sawston and learn to keep house, and all my chances spoilt of marrying again. No, thank you! ..."⁵⁰

Lilia's defiance, her "supreme insolence," is presented sympathetically, and Philip, who is always honest, must acknowledge "the coarseness and truth of her attack".⁵¹

Indeed, he must eventually recognize the oppressive nature of all aspects of his existence in Sawston. Furthermore, through a rapid series of revelations, he comes to view his mother as harshly as Lilia does. Because he is potentially a great human being, his enslavement in the hands of Mrs. Herriton affects us more profoundly than the plights of Harriet or Lilia. Caroline Abbott expresses the feelings of most readers when she takes hold of both of his hands, and exclaims:

' You are so splendid, Mr. Herriton, that I can't bear to see you wasted. I can't bear - she has not been good to you - your mother.'⁵²

Caroline cannot quite articulate her feelings but clearly, she understands Philip's situation. Mrs. Herriton has ensured her son's misery, and stunted his development. In a moment of insight, he perceives her weaknesses:

Philip started and shuddered. He saw that his mother was not sincere. Her insincerity to others had amused him, but it was disheartening when used against himself.⁵³

As he continues to consider the matter, his faintly disguised disgust reveals itself to be a burning resentment:

He was sure that she was not impulsive, but did not dare say so. Her ability frightened him. All his life he had been her puppet...To what purpose was her diplomacy, her insincerity, her continued repression of vigour? Did they make anyone better or happier?

Did they even bring happiness to herself? Harriet with her gloomy peevish creed, Lilia with her clutches after pleasure, were after all more divine...⁵⁴

With these thoughts, Philip begins to recognize the horror of his own existence.

He has, in fact, been thrust into an alienating set of social relationships which he can accurately observe, but which he cannot change. His mother has rendered him incapable of escaping. Forster writes:

He could criticize [his mother] thus. But he could not rebel. To the end of his days, he would probably go on doing what she wanted.⁵⁵

He is incapable of action, rarely passionate, and his attitude to women often borders on hatred. For example, when Caroline appears in Italy to rescue Lilia's baby, he is irrationally angered:

Philip's first coherent feeling was one of indignation. To be run by his mother and hectored by his sister was as much as he could stand. The intervention of a third female drove him suddenly beyond politeness.⁵⁶

The frustrations involved in living in an all-female environment are only too apparent in these lines. One cannot help remembering the feminine household Forster himself was raised in. In the scene referred to above, Philip's misogyny bursts from his lips:

"Tear each other's eyes out!" he cried, gesticulating at the facade of the hotel. "Give it to her, Harriet!"

Teach her to leave us alone. Give it to her, Caroline! Teach her to be grateful to you! Go it, ladies; go it!'57

In comparison with Mrs. Herriton, Mrs. Elliott in The Longest Journey is a sympathetic characterization, indeed. As a little boy, Rickie tells her lovingly:

"I have seen you laugh ever so often. One day you were laughing alone all down in the sweet peas".58

Philip's mother also loves her garden, but she sows her seeds much more methodically. In Where Angels Fear To Tread, we learn:

【Harriet and her mother】 sowed the duller vegetables first, and a pleasant feeling of righteous fatigue stole over them as they addressed the peas...Mrs. Herriton was very careful to let those peas trickle evenly from her hand, and at the end of the row she was conscious that she had never sown better.59

This seemingly trivial contrast illustrates the essential difference between the two women. Unlike Mrs. Herriton, Rickie's mother can be frivolous and tender, by turns. Unfortunately, however, she is married to a man who embodies "the grey monotony that surrounds all cities".60 Rickie's father leads a diabolically mechanical existence, and is cruel to his only child. Despite the boy's lameness, he maintains a firm stance: "No coddling".61 The hollowness of his heart is reflected in his physical appearance. Forster describes his "hollow little cheeks, ...and

stiff impoverished hair" and his eyes, with "their peculiar flatness, as if the soul looked through dirty window-panes".⁶²

It is impossible to take Mr. Elliott's ferociousness seriously, however, because it is presented facetiously. "He worries me", he declares of his son. "He's a joke of which I have got tired".⁶³ He abandons his wife with incredible ease:

...Mrs. Elliott had not the gift of making her home beautiful; and one day, when she bought a carpet for the dining-room that clashed, he laughed gently, said he 'really couldn't', and departed.⁶⁴

On another occasion, the frustrated wife leaves the loveless marriage. She heads for Stockholm, with "a man who told her three times not to buy artificial manure ready made, but, if she would use it, to make it herself at the last moment".⁶⁵ Forster joyously weaves a fantasy of illicit love out of the tale of Mrs. Elliott and her "young farmer of some education".⁶⁶ Like Maurice and his lover, these two flee to a "Whitmannic"⁶⁷ paradise for seventeen days of "perfect health...perfect weather", and "more than personal love".⁶⁸ The then young Mrs. Failing aptly captures the spirit of this blissful union. Cries she:

"Why they're divine! They're forces of Nature! They're as ordinary as volcanoes...they are guiltless in the sight of God".⁶⁹

In this earlier novel, Forster brings the unconventional, spontaneous idyll to an abrupt conclusion. Whereas we are asked to imagine "Maurice and Alex still roam(ing) the greenwood",⁷⁰ Mrs. Elliott's farmer dies suddenly, and we must envisage the recalcitrant wife's return to her tyrannical husband. Her response to Mr. Elliott's proposal of a resumption of their relationship deserves to be quoted at length. She says to herself:

I will think about it. If I loved him the very least bit I should say no. If I had anything to do with my life I should say no. But it is simply a question of beating time till I die. Nothing that is coming matters. I may as well sit in his drawing room and dust his furniture, since he has suggested it.⁷¹

Despite Forster's cheerful manner of describing these major events in the life of Rickie's parents, he clearly intends us to view the agonies of the boy's childhood in a serious light. His confusion, we are told, begins before he enters public school:

Rickie departed in a state of bewildered misery, which was scarcely ever to grow clearer.⁷²

Mrs. Elliott embodies yet another version of stultifying parental love. Her influence on Rickie is more damaging than that of her cruel husband. She herself is the helpless victim of repression:*

* cf. Forster's account of Dickinson's household in which "there never had been any intimacy..." in Forster, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, p. 4.

The boy grew up in great loneliness. He worshipped his mother and she was fond of him. But she was dignified and reticent, and pathos, like tattle, was disgusting to her. She was afraid of intimacy, in case it led to confidence and tears, and so all her life she held her son at a little distance.⁷³

Unwittingly, she instills Rickie with some of her own prudishness; he must fight against his tendency to withdraw from intimacy throughout his life. When he is older, he observes an embrace of Agnes and Gerald.

Forster writes:

It was the merest accident that Rickie had not been disgusted. But this he could not know.⁷⁴

When Mr. Elliott dies, his wife makes a further mistake:

It seemed as if she could not do too much to shield [Rickie] and to draw him nearer to her.⁷⁵

Since Rickie is fifteen years old at this time, Mrs. Elliott's action seems unnecessary: she offers him a great-coat, to shield him from the wind.⁷⁶ We cannot be certain that this action symbolizes a sustained over-protection, because the mother dies suddenly at this point in the narration. In this way, Forster removes their relationship from the physical world, and provides himself with a framework in which to develop the sheerly spiritual aspects of their love. Rickie's love for his mother is inspiring in its strength, but it is also frightening. After her death, he dreams of her constantly, and scarcely loves anyone else. Like Philip, Rickie

is overpowered by his mother, despite her gentle nature, and will never achieve independence. Like Maurice, he fears the darkness. He longs for his mother to still his terrors and he is tormented by strange visions. Forster writes:

Yet again did he awake, and from a more mysterious dream. He heard his mother crying quite distinctly in the darkened room. He whispered, "Never mind, my darling, never mind", and a voice echoed, "Never mind - come away - let them die out - let them die out".⁷⁷

She seems to beckon this son away from life, and into a vast abyss of sterility and death.

The Longest Journey is cluttered with people who manipulate Rickie. His mother's posthumous influence is merely a single link in the chains that bind him. The true female tyrants are his aunt and his wife. Like Philip, he is often controlled by the women in his family. His aunt resembles Philip's mother, although she is a much more awesome figure. Like Mrs. Herriton, she is a widow in suburbia. Like Agnes after her marriage to Rickie, and like Mrs. Elliott, she, too, beats time. After her husband's death, Mrs. Failing lives in a state of "graceful fretfulness"⁷⁸ - a condition which sounds very much like sexual frustration. Forster writes:

With many a groan she settled down to banishment. Wiltshire people, she declared, were the stupidest in England.

She told them so to their faces, which made them no brighter. And their county was worthy of them: no distinction in it - no style - simply land. ⁷⁹

She also settles down to hurting others, for her own amusement. "Finding life dull", writes Forster, "she had dropped lies into it, as a chemist drops a new element into a solution...she loved to mislead others".⁸⁰ Rickie and his half-brother Stephen are two of her most prized victims. It can be demonstrated, however, that she has her virtues. Her power lies in the fact that, like Forster's own Aunt Monie,⁸¹ she is good and evil by turns. Writes Stone: "she is vindictive and generous, sympathetic and cruel, intelligent and cold..."⁸²

Rickie's family is briefly and bluntly contrasted with that of his best friend, Stewart Ansell. Unlike Mr. Elliott, Stewart's father believes in freedom.⁸³ He allows his son to study whatever he wants, and thus it is not surprising to hear the boy say:

"The only real reason for doing a thing is because you want to do it."⁸⁴

The family has less money than the Elliotts; the father is "a provincial draper of moderate prosperity."⁸⁵ Nonetheless, this "plebeian household" is inordinately cheerful. When Rickie comes to visit, he wonders wistfully "whether one of the bonds that kept the Ansell family united might not be their complete absence of taste".⁸⁶ His own father, one remembers, gathers objets d'art "mechanically, not in any impulse of love",⁸⁷

and the sister reduces beauty to a meaningless formula:

Mrs. Failing's attitude towards Nature was severely aesthetic - an attitude more sterile than the severely practical. She applied the test of beauty to shadow and odour and sound; they never filled her with reverence, or excitement...⁸⁸

Thus, Ansell's home offers Rickie a completely novel experience. Bad taste is one of Forster's favourite symbols of a spontaneous escape from stultifying mores. For example, in Angels, as Philip approaches the garishly decorated theatre in Monteriano, he rejoices:

So rich and appalling was the effect, that [he] could scarcely suppress a cry. There is something majestic in the bad taste of Italy...It observes beauty and chooses to pass it by. But it attains to beauty's confidence...⁸⁹

In Where Angels Fear To Tread, The Longest Journey, and Maurice, Forster focuses his attention on familial misery. By contrast, in A Room With a View, he depicts a happy household. In his portrayal of the Honeychurches, he develops ideas touched upon briefly in the description of the Ansell's in The Longest Journey. First of all, both families seem to thrive on their bad taste. The Honeychurch home is located in an exquisite natural setting, but architecturally, it is a chaotic edifice. Forster writes:

The situation was so glorious, the house so commonplace, not to say impertinent... and yet the house 'did', for it was the home of people who loved their surroundings honestly...Windy Corner seemed as inevitable

as an ugliness of Nature's own creation.
One might laugh at the house but one
never shuddered. 90

Second . . . , Mrs. Honeychurch believes in giving her children many liberties, much as Mr. Ansell does. Thus, her son Freddy can scatter his books and his bones throughout the drawing room with complete equanimity;⁹¹ more importantly, her daughter Lucy must work out her own marital destiny. When Cecil Vyse asks Mrs. Honeychurch's permission for Lucy's hand in marriage, she expresses an emancipated view of courtship:

"[I]n these days young people must decide for themselves".⁹²

Finally, like the Ansell, the Honeychurches are sensitive to one another:

At the last minute, when the social machine [is] clogged hopelessly, one member or the other of the family pour[s] in a drop of oil.⁹³

Mrs. Honeychurch's tact, in particular, causes much joy on many occasions.

At such times, the Honeychurches appear to be "perfect".⁹⁴ Here, Forster reveals his awareness of the positive aspects of family relationships. Unlike Mrs. Herriton, Mrs. Elliott, or Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Honeychurch creates a warm, secure home for her children. As a widow in suburbia, she, too, could become bored, fretful, or hungry for power, like so many of Forster's

female characters. She is surrounded by dull immigrants and "their kindly affluence, their inexplorative religion, their dislike of paper-bags, orange-peel, and broken bottles".⁹⁵ However, her temperament never sours; unlike the others, she remains helpful and kindly to all. She tolerates inept servants,⁹⁶ and entertains tiresome neighbours whenever she feels they merit her good will.⁹⁷ Symbolically, her house appears bathed in sunshine. In the introductory description of Windy Corner, the curtains let in a "subdued and varied light", and "without is poured a sea of radiance":⁹⁸ clearly, this is the home of tolerance, enlightenment and love.

This impression is re-enforced by the depiction of Mrs. Honeychurch's attitude towards her children. She demonstrates her affection for them, but there is nothing abnormal or sinister about the attentions she pays them. For example, she asks Lucy to kiss her, when she sees that her daughter needs her moral support. Writes Forster:

Mrs. Honeychurch might have flamed out. She did not. She said: "Come here, old lady - thank you for putting away my bonnet - kiss me."...So the grittiness went out of life.⁹⁹

On the other hand, Mrs. Honeychurch varies her treatment of Freddy appropriately. She respects his needs as he becomes a man, and never invites him to remain unnaturally intimate with her. She is not reticent or prudish in her dealings with her son, but she does not smother him

with attention. Furthermore, she never attempts to transform him into a substitute for her dead husband. She gives him room to grow in, but exerts a firm and gentle control of his actions, when necessary. For example, she speaks with memorable calm and grace, in order to end the confusion of the nude swimming scene. Only she can dispel the awkwardness caused by the unexpected arrival of women at the scene of this all-male outing:

'Hush dears', said Mrs. Honeychurch, who found it impossible to remain shocked.
'And do be sure you dry yourselves thoroughly first. All these colds come of not drying thoroughly.'¹⁰⁰

Mrs. Honeychurch differs from the mothers of Philip, Rickie and Maurice in all of these ways. Her departure from the behavioural patterns of the others is significant in that she produces happier, more normal children. One must note that of the four early protagonists, only Lucy grows up to marry, thereby aligning herself with the majority of people in our society, and that of the males, only Freddy has a healthy relationship with his mother. ~~All~~ of the others have troubling experiences with their parents, and differ sharply from the norm throughout their adult lives.

Clearly, Forster's male heroes suffer more
in the hands of their mothers than Lucy does.
However, it would be an over-simplification of A Room

With A View, if we neglected the importance of the theme of repressive family influences. Like the other Forsterian mothers, Mrs. Honeychurch certainly has her faults. Her attitude towards her own sex, for example, is as "medieval" as that of Charlotte Bartlett or Cecil Vyse. She does not trust other women, and advises her friend, Sir Harry, to find male tenants for Cissie Village:

"Men don't gossip over tea-cups. If they get drunk, there's an end of them - they lie down comfortably, and sleep it off. If they're vulgar, they somehow keep it to themselves. It doesn't spread so. Give me a man - of course, provided he's clean".¹⁰¹

As a traditional housewife, Mrs. Honeychurch loves domestic affairs, and expects other women to feel the same way. In fact, she despises those who attempt to develop other interests, such as literature:

Nothing roused Mrs. Honeychurch so much as literature in the hands of females. She would abandon every topic in order to inveigh against those women who (instead of minding their own houses and their children) seek notoriety by print. Her own attitude was: 'If books must be written, let them be written by men'.¹⁰²

She discourages Lucy from being interested in music, and is surprisingly anti-intellectual in her attitudes. She "doesn't like one to get excited over anything", as Lucy explains it to Mr. Beebe.¹⁰³ Thus, despite all of her virtues, she represents a force against which

Lucy must rebel. The daughter's ultimate desire for equality in her relationship with George differs radically from the future her mother envisages for her.

At the novel's conclusion, Forster emphasizes the fact that Lucy's marriage has involved a major act of rebellion. Her contentment with George is marred by a degree of bitterness:

The Honeychurches had not forgiven them; they were disgusted at her past hypocrisy; she had alienated Windy Corner, perhaps for ever.¹⁰⁴

It would seem that Forster connects the process of growth with that of rebellion against a previous generation. Even a happy household, like that of the Honeychurches, must eventually be abandoned by its children, and Forster insists that the necessary sacrifices are not too great. Of the elopement of Lucy and George, he writes:

Ah! it was worth while; it was the great joy that they had expected, and countless little joys of which they had never dreamt.¹⁰⁵

The alternative these two lovers faced was, of course, the intense loneliness their failure to marry would have brought to each of them. Their happiness in the novel's final chapter stands in sharp contrast to the misery and alienation symbolized by the Vyse family throughout the latter portion of the work. Just as Mrs.

Honeychurch embodies several creative aspects of motherly love, Mrs. Vyse incorporates certain destructive ones. Through the depiction of this shallow woman's relationship with her son, Forster underscores his ongoing concern with the dangers of family life.

The weather at Windy Corner is symbolically sunny; by contrast, at Mrs. Vyse's flat it is "unseasonable".¹⁰⁶ Like the rooms of Mr. Elliott in The Longest Journey, this home is artistically furnished and "well appointed", but it lacks vitality.¹⁰⁷ Lucy finds herself expressing "the sadness of the incomplete" when she plays the piano in its drawing-room.¹⁰⁸ In a few polished phrases, Forster portrays the decadent owner of the flat, and adds one more suburban automaton to his canon. He muses:

One was tired of everything, it seemed.
One launched into enthusiasms only to
collapse gracefully, and pick oneself
up amid unsympathetic laughter.¹⁰⁹

One remembers the Elliotts, about whom Forster asks:

What had they ever done, except say
sarcastic things, and limp, and be
refined?¹¹⁰

Mrs. Vyse's personality has been "swamped by London";¹¹¹ unlike Mrs. Honeychurch, she can no longer relate to herself, her lovers, or her son:

The too vast orb of her fate had crushed
her; she had seen too many seasons, too
many cities, too many men for her abilities,
and even with Cecil, she was mechanical,

and behaved as if he was not one son,
but so to speak, a filial crowd.¹¹²

Like Mrs. Herriton in Angels, Mrs. Vyse leads a meaningless existence and contributes to the emotional stagnation of her son. Cecil is even less capable of rebellion, intimacy or passion than Philip:

He is the sort who are all right so long as they keep to things - books, pictures - but kill when they come to people.¹¹³

When he asks Mrs. Honeychurch for permission to marry Lucy, he reveals the extent to which he has failed to develop independence of spirit. Then, his awkward request for a kiss from Lucy reveals the "depths of prudishness in him".¹¹⁴ The subsequent embrace is, of course, a failure, and Forster notes:

Passion should believe itself irresistible. It should forget civility and consideration and all the other curses of a refined nature. Above all, it should never ask leave where there is a right of way...¹¹⁵

Like Philip, Cecil becomes increasingly aware of the limitations of his nature. Upon kissing Lucy, he expresses his self-disgust:

Why could he not do as any labourer or navvy - nay, as any young man behind the counter would have done?¹¹⁶

Unfortunately, Cecil is, indeed, an "ideal bachelor ... better detached",¹¹⁷ and "the sort who can't know anyone intimately".¹¹⁸ Like his mother, he is incapable of establishing personal associations with men or women:

[T]he only relationship which Cecil conceived was feudal: that of protector and protected. He had no glimpse of the comradeship after which [Lucy's] soul yearned.¹¹⁹

Charlotte Bartlett also engages in "feudal" relationships. Like Cecil, she constantly attempts to shield Lucy from life. Wherever the young girl looks, there stands her cousin, "brown against the view".¹²⁰ As a surrogate for Mrs. Honeychurch, this "prim chaperone"¹²¹ has ample opportunity for imposing her "shame-faced world of precautions and barriers".¹²² Mr. Beebe succinctly interprets the relations of Charlotte and Lucy in a picture he draws of them:

Miss Honeychurch as a kite,
Miss Bartlett holding the string.¹²³

Forster depicts Charlotte in a much more awesome manner; he associates her with as many symbols of sexual and psychological repression as he can muster. Whereas Mrs. Honeychurch is associated with sunshine, Charlotte brings with her a constant flow of inclemency and darkness. In the first chapter of the novel, she casts "a haze of disapproval" over Lucy, and smothers her in a "protecting embrace" that reminds the girl of fog.¹²⁴ Unlike the airy curtains of Windy Corner, those of Charlotte's rooms smite one in the face, and seem "heavy with more than cloth".¹²⁵ With her "unknown depths of strangeness, though not, perhaps of meaning",

this woman represents forces capable of over-powering much stronger natures than Lucy's.¹²⁶

A consideration of the role of Charlotte Bartlett in A Room With A View reminds the present writer of the ways in which Lucy Honeychurch resembles a Forsterian school boy. Whereas her pleasant mother and happy marriage distinguish her from Philip, Rickie, and Maurice, her relationship with Charlotte marks her kinship with her male counterparts. In the major part of the novel, Lucy is away from Windy Corner; thus, she is faced with her stuffy, prudish cousin rather than with her mother. Like the male protagonists, Lucy possesses an undeveloped heart, and Charlotte forces her into a position of total "spiritual starvation".¹²⁷ Significantly, she possesses a "pretty, pale, undeveloped face",¹²⁸ and her early education has clearly been as inadequate as that of the boys. Like Rickie or Maurice at their most vulnerable periods of growth, Lucy has not yet "come to a situation where Character tells", or "where Childhood enters upon the branching paths of Youth".¹²⁹ Instead, she has led a sheltered, trivial existence prior to her visit to Italy, filled with concerts, social visits, iced coffee, and meringues.¹³⁰ Once noted, these parallels between Lucy and the male heroes can prove confusing. One wonders if Forster is merely rendering his habitual concern with abnormal

behavioural patterns acceptable to a heterosexual audience by using a female protagonist, rather than a somewhat abnormal male. This interpretation is tantalizing, but ultimately unsatisfactory; A Room With A View is, after all, largely a cheerful novel, differing decidedly from each of the other early works in both its tone and subject matter.*

In Maurice, Forster finally allows himself to give his complete attention to a family situation that interests him greatly. Thus, the first two chapters of this novel consist entirely of descriptions of Maurice's early experiences as the only son in a house full of women. In the first few pages, Forster points out the spiritual impoverishment that can result from insisting a son be exactly like his dead father. His mother, Dr. Barry, his teachers, and other authorities ask him to imitate his father in every way. He is sent to Mr. Hall's old public school,¹³¹ and is expected to enter the Stock Exchange, to carry on the family tradition.¹³² For Maurice, who is already yearning for the garden boy, and vaguely sensing that he will never marry, the worst edict involves marriage. The platitudinous Dr. Barry pains Maurice deeply with his idle banter:

* Forster himself ^{called} A Room With A View his "nicest novel" in 1958.

Who will present the expectant world
with a Maurice the third? After
which old age, grandchildren and
finally the daisies.¹³³

He transforms his ideas into the form of inflexible
commandments that intimidate the young boy. Says he:

Man that is born of woman must go with
woman if the human race is to continue.¹³⁴

With these and other examples of the way in which
society turns parental authority into a stultifying
divinity for children to worship, Forster adds one more
important element to his critique of conventional
morality.

Of course, the influence of Maurice's living
parent is more harmful than that of the dead one. Mrs.
Hall is yet another bored housewife in a bourgeois
community:

Church was the only place Mrs. Hall
had to go to - the shops delivered...
It was a land of facilities, where
nothing had to be striven for, and
success was indistinguishable from
failure.¹³⁵

Mrs. Hall, who has very few duties and all too few
pleasures, easily finds her place within the canon of
Forsterian women. Like Mrs. Herriton, Mrs. Elliott
and others, she rules over the daily affairs of her
household, and must rest content with the shred of
power this affords her. Having no husband, she dedicates
herself to the son. In the early years, "Maurice liked

his home", Forster informs us, "and recognized his mother as its presiding genius".¹³⁶ As he grows older, however, her "very softness" enrages him. Thinks he:

It cost her nothing to muck about with tender words and toast: she only wanted to make him soft too.¹³⁷

Gradually, he realizes that even their early affection for one another was harmful, since it involved an abnormal intimacy. In one scene, the fifteen-year-old Maurice returns from school. Writes Forster:

They went kissing one another and conversing aimlessly.
'Morrie...'
'Mummie...'
'Now I must give my Morrie a lovely time'.¹³⁸

As the episode unfolds, we observe Maurice's regression to infancy in his mother's presence. One is reminded forcibly of the way in which Mrs. Elliott offered Rickie a greatcoat on his fifteenth birthday, and of Forster's own childhood position as the curly-haired "Important One" in Marianne Thornton. In all of these cases, the affections of the mothers are distorted and misdirected.

In Maurice, Forster describes the frightening results. After meeting Durham at Cambridge, Maurice returns to his household in a bitter mood of resentment:

One strong feeling arouses another, and a profound irritation against his womenkind set in. His relations with them had hitherto been trivial but stable, but it seemed iniquitous that anyone should mis-

pronounce the name of the man who was more to him than all the world. Home emasculated everything.¹³⁹

Maurice resembles A Room With A View, in that once again, the beloved can be gained only by rejecting one's parents. However, here the theme receives a much greater and more bitter emphasis. As Maurice grows older, his family limits him in continually more serious ways. He must reject its religion, its educational system, and marriage, its basic institution. At Cambridge, Maurice learns to rebel against authority, and think for himself. However, each visit to his mother and sisters marks another regression into confusion:

Three weeks in their company left him untidy, sloppy, victorious in every item, yet defeated on the whole. He came back to Cambridge thinking, and even speaking, like his mother or Ada.¹⁴⁰

His womenfolk plant a suburban soul in Maurice, and a hatred of the opposite sex. Like Philip, he becomes angry when fenced in by too many females. Writes Forster:

They sat round the breakfast table, in mourning because of Grandpa, but otherwise worldly. Beside his mother and sisters, there was impossible Aunt Ida, who lived with them now, and a Miss Tonks, a friend whom Kitty had made...¹⁴¹

Clearly, Maurice is miserable in the absence of male companionship; he frets nervously about the possibility

of marrying the unappealing Miss Tonks, and his frustration mounts.

The clever undergraduate Clive Durham has enough self-knowledge to understand his relations with his mother long before Maurice has drawn any conclusions about his. With the depiction of this molly-coddled aesthete and his shrewish mother, Forster develops the theme of familial relationships more completely than he could by simply describing the Halls. Like Philip Herriton in Where Angels Fear To Tread, Clive recognizes his mother's insincerity, and longs to rebel. Early in his friendship with Maurice, he admits his dislike of Mrs. Durham:

"I just have been pretending to like her. This row has shattered my lie. I did think I had stopped building lies. I despise her character, I am disgusted with her."¹⁴²

In a quarrel resembling those of Philip and Mrs. Herriton, Clive decides his mother is "withered, unsympathetic, empty".¹⁴³ In truth, she is a worldly woman, who loves to deal in petty manipulations. Just as Mrs. Herriton plans to re-capture Lilia's baby, Clive's mother schemes to find an eligible match for her son:

Mrs. Durham had her motives. She was looking out wives for Clive, and put down the Hall girls on her list. She had a theory one ought to cross breeds a bit, and Ada, though suburban, was

healthy...Mrs. Durham did not propose to return to the dower house in practice, whatever she might do in theory, and believed she could best manage Clive through his wife.¹⁴⁴

With these words, Forster vividly suggests this woman's snobbery and bossiness. Clearly, she is an important addition to the already large group of unpleasant mother figures in Forster's fiction.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY NOVELS:

DREAMS, ART, WORK AND COMRADESHIP

In his discussion of Forster's short stories, Wilfred Stone provides us with a Freudian definition of fantasy. He writes:

Fantasy, as a psychological phenomenon, is a means of getting via dream, imagination, or wishful thinking what one cannot get in reality...'We may lay it down', writes Freud, 'that a happy person never fantasies, only an unsatisfied one. The motive forces of fantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single fantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfied reality'.¹

In Forster's early novels and Maurice, fantasy is only the first of a series of methods the central characters employ in order to flee from the cages of their respective existences. In the first chapter of this thesis, we discovered that Philip, Rickie, Lucy and Maurice become alienated from themselves and their surroundings. Due to a conflict between their desires and the commands of their superiors, they each become muddled and trapped. Thus, they make a series of unconscious attempts to escape from problems they have not clearly defined. They are filled with "unsatisfied wishes"; they dream frequently, pursue various aesthetic and religious ideals, or travel. Only Lucy and Maurice

go beyond these pursuits to find alternate^{ly} solutions to their loneliness and boredom. For Philip and Rickie, no beloved arrives to conclude the struggle for freedom and fulfillment. Despite the very different endings of these novels, however, the portrayal of the struggle for happiness is very similar in each case, and it is to this quest that we must now turn our attention.

In Where Angels Fear To Tread, Philip's departure from England provides him with an opportunity to explore his repressed desires. In transforming Italy into a land in which reality resembles dreams and nightmares, Forster uses a standard twentieth-century technique; his concern for unconsciousness is immediately apparent. Writes Wilfred Stone:

For the last century and a half, such northern Europeans as Goethe, Arnold, Butler, Lawrence and Mann have in their writings made Italy a powerful symbol for release from repression, for all the sensuous and passionate side of life that Protestant restraints have made illicit.²

Each of Philip's trips to Italy represents an ephemeral excursion into the realm of fantasy. After each one, he must return to his smothering existence in Sawston. Nonetheless, while he is away, he releases many of the passions that have been bottled up inside him, thereby achieving a limited satisfaction. In the opening passages of the novel, Forster contrasts Sawston, "the realm of

common sense,"³ with Monteriano, "a fantastic ship city of a dream".⁴ Upon Philip's arrival, he is cast into a trance: "the sheer force of his intellect (is) weakened by the sight of Monteriano".⁵ Clearly, he has entered the land of sensuality and wish-fulfillment.

Monteriano's symbolic significance is first conveyed through a detailed description of its physical features. The city has a "phallic aspect",⁶ due to its towers:

Monteriano's colour was brown and it revealed not a single house - nothing but the narrow circle of the walls, and behind them seventeen towers - all that was left of the fifty-two that had filled the city in her prime. Some were only stumps, some were inclining stiffly to their fall, some were still erect,⁷ piercing like masts into the blue.

A luxurious profusion of violets, one of Forster's favourite symbols of passion,* covers everything:

There are such violets in England, but not so many. Nor are there so many in Art, for no painter has the courage. The cart-ruts were channels, the hollow lagoons; even the dry white margin of the road was splashed, like a causeway soon to be submerged under the advancing tide of spring...the road to Monteriano must traverse innumerable flowers.⁸

The city itself stands high on a hill, surrounded by further examples of vernal splendour:

* For example, Forster uses this identical symbolism in both A Room With A View and The Eternal Moment.

The hazy green of the olives rose up to
its walls, and it seemed to float in
isolation between trees and sky...⁹

Through a vivid particularization of detail in the earliest chapters, Forster indicates that the repressed Sawstonians, Caroline, Philip, and Harriet, have arrived in a fabulous kingdom of natural wonders.*

They have also entered a world filled with artificial splendour, for Italy is the home of man's accomplishments, as well as nature's. Thinks Philip:

Monteriano...a place which knew the
Etruscan League, and the Pax Romana,
and Alaric himself, and the Countess
Matilda, and the Middle Ages, all
fighting and holiness, and the
Renaissance, all fighting and beauty!¹⁰

To him, Monteriano is a city in "fairyland",¹¹ and filled with "Romance".¹² This dreamy, dissatisfied youth has sublimated many passions to an appreciation of art:

All the energies and enthusiasms of a
rather friendless life had passed into
the championship of beauty.¹³

At the age of twenty, Philip quenched his thirst for beauty by wearing "parti-coloured ties and a squashy hat".¹⁴ At twenty-two, he created an idealized version of Italy, to satisfy further longings:

* At times, the city overwhelms the Sawstonians, who become filled with a sense of guilt, cf. Caroline's reaction, Forster, Where Angels Fear To Tread, pp. 87-8: "To her imagination Monteriano had become a magic city of vice, beneath whose towers no person could grow up happy or pure."

He absorbed into one aesthetic whole
olive-trees, blue sky, frescoes,
country inns, saints, peasants,
mosaics, statues, beggars.¹⁵

By the time of the novel's main action, he is twenty-four*, and a typical Forsterian aesthete; he resembles Cecil Vyse, Clive Durham and Tibby Schlegel, in that he views life rather than experiencing it. "Life to me is just a spectacle", he admits to Caroline Abbott.¹⁶

Most events pass before Philip's eyes like paintings in an art gallery. For example, as he stares at Gino helping Caroline to wash the baby, the scene becomes a religious icon; he sees them as "the Virgin and Child, with Donor":

There [Caroline] sat, with twenty miles of view behind her, and Gino placed the dripping baby on her knee. It shone now with health and beauty: it seemed to reflect the light, like a copper vessel. Just such a baby Bellini sets languid on his mother's lap... [Gino] knelt by the side of the chair, with his hands clasped before him.¹⁷

On a more dramatic occasion, Philip watches Caroline comfort Gino, who is mourning for his dead child. Again, he transforms the two individuals into participants in a quasi-religious, aesthetic tableau:

* The twenty-fourth year of a character's life often marks his maturity in Forster's fiction. cf. Maurice, in which both Clive and Maurice identify themselves with heterosexuality and homosexuality respectively, at this same age.

All through the day Miss Abbott had seemed to Philip like a goddess, and more than ever did she seem so now... Her eyes were open, full of infinite pity and full of majesty... Her hands were folded around the sufferer, stroking him gently... And it seemed fitting, too, that she should bend her head and touch his forehead with her lips.¹⁸

Philip transfigures reality into art, instead of confronting it directly. Writes Forster:

Philip looked away, as he sometimes looked away from the great pictures...¹⁹

When he learns that Caroline loves Gino instead of himself, he mythologizes the two of them one final time:

He smiled bitterly at the thought of them together. Here was the cruel antique malice of the gods, such as they once sent forth against Pasiphae. Centuries of aspiration and culture...²⁰

Rather than lamenting, he stares at the Campanile of Airolo, pretending it represents "the fair myth of Endymion",²¹ and accepts his role as Caroline's worshipper instead of simply taking her in his arms.

Philip's passivity affects other areas of his life, as well. As we noted earlier, he is incapable of rebellion, no matter how intensely dissatisfied he becomes. In an important conversation with Caroline, he argues:

"Society is invincible - to a certain degree. But your real life is your own, and nothing can touch it. There

is no power on earth that can prevent your criticizing and despising mediocrity - nothing that can stop you retreating into splendour and beauty - into the thoughts and beliefs that make the real life - the real you."²²

Philip's retreat, however, spoils his life. In another discussion with Caroline, he reveals his sense of resignation:

"Some people were born not to do things. I'm one of them; I never did anything at school or at the Bar. I came out to stop Lilia's marriage, and was too late. I came out intending to get the baby, and I shall return an 'honourable failure'. I never expect anything to happen now, and so I am never disappointed ...I seem fated to pass through the world without colliding with it or moving it - ..."²³

Forster illustrates the extent to which Philip has failed to develop fully, by providing us with brief glimpses of the sterility of his daily life in Sawston. After college, he mechanically becomes a lawyer:

The world, [he] found, made a niche for him as it did for every one. ²⁴

He is, in fact, as inadequate in his career, as he is in his personal life. When he asks Lilia about the profession of one of her new relatives, she wounds him by replying:

"Why, [he is] a lawyer, just like you are - except that he has lots to do and can never get away."²⁵

In addition to escaping from reality by developing his sense of beauty, and burying himself in a meaningless

legal career, Philip cultivates a sense of humour. Forster describes this aspect of his protagonist's philosophy in the following manner:

If he could not reform the world, he could at all events laugh at it, thus attaining at least an intellectual superiority. Laughter, he read and believed, was a sign of good moral health, and he laughed on contentedly...²⁶

Philip's complacency remains unruffled throughout the greater part of the novel. He attempts to rescue Gino's baby with the same lack of enthusiasm with which he embarked on a legal career. In contrast with Caroline, who feels genuinely concerned for the child's welfare, he prefers to remain an amused bystander:

Philip saw no prospect of good, nor of beauty either. But the expedition promised to be highly comic...he was simply indifferent to all in it except the humours. These would be wonderful. Harriet, worked by her mother; Mrs. Herriton worked by Miss Abbott; Gino, worked by a cheque - what better entertainment could he desire?²⁷

With this attitude, Philip makes only a meager attempt to rescue the baby. Caroline voices some of Forster's own exasperation with his effete hero when she says:

"Settle which side you'll fight on...Oh, what is the use of fair-mindedness if you never decide for yourself? Any one gets hold of you and makes you do what they want. And you see through them and laugh at them - and do it. It's not enough to see clearly...we must intend to accomplish - not sit intending on a chair...You appreciate us all - see good in all of us. And all the time you are dead - dead - dead."²⁸

The vitality of Gino Carella stands in direct contrast to the "deadness" of Philip, throughout the novel. Unlike the Sawstonian, this representative figure of Monteriano embraces life with passionate vigour. Gino resembles most Forsterian symbols of virility, in that he is both creative and destructive, loving and violent. On the one hand, he longs to create life:

His one desire was to become the father of a man like himself, and it held him with a grip he only partially understood, for it was the first great passion of his life. Falling in love was a mere physical triviality, like warm sun or cool water, beside this divine hope of immortality: "I continue".²⁹

On the other hand, he loves to destroy it. During the first meal Philip has at Gino's home, the latter reveals his cruelty:

A starved cat had been worrying them all for pieces of the purple quivering beef they were trying to swallow. Signor Carella, with the brutality so common in Italians, had caught her by the paw and flung her away from him.³⁰

Later, we discover that he torments his own wife who responds to his abuses with the gestures of a wounded animal:

He had a good strong will when he chose to use it, and would not have had the least scruple in using bolts and locks to put it into effect. There was plenty of brutality deep down in him, and one day Lilia nearly touched it...He edged around the table to where she was sitting, and she sprang away...too frightened to speak or move.³¹

Philip reacts to both the cruelty and the beauty of Gino's nature. At first, he finds Gino unsavoury,³² but soon he discovers the Italian's charm:

The youth was hungry...and when those delicious slippery worms were flying down his throat, his face relaxed... And Philip had seen that face before in Italy a hundred times - seen it and loved it...³³

In a story published in The Life To Come, Forster describes a character who, like Gino, "loved to take life, as all those do who are really in touch with nature".³⁴ Like the gamekeeper Alec Scudder, Gino is a creature of the open air. When he steps outside of his house, he enters "a loggia, where you can live all day and night, if you feel inclined, drinking vermouth and smoking cigarettes, with leagues of olive-trees and vineyards and blue-green hills to watch you".³⁵ Here, on Italian soil, Gino leads a carefree existence. One recalls Forster's loving depiction of T.E. Lawrence's* ramshackle cottage in the woods, where men would withdraw periodically, to commune with each other and nature:

We weren't to care, as soon as we were inside; we were to feel easy, and not worry about the world and its standards.³⁶

The motto of Clouds Hill, "Ou phrontis - meaning roughly:

* The famous "Lawrence of Arabia" was one of Forster's homosexual friends. cf. E.M. Forster, The Eternal Moment And Other Stories (London: Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., 1928). The Dedication reads: 'To T.E. in the absence of anything else!'

'I don't care'³⁷ could easily be inscribed on Gino's loggia, as well.

Gino welcomes Philip into his loggia, and into "the democracy of the caffè or the street" where "the brotherhood of man is a reality".³⁸ It is, in fact, a beautiful paradise - for men only:

Italy is such a beautiful place if you
happen to be a man.³⁹

In Maurice, we learn that Italy had adopted the Code Napoleon by the Edwardian period. "There homosexuality is no longer criminal", Maurice's hypnotist tells him.⁴⁰ Indeed, the Italian society depicted in Where Angels Fear To Tread would easily please homosexuals since it excludes women and exalts men. In this environment, Philip's love for men rises freely to the surface of his personality. One night at the opera, he becomes 'drunk with excitement':

He deserted his ladies and plunged towards the box. A young man was flung stomach downwards across the balustrade...Then his own hands were seized affectionately. It all seemed quite natural.⁴¹

The hand, of course, is Gino's, and in a rare burst of spontaneity, Philip cavorts with this Italian and his band of friends. More than ever before, he is intoxicated by sheer sensation:

Again he would be enchanted by the kind, cheerful voices, the laughter that was never vapid, and the light caress of the arm across his back.⁴²

Even Philip's habitual sense of beauty expresses itself in a new, light-hearted way:*

"Here, we find what asses we are, for things go off quite easily all by themselves. My hat, what a night! Did you ever see a really purple sky and really silver stars before?"⁴³

Through his association with Gino and his adventures in Italy, Philip develops the impoverished heart he has brought with him from Sawston. First of all, he overcomes his own snobbery, in order to befriend Gino, who comes from a lower social class, as well as a foreign nation. Their first conversation has been immensely awkward:

Signor Carella...attempted to talk, and, looking politely towards Philip, said, "England is a great country. The Italians love England and the English".

Philip, in no mood for international amenities, merely bowed...⁴⁴

However, by the end of Philip's visit, this initial discomfort has vanished:

The two men parted with a good deal of genuine affection. For the barrier of language is sometimes a blessed barrier, which only lets pass what is good. Or - to put it less cynically - we may be better in new clean words, which have never been tainted by our pettiness or vice. Philip, at all events, lived more graciously in Italian, the very phrases of which entice one to be happy and kind.⁴⁵

* cf. Forster, Maurice, p. 36. Maurice responds in a similar fashion to an initial meeting with Risley: "Looking up, he noticed the night. He was indifferent to beauty as a rule, but 'what a show of stars!' he thought."

Clearly, this socially unacceptable, unconventional relationship has been a success; Philip's visit to Monteriano leaves him more sympathetic to the feelings of others than ever before. As he leaves the country, he communes briefly with all of humanity:

It was as if they were travelling with the whole world's sorrow, as if all the mystery, all the persistency of woe were gathered to a single fount.⁴⁶

After Gino's baby dies, Philip feels personally responsible for what has happened:

He and no one else must take the news to Gino...It was his own fault, due to acknowledged weakness in his own character. Therefore he, and no one else, must take the news to Gino.⁴⁷

In a dramatic scene, Philip confronts the Italian with the sad story of the child's death. The nature of the relationship between the two men stands more fully revealed than earlier: it involves a combination of physical torture, sexual attraction and idealism. Forster describes the fight that ensues in considerable detail, emphasizing Gino's brutality, and Philip's noble suffering:

The left hand came forward...It hovered before Philip like an insect. Then it descended and gripped him by his broken elbow...The whole arm seemed red-hot, and the broken bone grated in the joint, sending out shoots of the essence of pain.⁴⁸

Since Philip has come to Gino's house bearing a "vast apparatus of pride and pity and love",⁴⁹ he is able to

accept the brutal wrath of his comrade. His newfound human charity sustains him, even as he suffers:

Philip struck out with all the strength of his other arm...Then he was seized with remorse, and knelt beside his adversary and tried to revive him. He managed to raise him up, and propped his body against his own. He passed his arm around him. Again he was filled with pity and tenderness.⁵⁰

Philip's new virtues are not fully acknowledged by Forster until Caroline Abbott arrives to end the fight. He writes:

Philip was happy; he was assured that there was greatness in the world. There came to him an earnest desire to be good through the example of this good woman. He would try henceforward to be worthy of the things that she had revealed. Quietly, without hysterical prayers or banging of drums, he underwent conversion. He was saved.⁵¹

In this scene, "Caroline plays the role of mother to both men."⁵² She separates the fighting men, like a motherly referee, and pacifies them with the dead baby's milk:

"That milk", said she, "need not be wasted. Take it, Signor Carella, and persuade Mr. Herriton to drink".

Gino obeyed her, and carried the child's milk to Philip. And Philip obeyed also and drank.⁵³

From this point in the novel onward, Philip feels that Caroline's goodness has prompted him to love her. However, his feelings for her are only minimally physical:

He had reached love by the spiritual path: her thoughts and her goodness and her nobility had moved him first, and now her whole body and all its gestures had become transfigured by them.⁵⁴

He actually has to be reminded about sexual desire by the sensual Gino:

The beauties that are called obvious - the beauties of her hair and her voice and her limbs - he had noticed these last; Gino, who never travelled any path at all, commended them dispassionately to his friend.⁵⁵

Philip's feelings for Gino are more amorous than his responses to Caroline. His fight with the Italian provides him with a rare opportunity for physical contact, as well as the release of a variety of emotions, ranging from pity and tenderness, to hatred and remorse. On the way home from Italy with Caroline, Philip expresses his gratitude to this friend:

"I don't believe he even feels angry. I never was so completely forgiven. Ever since you stopped him killing me, it has been a vision of perfect friendship. He nursed me, he lied for me at the inquest, and at the funeral, though he was crying, you would have thought it was my son who had died".⁵⁶

A moment later, Philip realizes that he feels bound to Gino by "ties of almost alarming intimacy".⁵⁷ When Caroline admits the strength of her own feelings for Gino, Philip hears himself spontaneously remark:

"Rather! I love him too!"⁵⁸

Forster writes:

In that terrible discovery Philip managed to think not of himself but of her. He did not lament. He did not even speak to her kindly.⁵⁹

Consciously, he is trying to save Caroline from embarrassment; an Englishwoman's love for a lower-class Italian was nearly as socially unacceptable at this time as a homosexual affair.* Unconsciously, however, Philip is expressing his own feelings. "He loves Gino just as Caroline does", states Stone, commenting on this passage.⁶⁰ And Caroline's love for Gino is firmly rooted in sexual passion. Says she:

"He's not a gentleman, nor a Christian, nor good in any way...But because he's handsome, that's been enough."⁶¹

In leaving Gino behind in Italy, both Caroline and Philip lose sight of the passionate, sensual lives that might have been theirs. Caroline recalls her Sawstonian duties; she tells Philip:

"You forget my father; and even if he wasn't there, I've a hundred ties: my district - I'm neglecting it shamefully - my evening classes, the St. James' - "⁶²

Philip tries to remember the lesson he has learnt in Monteriano; he pleads with Caroline to leave Sawston with him.⁶³ However, he does not have the strength of

* In the third chapter of this thesis, this topic is discussed at length.

character necessary to leave his repressive environment. Without Caroline to encourage him, he will sink back into the same dull life, "With a dozen relatives around (him)".⁶⁴ In the last chapter of the novel, he stares into his mirror with as much uncertainty as he experienced before his journey:

He was convalescent, both in body and spirit, but convalescence brought no joy. In the looking-glass at the end of the corridor he saw his face haggard, and his shoulders pulled forward by the weight of the sling. Life was greater than he had supposed, but it was even less complete. He had seen the need for strenuous work and righteousness. And now he saw what a very little way those things would go.⁶⁵

This passage reveals that Philip has gained essential wisdom, but earthly happiness still lies far beyond his reach. "All of the wonderful things had happened," Forster tells us.⁶⁶ Back in England, Philip will have only his dreams, his aesthetic sensibilities, and his memories to comfort him.

Rickie Elliott of The Longest Journey is a hero of much the same ilk. Like Philip, he must lead a highly active intellectual life, in order to compensate for unsatisfactory aspects of his actual existence. He is depicted as an intense youngster, given to tears and childish dramatics. From a very early age, he too must 'get via dream, imagination, or wishful thinking what he cannot get in reality'. In a flashback to Rickie's

childhood, we learn of his loneliness:

the only person he came to know at all
was himself.⁶⁷

Thus, like the adolescent Philip, he must invent amusements for himself. One of Rickie's earliest recollections is of playing a solitary game called Halma. After playing, he would sob for loneliness, and ask himself:

Shall I ever have a friend?...I don't
see how. They walk too fast. And a
brother I shall never have.⁶⁸

In addition to playing games, Rickie dreams nightly. By the time he reaches Cambridge, he still needs his games, although they have become more sophisticated:

Those elms were Dryads - so Rickie
believed or pretended, and the line
between the two is subtler than we
admit.⁶⁹

Like Philip, Rickie constantly transfigures reality. For him, the stars are "gods and heroes, virgins and brides, to whom the Greeks have given their names".⁷⁰ One day, he stares at Agnes and Gerald, "locked in each other's arms",⁷¹ in much the same way that Philip stared at Caroline while she embraced Gino in Angels. Writes Forster:

It was the merest accident that Rickie
had not been disgusted. But this he
could not know.⁷²

Like Philip, Rickie is rarely sexually aroused, or capable of actualizing his passions. He, too, prefers

to remain a viewer of life whenever possible. He does not recognize his own passivity; as he watches the lovers, he thinks that his childhood fantasy-life has come to an end, and that something vital is happening to him. He triumphantly asks:

"When real things are so wonderful,
what is the point of pretending?"⁷³

In actual fact, Rickie has merely "deflected his enthusiasms":⁷⁴ now he transfigures people, instead of stars and trees. For him, the lovers become "gods of pure flame", and a "riot of fair images" runs through his head, whenever he observes them.⁷⁵

Like other Forsterian aesthetes, Rickie perceives symbols where he should be seeing individuals. This is most apparent in his attitude towards Agnes Pembroke.

Thinks Rickie:

Agnes wrote like the Sibyl; her sorrowful face moved over the stars and shattered their harmonies; last night he saw her with the eyes of Blake, a virgin widow, tall, veiled, consecrated, with her hand stretched out against an everlasting wind.⁷⁶

Clearly, Rickie never sees her unique qualities; he merely categorizes her in terms of great masterpieces. Those who love Rickie try to warn him of the error of his ways. For example, Ansell begs him to keep his mind on what is real:

"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?"⁷⁷

Rickie's subjective perceptions deceive him continually. His misplaced idealism causes him to "believe that every human being is a moving wonder of supreme interest and tragedy and beauty".⁷⁸ When Rickie marries Agnes, Ansell says that "he has at last hung all the world's beauty on a single peg".⁷⁹ But Agnes is in reality, not a symbol of beauty or of anything else: she is merely herself.

Rickie's desire to transform everything into art certainly impoverishes his personal life. On the other hand, these same urges lead to the development of his creative abilities. Rickie's need for a world more perfect than his own causes him to take possession of a "secluded dell... a kind of church - a church where indeed you could do anything you liked, but where anything you did would be transfigured".⁸⁰ In the security of this dell, Rickie's imagination roams freely. Like Philip, Rickie is a dreamer, but his fantasies have tangible results. Rather than simply "seeing around things"⁸¹ like the earlier hero, Rickie records his impressions. Out of what he himself calls his "follies" come "a pile of stories, all harping on this ridiculous idea of getting into touch with Nature".⁸² Rickie is his uncle's "spiritual heir;⁸³ like Mr. Failing, he, too,

believes that the "hills and the trees are alive".⁸⁴ His stories and novels are his brain children, and give his life a posthumous significance. After his death, his relatives publish his works; soon there is an illustrated American edition of one of his books, as well as a collection of his stories.⁸⁵ Clearly, his artistic endeavours have not been in vain.

"Drudgery is not art, and cannot lead to it", Forster tells us at the beginning of The Longest Journey.⁸⁶ Rickie's desire to write plays a major role in his abandonment of a boring marriage and career. Supported by Stephen and Ansell who believe in his capabilities,⁸⁷ the uncertain young man eventually tries to make his life his own. Like Philip, Maurice, or Lucy, Rickie cannot succeed when he acts out of a sense of duty, or self-righteousness. His connection with the Pembrokes takes him away from the work and friends he loves; in Sawston, he lives under a "shadow of unreality".⁸⁸ As a teacher, he is restrained by Herbert; thus, his actions cease to be spontaneous. Comments Forster:

In his form, oddly enough, Rickie became a martinet...as a teacher, he was rather dull...⁸⁹

As his frustration increases, he burrows farther into the meaningless work:

It was as if some power had pronounced against him - as if by some heedless action, he had offended an Olympian god.

Like many another, he wondered whether the god might be appeased by work - hard, uncongenial work.⁹⁰

Like an exemplary Victorian, he applies himself to the mundane tasks before him with religious fervour:

No man works for nothing, and Rickie trusted that to him also benefits might accrue; that his wound might heal as he laboured, and his eyes recapture the Holy Grail.⁹¹

These hopes of Rickie's prove groundless; in Forster's novels, work without desire is futile. In Sawston, the home of Philip and Caroline, Rickie deteriorates: "the spiritual part of him proceed[s] toward ruin".⁹²

The epigraph^{9r} of The Longest Journey provides a clue as to how Rickie should spend his life. "Fratribus" is, in fact, the novel's major theme. At Cambridge, Rickie, Ansell and their friends enjoy a comradeship akin to that of Philip and Gino in Italy. In this environment, the lonely, lame Rickie blossoms:

In one year he had made many friends and learnt much, and he might learn even more...⁹³

In fact, his self-confidence grows daily in the liberal, supportive college. It is an ideal learning experience:

The tutors and resident fellows...treated with rare dexterity the products that came up yearly from public schools. They taught the perky boy that he was not everything, and the limp boy that he might be something...And they did everything with ease - one might also say with nonchalance, so that the boys noticed nothing, and received education, often for the first time in their lives.⁹⁴

Rickie takes particular pleasure in having rooms in college. They give him a sense of security for the first time in years:

He felt almost as safe as he felt once when his mother killed a ghost in the passage by carrying him through it in her arms. There were no ghosts now.⁹⁵

When Rickie is happy, he ceases to fantasize: at Cambridge, he sees reality instead of ghosts. Cambridge is, of course, presented by Forster as a more idyllic realm than Monteriano, since the school meant a great deal to him. It will be remembered that he lived at King's College for over forty years. In Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, he evokes the spirit of the school:

As Cambridge filled up with friends it acquired a magic quality. Body and spirit, reason and emotion, work and play, architecture and scenery, laughter and seriousness, life and art - these pairs which are elsewhere contrasted were there fused into one. People and books reinforced one another, intelligence joined hands with affection, speculation became a passion, and discussion was made profound by love.⁹⁶

Rickie's college at Cambridge possesses much of this magic quality. Thus, the novel opens with a scene of undergraduate bliss. Like Philip, Rickie finds his first whiff of freedom and stimulation intoxicating. The boys are simply sitting in their rooms, lighting matches, sipping tea, and discussing philosophical issues; the aura of insouciance and masculine informality

surrounding their gathering parallels that of Gino's world, and of Clouds Hill:

The fire-irons went flying and the buttered-bun dishes crashed against each other in the hearth. The ... philosophers were crouched in odd shapes on the sofa and table and chairs...⁹⁷

One remembers Forster's depiction of the "happy casualness" of Clouds Hill, where "there were no fixed hours for meals and no one sat down".⁹⁸ Despite this easy atmosphere, these societies are highly exclusive. Clouds Hill and fraternal Italy exclude all women; the brotherhood of Cambridge excludes women, the "beefy set",⁹⁹ and those who are "not saved".¹⁰⁰

The earth is full of tiny societies, and Cambridge is one of them. All the societies are narrow...¹⁰¹

The fraternity of Cambridge recalls Forster's dreamed-of "aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky".¹⁰² Those who have been irreparably petrified by conventions do not belong in these superior groups of people. Thus, when Agnes enters the room, the boys flee "like mists before the sun",¹⁰³ and Ansell refuses to acknowledge her existence. Similarly, Herbert is pushed into a gutter by some boisterous undergraduates as he hurries to Rickie's rooms; when he arrives, he chokes on some coffee-grounds the casual, absent-minded Rickie has inadvertently left in the cup.

Clearly, the stuffy Pembrokes do not belong in the lively, chaotic environment of Cambridge.

For those whom Cambridge does not reject, however, the rewards are great. Just as Philip finds Gino in Italy, Rickie discovers Stuart Ansell at college. This friendship proves to be one of the most satisfactory experiences of his life. Ansell, with his Bloomsburian standards, conscientiously instructs his friend in the values of truth and affection. Like Maurice and Clive, however, these two boys suffer because of the unconvencionality of their relationship. Like most of us, Rickie needs public sanction for his private acts: thus, he wishes there was a "friendship office where the marriage of true minds could be registered".¹⁰⁴ Just as Philip's friendship with Gino functions only in Italy, so Rickie and Ansell can be together freely only in the isolation of Cambridge.

In one passage of the novel that sounds surprisingly like Maurice, Rickie muses:

Nature has no use for us: she has cut her stuff differently. Dutiful sons, loving husbands, responsible fathers - these are what she wants, and if we are friends, it must be in our spare time... a few scraps of poetry is all that survives of David and Jonathan.¹⁰⁵

When Rickie allows himself to act of his own free will, he and Ansell cavort like lovers. Alone in a meadow, the two boys resemble Maurice and Clive on a Cambridge

spree:

'Don't go', Ansell said idly. 'It's much better for you to talk to me'.

'Lemme go, Stewart'.

'It's amusing that you're so feeble. You - simply - can't-get-away. I wish I wanted to bully you'.

Rickie laughed, and suddenly over-balanced in the grass. Ansell, with unusual playfulness, held him prisoner. They lay there for a few minutes, talking and ragging aimlessly.¹⁰⁶

In commenting upon this scene, Frederick Crews writes:

Rickie is not, strictly speaking, a homosexual, but his physical handicap and his effeminacy are such that the more genuine strains of homosexuality in Ansell strike a more responsive chord in him.¹⁰⁷

Whether Rickie is homosexual or not, he is indeed a lover of friendship rather than marriage. While at Cambridge, he cherishes a passage from Shelley's Epipsychidion, in which the imprisoning aspects of marriage are delineated. This poem provides the novel with its title, and Rickie with the seeds of a philosophy:

I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the world a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, command
To cold oblivion, - though it is the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, - and so

With one sad friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go'.¹⁰⁸

Instead of marrying, Rickie decides to "love everyone equally".¹⁰⁹ Ansell, whose homosexuality is portrayed, scoffs at the concept of loving all of mankind, but he certainly approves of his friend's decision not to marry. Warns he:

You are not a person who ought to marry at all. You are unfitted in body: that we once discussed. You are also unfitted in soul: you want and 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.¹¹⁰

Of course, Rickie soon changes his mind about marriage, and proposes to Agnes Pembroke. Two years after marking "very good" in the margin of his copy of Shelley's poem, he turns to it again, but with a very different attitude:

This afternoon it seemed a little inhuman. Half a mile off two lovers were keeping company where all the villagers could see them. They cared for no one else; they felt only the pressure of each other, and so progressed, silent and oblivious, across the land. He felt them to be nearer to the truth than Shelley.¹¹¹

With these words, Forster reveals his own awareness of the pleasures of a happy love relationship. However, in his portrayal of Rickie's marriage, he delineates the latent horrors of wedlock, for those who are unsuited to it. The young couple's only moment of real passion

occurs before their wedding:

Rickie's vision had been granted him three years before, when he had seen his wife and a dead man clasped in each other's arms. She was never to be so real to him again.¹¹²

The deformed, lame child these two bring into the world is an emblem of their mutual failure, and Rickie vows to pay heed to "the lesson he had learnt so glibly at Cambridge...; no child should ever be born to him again".¹¹³

When compared to the tremulous physicality of Ansell and Rickie at Cambridge, the relations of Agnes and Rickie seem barren -- despite the fact that they have a child*. Rickie lacks the assertive qualities Agnes once appreciated in Gerald; he does not know how to "keep his wife in line".¹¹⁴ As for her own responses, they have been limited by early training. Like Clive's wife in Maurice, or Rickie's own mother, Agnes is reticent:

Rickie valued emotion...because it is the only final path to intimacy. She, ever robust and practical, always discouraged him. She was not cold; she would willingly embrace him. But she hated being upset, and would laugh or thrust him off when his voice grew serious.¹¹⁵

The conversations between the married couple soon become dull and lifeless. Writes Forster:

* cf. Wilfred Stone, The Cave And The Mountain: A Study of E.M. Forster (California: Stanford Univ. Press 1966) p. 193: "When a child is born, the event seems as improbable as one of the book's sudden deaths".

The tone of their marriage life was soon set. It was to be a frank good-fellowship, and before long Rickie found it difficult to speak in a deeper key.¹¹⁶

Agnes effectively cuts Rickie off from the stimulating dialogues he shared with Ansell as a Cambridge undergraduate, and jealously resents any of his efforts to maintain contact with his old friend. Within a very short space of time, Rickie is isolated in a spiritual wasteland, and the grim aspects of marriage depicted in Shelley's poem are fully realized.

Throughout the courtship and marriage of Rickie and Agnes, Ansell warns his friend constantly of the dangers of the relationship. Crews is correct in assuming that Ansell is a homosexual. For example, his protestations at the time of the betrothal resemble those of a jealous suitor. The flurry of letters he writes indicates the intensity of his feelings, and Rickie responds, with an equal excitement. Even in the midst of his own happiness with Agnes, he writes his friend:*

This letter of yours is the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to me yet - more wonderful (I don't exaggerate) than the moment when Agnes promised to marry me...You've written to me, "I hate the

* Rickie's situation at this time is comparable to that of Clive Durham in Maurice. In both cases, a male companion is rejected, and an unsuitable wife accepted. Note also the similarity of the reactions of the friends. Both Ansell and Maurice become extremely resentful.

woman who will be your wife", and I write back, "hate her. Can't I love you both?"¹¹⁷

In truth, Rickie cannot love them both, and Ansell's frustrations mount. He sublimates his feelings to a hatred of all females, and the word "ladylike" becomes an insult on his lips:

'Damn these particular women...Their diplomacy was ladylike. They've caught Elliott in a most ladylike way...Agnes caught him and makes him believe that he caught her. She came to see me and makes him think that it is his idea. That is what I mean when I say that she is a lady'.¹¹⁸

According to him, women are incapable of the comradeship he worships:

'Men and women desire different things. Man wants to love mankind; woman wants to love one man. When she has him her work is over. She is the emissary of Nature, and Nature's bidding has been fulfilled. But man does not care a damn for Nature - or at least only a very little damn...'¹¹⁹

With these declarations, Ansell joins a long line of Forsterian misogynists, many of whom are homosexually inclined.

Rickie's marriage cuts him off from Stephen Wonham, the spirit of Wiltshire, as well as from Ansell, the high-priest of Cambridge. Guided by his wife, Rickie decides to consider Stephen to be "illicit, abnormal, worse than diseased":¹²⁰

He, too, came to be glad that his brother had passed from him untried, that the symbolic moment had been rejected. Stephen was the fruit of sin; therefore he was sinful. He, too, became a sexual snob.¹²¹

Rickie's attitude is ironic, in that he himself was a victim of prejudice, due to his "abnormal" lameness.¹²² In rejecting Stephen, Rickie refuses to acknowledge the brother for whom he longed desperately as a child, and his spiritual demise is complete. He knows he has denied "some eternal principle",¹²³ he feels that the "heart of all things" is hidden or a secret password forgotten.¹²⁴ After spending a year in bed with "a curious breakdown", he realizes the enormity of his crime.¹²⁵ Stephen's function in the novel is inordinately symbolic. Rickie is not alone in his attempt to interpret this Protean character's significance: one can imagine Forster, the other characters in the novel, and the reader, all drawing endless conclusions about Stephen. For Mrs. Failing, he is a selfish hero;¹²⁶ for Ansell, he is a multitude of things, including "an animal with just enough soul to contemplate his own bliss",¹²⁷ "a momentary contact with reality",¹²⁸ and a cause for a speech denouncing the Pembrokes and Sawston.¹²⁹ For Agnes, he is a reminder of Gerald, and of love. Indeed, he is the cause of speeches, deep reflection, and revelations whenever he appears.

Stephen Wonham is more symbol than character,

and clearly the product of the author's own rich store of fantasies. This nature-loving, free-living man springs from seventeen cloudless days of adulterous love in Sweden, and he preserves the spontaneity that surrounded his own birth throughout his life. In a novel filled with explorations into the nature and potentiality of human brotherhood, Stephen is a living embodiment of the ideals involved. Forster tells us, approvingly:

Stephen only held the creed of "here am I and there are you", and therefore class distinctions were trivial things to him, and life no decorous scheme, but a personal combat or a personal truce.¹³⁰

A "child of poetry and rebellion," Stephen stands beyond the pale of conventional morality. Forster states emphatically that "love for one person" is never to be the greatest thing Stephen knows.¹³¹ Like Shelley in Epipsychidion, Rickie's half-brother hates the idea of being possessed by another person. Says he:

"You can't own people...Being nothing much, surely I'd better go gently. For it's something rather outside that makes one marry, if you follow me: not exactly oneself."¹³²

The "something outside" is, of course, society, and Stephen eventually succumbs to its wishes, by marrying. Nonetheless, he manages to preserve both his personal freedom and his friendships. In the last scene of the novel, we catch sight of Stephen's pleasant

wife, and receive substantial evidence that Stephen has not changed. Stewart Ansell is asleep in the house; he is clearly a welcome and frequent guest. Furthermore, on this particular night, Stephen is busily initiating his child in his personal rites of spring. Like Eustace and Gennaro in Forster's The Story of A Panic, Rickie's half-brother loves to sleep out-doors, and he is determined his daughter will love it, too. Cries he to his wife:

"It is time that she learnt to sleep out...
If you want me, we're out on the hillside,
where I used to be."¹³³

As Stephen steps outdoors with his daughter in his arms, he confirms once again his connections with Pan, the god of woodlands and pastures, who also happens to be one of Forster's own favourite deities.

In the characterization of Stephen Wonham, Forster links the themes of paganism and comradeship.* Stephen's room is constructed on classical lines, and a picture of the Demeter Cnidos is its only decoration. Furthermore, Ansell provides us with the following vivid summation of Stephen's character:

Certain figures of the Greeks, to whom
we continually return, suggested him a
little. One expected nothing of him...
- Yet the conviction grew that he had

* This particular association of ideas is very common in the writings of Edward Carpenter, the ideologist of homosexuality and democracy.

been back somewhere - back to some table of the gods, spread in a field where there is no noise, and that he belonged forever to the guests with whom he had eaten.¹³⁴

Even in his love of alcohol, Stephen resembles a Greek hero, according to Forster. He writes:

Drink today is an unlovely thing. Between us and the heights of Cithaeron the river of sin now flows. Yet the cries still call from the mountain, and granted a man has responded to them, it is better he respond with the candour of the Greek.¹³⁵

In a cheerful mood, Stephen invites Rickie to drink with him. Here, Forster echoes his own earlier writing, for Stephen's bars resemble the democratic cafés of Italy, through which Gino conducted Philip. Stephen's joie de vivre matches Gino's perfectly, as does his spontaneous acceptance of the equality of all mankind. Playfully, he encourages the teetotalling Rickie:

'Slip out after dinner this evening, and we'll get thundering tight together... It'd do you no end of good. You'll get to know people - shepherds, carters -'
'He waved his arms vaguely, indicating democracy. 'Then you'll sing'.¹³⁶

Fortunately for Rickie, this appealing creature extends the hand of friendship in earnest. Far from the sterility of Sawston, the two men stand together for a moment in a world of their own creation:

The suburb was now wrapped in a cloud, not of its own making. Sigh after sigh passed along its streets to break against dripping walls. The schools, the houses were hidden, and all civilization seemed in abeyance. Only the simplest sounds, the simplest desires emerged.¹³⁷

In this rarefied atmosphere, Stephen beckons to Rickie in freshly-minted words of love:

"Come with me as a man", said Stephen, already out in the mist. "Not as a brother; who cares what people did years back? We're alive together, and the rest is cant. Here am I, Rickie, and there are you...Come, I do mean it. Come; I will take care of you, I can manage you".138

Vividly reminded of his beloved mother, Rickie accepts Stephen's invitation, and the two men depart at sunset. Their mood parallels that of Maurice and Alex at the conclusion of Maurice. However, unlike ^{those of} Maurice, the desires of Rickie remain unfulfilled. He dies, saving his friend's life, as well as his own soul: but earthly joys will never be his.

Like Philip in Where Angels Fear To Tread, Rickie's desires are frustrated. In a striking passage, Forster reveals the value he places on simple pleasures, and sums up the worth of his hero's existence. Due to their importance in terms of the entire novel, as well as Forster's other works, they must now be quoted at some length:

The soul has her own currency. She mints her spiritual coinage and stamps it with the image of some beloved face...But the soul can also have her bankruptcies...

There is, indeed, another coinage that bears on it not man's image but God's. It is incorruptible, and the soul may trust it safely; it will serve her beyond

the stars. But it cannot give us friends, or the embrace of a lover, or the touch of children, for with our fellow mortals it has no concern. It cannot even give the joys we call trivial - fine weather, the pleasures of meat and drink, bathing and the hot sand afterwards, running, dreamless sleep. Have we learnt the true discipline of a bankruptcy if we turn to such coinage as this? Will it really profit us so much if we save our souls and lose the whole world?¹³⁹

Questions about the values of salvation ring loud and clear in each of Forster's novels. We must now turn our attention to Lucy and Maurice, two Forsterian protagonists who live happily, and save their souls as well. Unlike Rickie and Philip, these two later characters are assured of satisfaction on earth by the conclusions of their respective stories.

In A Room With A View, Forster returns to the Italian setting of Where Angels Fear To Tread, and once again uses it to symbolize a place in which unconscious desires can be explored. Like Philip, Lucy attains self-knowledge only while she is away on vacation. On her first morning in Florence, old Mr. Emerson offers her a piece of advice:

"You stop here several weeks, I suppose?... Let yourself go. Pull out from the depths those thoughts that you do not understand, and spread them out in the sunlight and know the meaning of them."¹⁴⁰

This task, of course, presents nearly infinite problems to Lucy. As she wanders through the streets of Florence,

she begins to feel restless for the first time in her life. However, she still cannot recognize the exact nature of her desires:

'The world', she thought, 'is certainly full of beautiful things, if only I could come across them'.¹⁴¹

Forster subtly suggests that one of the things Lucy wants is sex, by making use of the same phallic imagery he employed in Where Angels Fear To Tread:*

Lucy desired more...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.¹⁴²

As the novel progresses, Lucy's constant repression of her feelings for George destroys her equilibrium. Like Rickie and Maurice, she becomes plagued by nightmares, and visions of ghosts in the dark.¹⁴³ At times, she despairs of controlling her feelings at all:

How would she fight against ghosts? For a moment the visible world faded away, and memories and emotions alone seemed real.¹⁴⁴

In Two Cheers For Democracy, Forster outlines the difficulties involved in dilemmas like Lucy's:

* cf. Forster, The Life To Come, "The Other Boat", p. 173: "A tang of sweat spread as he stripped and a muscle thickened up out of gold".

These mixed states are terrible for the nerves. That is the real drawback in them. Sensitive people...are vexed by messages from contradictory worlds, so that whatever they do appears to them as a betrayal of something good; they feel that nothing is worth attempting, they drop their hands, break off in the middle with a shriek, smash physical or spiritual crockery.¹⁴⁵

Even nervousness itself seems to add to Lucy's confusion. Instead of attempting to discover the cause of the nerves, she simply accepts them. In describing this situation, Forster presents us with one of his most cogent psychological analyses. He comments:

It is obvious enough for the reader to conclude, 'She loves young Emerson'. A reader in Lucy's place would not find it obvious. Life is easy to chronicle, but bewildering to practice, and we welcome 'nerves' or any other shibboleth that will cloak our personal desire. She loved Cecil; George made her nervous; will the reader explain to her that the phrases should have been reversed?¹⁴⁶

Lucy understands herself best when she plays the piano, and her unaffected love of her own talents endears her to us. Says Mr. Beebe:

"If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting - both for us and for her."¹⁴⁷

However, art can lead to self-deception, and a denial of passion, as well as clarity. A Room With A View resembles Forster's other novels, in that both the negative and positive aspects of possessing an artistic temperament are presented. As usual, Forster

emphasizes the dangers of a complete withdrawal into an aesthetic haven. Because Lucy is beautiful, and musical, she attracts the attention of Cecil Vyse. Like Philip and Rickie, Cecil transfigures people into works of art. Thus, he becomes Lucy's most appreciative critic. Thinks he:

Italy worked some marvel in her. It gave her light, and - which he held more precious - it gave her shadow. Soon he detected in her a wonderful reticence. She was like a woman of Leonardo da Vinci's...¹⁴⁸

By viewing Lucy continually as though she were a painting, he effectively cuts himself off from life.

In this happiest of Forster's novels, Lucy does, of course, eventually come to her senses, and break off her engagement to the unsuitable Cecil. However, her self-deception continues for some time, and her life becomes meaningless. Writes Forster:

She gave up trying to understand herself, and joined the vast armies of the benighted, who follow neither the heart nor the brain, and march to their destiny by catch-words.¹⁴⁹

Like Philip, Rickie, or Maurice, in a spirit of self-righteousness, Lucy decides to bury herself in hard work. As an Edwardian woman, she cannot easily become a lawyer, a teacher, or a stock-broker; thus, she dedicates herself to womanhood itself. In a moment of frustration, she vows to become emancipated:

She must be one of the women whom she
had praised so eloquently, who care
for liberty and not for men.¹⁵⁰

Paradoxically, the "women's liberation movement" constitutes imprisonment in Lucy's case, since her heart prompts her to marry George instead. "I might even share a flat for a little with some other girl", she tells her mother, obstinately denying her true feelings.¹⁵¹ Mrs. Honeychurch correctly deciphers the falsity of Lucy's plans; in a rare burst of anger, she cries:*

"And mess with typewriters and latch-
keys...And agitate and scream, and be
carried off kicking by the police.
And call it a Mission - when no one
wants you! And call it Duty - when
it means that you can't stand your
own home! And call it Work - when
thousands of men are starving with
the competition as it is!"¹⁵²

In contrast with Lucy's attempt to marry the respectable but limited Cecil, or to settle down to a career she does not want, stands her ever-growing relationship with the Emersons. These two men represent precisely the form of comradeship Forster's own soul yearned for. Democratic, unconventional, and at home in the open air, they continually reveal that they are capable of spontaneous gestures of affection towards the world, and each other. Wandering with them through the

* These words also represent a further example of Mrs. Honeychurch's prejudices against her own sex.
See Chapter I, above.

streets of Italy, Lucy learns to respond freely to her environment, for the first time in her life:

The pernicious charm of Italy worked on her, and instead of acquiring information, she began to be happy.¹⁵³

She also discovers the joys of democracy:

In Italy, where anyone who chooses may warm himself in equality, as in the sun...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.¹⁵⁴

"Personal intercourse" and "equality beside the man she loves" become her slogans, and she approaches a genuine mode of liberation.¹⁵⁵ Like Philip, in Italy she steps beyond the pale of civilized society, making friends with whomever she pleases. Thus, she becomes one of the few people at the Pension Bertolini to befriend the socially unacceptable Emersons.

Mr.

The Reverend Beebe, one of the most mysterious characters in Forster's fiction, also favours the unpopular Emersons.¹⁵⁶ Like Lucy, he repeatedly champions their cause. In an article entitled "The Homosexual Theme in A Room With A View", Jeffrey Meyers writes:

Beebe's latent homosexuality has been released and he has fallen in love with George.¹⁵⁷

Meyers' argument offers an interpretation of Beebe's peculiar feelings towards women as revealed in the

following semi-concealed lines of the novel:

Girls like Lucy were charming to look at, but Mr. Beebe was, from rather profound reasons, somewhat chilly in his attitude towards the other sex, and preferred to be interested rather than enthralled.¹⁵⁸

However, the work itself offers a different explication than Meyers'. As Lucy's engagement with Cecil disintegrates, Mr. Beebe rejoices. Writes Forster:

His belief in celibacy, so reticent, so carefully concealed beneath his tolerance and culture, now came to the surface and expanded like some delicate flower. 'They that marry do well, but they that refrain do better'.¹⁵⁹

In other words, a Christian belief in chastity motivates this well-intentioned rector. Since the evidence supporting Mr. Meyers' argument is, in the belief of this reader, flimsy, it would seem best to assume that Beebe is asexual rather than homosexual. In this case, Forster wrote what he wanted to write: a criticism of clerical virginity.

Nonetheless, Meyers is correct in assuming that A Room With A View contains homosexual overtones. In perusing the Sacred Lake scene of Chapter Twelve, most readers of Maurice and The Life To Come And Other Stories will be aware of the interlocking of the themes of brotherhood and homosexuality. Just as Gino has called to Philip, or Stephen to Rickie, so, too, Freddy impetuously beckons his male companions to steal away

with him:

'How d'ye do? Come and have a bathe'.¹⁶⁰

Part of the pleasure stems from leaving the ladies behind. Chuckles Mr. Beebe:

"Can you picture a lady who has been introduced to another lady by a third lady opening civilities with 'How do you do? Come and have a bathe?'"¹⁶¹

Despite the fact that Mr. Emerson prophesies the comradeship of male and female,¹⁶² the scene at hand clearly involves the brotherhood of men alone. In fact, women act as an inhibiting force in this instance. Like a naughty school-boy, Freddy thinks of Mrs. Honeychurch immediately after he makes his spontaneous proposal. He mumbles:

"I must - that is to say, I have to - have the pleasure of calling on you later on, my mother says, I hope".¹⁶³

Mr. Emerson dismisses these reservations as "drawing-room twaddle" suitable for a grandmother, and, like every child's dreamed-of parent, blesses the forthcoming romp.¹⁶⁴

As usual, Forster opposes pleasure and duty, happiness and the constraints of society. As the outing begins, Lucy's engagement to Cecil is perfunctorily considered by each of the men. Old Mr. Emerson pronounces the final verdict:

"Marriage is a duty".¹⁶⁵

The inference is clear: once again, Forster is suggesting that all too often, marriage is merely an enforced 'long journey', and that less possessive male relationships can be a jollier alternative. In a letter to T.E. Lawrence, Forster states this viewpoint more openly than in A Room With A View. He writes:

I think about a remark of mine which you once approved - It was about love, how over-rated and over-written it is, and how the relation one would like between people is a mixture of friendliness and lust.¹⁶⁶

The three men certainly partake of this pleasurable combination of emotions, as they swim and play in the lovely pool. As they shed their clothes, they abandon the restrictive world of laws and convention. Soon even Mr. Beebe captures the spirit of the frolic, and when it is over, Forster memorably summarizes its virtues:

It had been a call to the blood and to the relaxed will, a passing benediction whose influence did not pass, a holiness, a spell, a momentary chalice for youth.¹⁶⁷

Despite the inclusion of this male bathing scene, it must be emphasized that A Room With A View affirms heterosexual, married love. Since the publication of Maurice, the homosexual aspects of this novel have been exaggerated by critics who forget that Forster praises happy fellowship, wherever he finds it. Thus, the love between a man and a woman is as viable for him as the

love between two men. A brief summary of a posthumous story entitled "The Obelisk",¹⁶⁸ will verify this contention in a simple fashion. In this rather silly tale, an unhappy couple escape the bondage of marriage for a single afternoon. Beneath the sun and by the water, the man and the woman cavort with a pair of rugged sailors: soon we discover that both of them crave male lovers. Forster clearly relishes each of the escapades: he does not discriminate between the relationships on the basis of the sexes involved. A parallel attitude can be discerned in A Room With A View; he affirms the value of both George's romp in the pool with the men, and his eventual marriage. As for Lucy, according to Mr. Emerson, she must marry, or her life will be wasted. Only through George will she find "the tenderness, and the comradeship, and the poetry" for which she yearns.¹⁶⁹ At the novel's conclusion, we see that Mr. Emerson's prophecy has been fulfilled. Clearly, her tendency towards sublimating her passions to dreams, art, religion, or hard work has subsided, and her married life holds the promise of considerable happiness.

In Maurice, Forster once again charts a central character's progress from an existence based on wish-fulfilling fantasies to one rooted in the love of another person. At his first school, Maurice keeps up a pretence

of normalcy by adhering to what Forster calls "school-boy ethics".¹⁷⁰ He bullies those who are weaker than he is, and becomes popular for his "bravery".¹⁷¹ This illusory strength is Maurice's first source of comfort. In the privacy of his own home, however, his loneliness, confusion, and fear become immediately apparent. Like Rickie, at the age of fourteen, Maurice cries abnormally at the slightest provocation. He is subject to "childish collapses" into hysteria due to the inner conflict just swelling within him.*¹⁷² Like Rickie, he turns to the game of Halma for relief from the indefinable "great mass of sorrow" that troubles him continually. Rickie, as we have seen, longs for a brother at times like these; Maurice sobs for a garden boy named George, and becomes even more upset.⁺ These unsolicited wishes haunt Rickie and Maurice throughout their childhood. They are particularly prominent at night-time, which accounts for the fact that they are both afraid of the dark as children.

* Forster admits he, too, was a nervous youngster: "I was not a bad child but could be hysterical, pretentious, and detestable". cf. E.M. Forster, Marianne Thornton: A Domestic Biography (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1956) p. 305.

+ Forster himself "depended a good deal for company on the garden boys" (Ibid., p. 306). They were the only men he knew. In The Life To Come, Forster describes the friendship that exists between a gentleman's son and a garden boy in considerable detail. cf. "Ansell", in The Life To Come And Other Stories, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1972).

During sleep, the unconscious mind roams freely; Forster was aware that dreams represent some of our innermost thoughts. In Maurice, he notes:

Where all is obscure and unrealized the best similitude is a dream.¹⁷³

Thoughts of supernatural disturbances destroy the slumber of both Rickie and Maurice. Rickie calls frequently to his mother to kill a "ghost in the passage",¹⁷⁴ and Maurice Hall imagines that he sees "blots like skulls [falling] over the furniture".¹⁷⁵ Maurice's looking glass* and the streetlamp outside his window cast eerie shadows. He does not calm himself by calling to his mother; instead, he whispers "George, George", and the phantoms disappear.¹⁷⁶ Paradoxically, then, Maurice is most awake when he is sleeping. His dreams "become more real than anything else he knows".¹⁷⁷ His colourful, sensual desires receive their fullest expression in two particularly vivid visions:

In the first dream, he felt very cross. He was playing football against a non-descript whose existence he resented. He made an effort and the nondescript turned into George, that garden boy... George headed down the field toward him, naked and jumping over the woodstacks... and a brutal disappointment woke him up... it was somehow a punishment for something.

* Bonnie Finkelstein comments that "what Maurice fears is his double, or homo, in the mirror". Maurice, however, does not see himself reflected in the mirror; it is Philip that furtively regards his own face. cf. Bonnie Finkelstein, Forster's Women: Eternal Differences. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975) p. 80.

The second dream is more difficult to convey. Nothing happened. He scarcely saw a face, scarcely heard a voice say, "that is your friend", and then it was over, having filled him with beauty and tenderness. He could die for such a friend, he would allow such a friend to die for him; they would make any sacrifice for each other, and count the world nothing, neither death nor distance nor crossness would part them, because "this is my friend"...¹⁷⁸

The naked figure of George in the first fantasy referred to above represents unrestrained physical passion. Maurice's yearnings for a male lover fill him with a guilt he cannot understand, and his "resentment" in the dream mirrors his actual reaction when the garden boy gives notice.¹⁷⁹ The second dream depicts a spiritual love. As opposed to the naked body of the beloved in the earlier dream, the second image contains "scarcely... a face, scarcely... a voice". "Brutal disappointment" is replaced by a feeling of "beauty and tenderness". Here, Maurice craves an ideal Friend, and one is reminded of the belief that through the love of one person, one can love God. He thinks of Christ, and a "greek god, such as illustrates the classical dictionary"; clearly, he longs for perfection. His attitude towards the beloved resembles religious adoration: he expresses a willingness to sacrifice himself and "count the world nothing", if it proves necessary. As the novel unfolds, Maurice lives out the prophecies hidden

in these powerful, obscure images from his "secret life".¹⁸⁰ In loving Clive, he experiences the anger, guilt, and frustration of the first dream; in loving Scudder, he participates in the tranquil ecstasies symbolized by the second.

Forster tells us:

Maurice's secret life can be understood now; it was part brutal, part ideal, like his dreams.¹⁸¹

Maurice's dreams adhere to a curious pattern found throughout Forster's fiction. Whenever a potentially sexual relationship is repressed, there emerges a combination of physical torture, attraction, and idealism that is amply reflected in Maurice's fantasies. In Where Angels Fear To Tread, as we have seen, Gino is simultaneously cruel and beautiful, filling Philip with both contempt and tenderness. Similarly, in The Longest Journey, Rickie Elliott's relations with both Gerald Dawes and Stephen Wonham "the bully...who knocks one down",¹⁸² partake of this same mixture of emotions. For example, at public school, Rickie is exposed to Gerald's brutality. Forster carefully chronicles the tortures inflicted; Rickie suffers from "pinches, kicks, boxed ears, twisted arms, pulled hair, ghosts at night, inky books, befouled photographs".¹⁸³ When the two meet again years later, Rickie resents Gerald, much as Maurice feels "cross" when he faces the fleeing football

player of his first dream*. This resentment, however, soon turns into a strong physical attraction. As Rickie stares at Gerald, he observes his beauty longingly:

There stood a young man who had the figure of a Greek athlete and the face of an English one. He was fair and clean-shaven, and his colourless hair was cut rather short. The sun was in his eyes, and they, like his mouth, seemed scarcely more than slits in his healthy skin. Just where he began to be beautiful the clothes started. Round his neck went an up-and-down collar and a mauve-and-gold tie, and the rest of his limbs were hidden by a grey lounge suit, carefully creased in the right places.¹⁸⁴

Like Maurice in his dream, Rickie is unaware of his own feelings, but feels vaguely guilty. Just as Maurice feels that his thoughts of George are "somehow a punishment for something",¹⁸⁵ so Rickie associates physicality with sin:

He wondered whether after all...bodily beauty and strength were signs of the soul's damnation.¹⁸⁶

Soon, Rickie attempts to idealize his relationship with Gerald. Like Maurice, Rickie longs to make sacrifices for the man who has captured his affections. Thus, he offers Gerald a large sum of money as an outright gift.¹⁸⁷ Rickie's attempt to transcend ordinary

* The close connection between Maurice's dreams and The Longest Journey become more apparent when we remember that Gerald, too, is a football player.

reality is an immediate failure. "He muddles all day with poetry, and old, dead people", says Agnes, "and then tries to bring it into life".¹⁸⁸ Gerald dies suddenly at this point in the narration, and Rickie's obscure desires remain unfulfilled. It is interesting to note that Agnes also loves Gerald for his beauty and his cruelty. When they kiss, he grips her strongly until she whispers "Don't - you hurt" in a mixture of pain and pleasure.¹⁸⁹ Later, when Gerald speaks at length of the cruelties he inflicted on Rickie at public school, Agnes cannot suppress her enjoyment. Forster writes:

For this she scolded him well. But she had a thrill of joy when she thought of the weak boy in the clutches of the strong one.¹⁹⁰

Agnes' vicarious participation in Gerald's brutality indicates that in Forster's universe both males and females, homosexuals and heterosexuals can enjoy this combination of sex and violence. When we turn to A Room With A View, Forster's most "normal" novel, this becomes increasingly clear. Lucy's first major encounter with George occurs on the Piazza Signoria at twilight, while a man is being killed. This scene provides a vivid exemplification of Forster's habitual approach to the theme of sexual repression. He writes:

Two Italians had been bickering about a debt...They sparred at each other, and one of them was hit lightly upon the chest...he bent towards Lucy...and a stream of red came out...and trickled down his unshaven chin.¹⁹¹

Lucy falls into George's arm in a swoon at this point in the narration. Forster describes her faint in sexual terms:

Even as she caught sight of him he grew dim; the palace itself grew dim, swayed above her, fell on to her softly, slowly, noiselessly, and the sky fell with it...George Emerson still looked at her, but not across anything. She had complained of dullness, and lo! one man was stabbed, and another held her in his arms.¹⁹²

In this moment of pleasure and pain, Lucy and George become sexually and spiritually aware of one another. Because Lucy cannot accept her feelings, she sublimates them to thoughts about the brutality of the accident. She focuses her attention on her photographs which have been splattered with blood. In her guilt, she begs George to forget the incident but her unconscious concern with her own sexuality emerges. As the scene closes, she hopes George will "avert his eyes from her nakedness like the knight in the beautiful picture".¹⁹³

From this brief analysis of Forster's use of the theme of sexual repression, we can conclude that Maurice's vivid nocturnal universe functions as a comprehensive summary of what the author means when he

speaks of "brutality" and "idealism", two of his favourite subjects. Maurice's adolescent dreams are, in fact, one of the most interesting aspects of the novel, in terms of the rest of Forster's fiction. However, we must now turn our attention to other elements of Maurice's sublimated sexuality. Like Rickie, Philip, and Lucy, he continually seeks out new methods of satisfying desires he does not even know he possesses. Maurice differs from these other characters in that he does not have the world of art to console him. He does not appreciate painting, write short stories, or play the piano.* By the time he is sixteen, the childlike powers of vision that become the means of a vital imaginative life for Rickie and Philip have evaded him entirely. Writes Forster:

He had lost the precocious clearness of the child which transfigures and explains the universe, offering answers of miraculous insight and beauty.¹⁹⁴

Thus, he relies on cruder waking pleasures instead, although these provide meager nourishment, indeed:+

* cf. Forster, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, p. 15: As a youth, Goldie finds his only satisfaction in "the world of Ariel". With the exception of Maurice, Forster's male heroes resemble Goldie in their love of art.

+ Several reviews of Maurice criticize Forster for the "thin writing" of this particular part of the work. In my opinion, the author provides only the barest outline of Maurice's early sex in order to emphasize the intensity of the young homosexual's frustrations.

He longed for smut...Books: the school library was immaculate, but while he was at his grandfather's he came across an unexpurgated Martial...Thoughts: he had a dirty little collection. Acts: he desisted from these after the novelty was over...¹⁹⁵

As Maurice grows older, he enjoys working hard. Unlike Philip and Rickie, he becomes competent and successful in the business world: everyone considers him "the right sort of stock-broker".¹⁹⁶ However, he, too, has entered his profession mechanically. Upon graduating from college, he joins his father's firm without deliberation. Writes Forster, disapprovingly:

Maurice was stepping into the niche
that England had prepared for him. ¹⁹⁷

When he loses Clive, Maurice buries himself deeply in his work. Like the earlier protagonists, he attempts to compensate for his loneliness by "setting himself to acquire new habits", and "practicing a severe self-discipline".¹⁹⁸ Maurice resembles the earlier works in that again, Forster admires his hero's dedication. Like Rickie's efforts to appease angry gods at the time of his rejection of his brother, Maurice's work at this point in his development is both admirable and futile.

Comments Forster:

Maurice was doing a fine thing - proving on how little the soul can exist...He hadn't a God, he hadn't a lover - the two usual incentives to virtue. But on he struggled with his back to ease because dignity demanded it...struggles like his are the supreme achievements of humanity, and surpass any legends about Heaven.

No reward awaited him. This work,
like much that had gone before, was to
fall ruining.¹⁹⁹

Indeed, Maurice stands in danger of a spiritual demise akin to that of Rickie at Sawston school. He becomes a slave to an urban society that threatens to destroy his as yet unrealized individuality for ever. As he ignores his homosexuality and concentrates on his career, he runs the risk of complete fossilization. He muses:

Indoors was his place and there he'd
moulder, a respectable pillar of
society who has never had the chance
to misbehave.²⁰⁰

Only through breaking with the tradition of his father and, in fact, with all conventional morality, does Maurice manage to come alive. In this novel, Forster opposes pleasure and duty, and opts for the freedom of the great outdoors, rather than for the confines of city life, in his own characteristic way. Like Scudder, who originally came from a family of tradesmen, Maurice must learn to become an "untamed son of the woods", instead of remaining an ambitious business man in search of career "openings".²⁰¹ As he learns to accept his homosexuality, he sees his entire milieu in a new light. Forster seizes this opportunity to present us with one of his most effective condemnations of his own class. He writes:

The clientele of Messrs Hill and Hall was drawn from the middle-middle classes, whose highest desire seemed shelter - continuous shelter - ...everywhere and always, until the existence of earth and sky is forgotten, shelter from poverty and disease and violence and impoliteness; and consequently from joy...Maurice saw from their faces as from the faces of his clerks and his partners, that they had never known real joy. Society had catered for them too completely...²⁰²

A reader can only be pleased as Maurice turns away from this bourgeois complacency.

Maurice resembles Forster's early novels most specifically in its handling of the theme of comradeship. Like the other protagonists, Maurice must seek relief from the alienating aspects of his life by finding kindred spirits. Like Rickie, he first becomes aware of other people while at Cambridge:

Once inside college his discoveries multiplied. People turned out to be alive...as he strolled through the courts at night...there came by no process of reason a conviction that they were human beings with feelings akin to his own.²⁰³

In a short time, Clive Durham attracts his attention, and friendship becomes his chief objective:

To ascend, to stretch a hand up the mountainside until a hand catches it, it was the end for which he had been born.²⁰⁴

Soon, Clive and Maurice commune clandestinely in the fields, smoking Pan-like pipes; they bathe in a pool as radiant as the Sacred Lake of A Room With A View.²⁰⁵

Again and again, Forster emphasizes the rarity of their relationship. Just as Philip speaks more honestly in Italian than in his native tongue, so Clive and Maurice become more genuine when they speak in the language they create for themselves. Writes Forster:

No tradition overawed the boys. No convention settled what was poetic, what absurd. They were concerned with a passion that few English minds have admitted, and so created untrammelled. Something of exquisite beauty arose in the mind of each at last, something unforgettable and eternal...²⁰⁶

Maurice's subsequent relationship with Alec Scudder represents one final extension of this typically Forsterian opposition of comradeship and society. Cooped up in Clive's respectable county estate, Maurice longs for freedom and companionship:

He moaned, half asleep. There was something better than this rubbish, if only he could get to it - love - nobility - big spaces where passion clasped peace, spaces no science could reach, but they existed for ever, full of woods some of them, and arched with majestic sky and a friend.²⁰⁷

In order to obtain this happiness, Maurice must "live outside class, without relations or money".²⁰⁸ However, the lures of society cannot compare with the joys of companionship. Furthermore, the bonds between Maurice and Alec Scudder are actually strengthened by the opposition of their enemies. "Only a struggle twists

sentimentality and lust together into love", writes Forster.²⁰⁹ A game of cricket that "takes on the semblance of reality" presents the dynamics of the battle to be fought by the united outcasts better than anything else in the novel:

They played for the sake of each other and of their fragile relationship - if one fell the other would follow. They intended no harm to the world, but so long as it attacked, they must punish, they must stand wary, then hit with full strength, they must show that when two are gathered together majorities shall not triumph.²¹⁰

With these words, Forster truly moves us with his concept of the fellowship possible between men.

CHAPTER III

HOWARDS END, MAURICE, A PASSAGE TO INDIA:

SEX AND SNOBBERY

In order to relate Maurice to Forster's early novels, we compared the protagonists and discovered that Philip, Rickie, Lucy and Maurice begin with "undeveloped hearts", and undergo parallel experiences that help them to change. By contrast, in Howards End, Forster presents us with a protagonist who has a developed heart. Margaret Schlegel responds openly and maturely to a variety of situations. She is the most heroic Forsterian character, and is introduced in the following manner:

Away she hurried, not beautiful, not supremely brilliant, but filled with something that took the place of both qualities - something that is best described as a profound vivacity, a continual and sincere response to all that she encountered in her path through life.¹

Margaret acts: she has no time for muddling. Even during her childhood, she refused to be manipulated or molly-coddled:

[The Schlegels] had been left motherless when Tibby was born, when Helen was five and Margaret herself but thirteen...Mrs. Munt could without impropriety offer to go and keep house at Wickham Place. But her brother-in-law...had referred the question to Margaret, who with the crudity of youth had answered, 'No, they could manage much better alone'.²

Margaret's decision to reject the surrogate motherhood of Aunt Juley Munt is a wise one. This upper middle-class matron is as snobbish and meddlesome as Mrs. Herriton, Mrs. Failing, or Mrs. Durham. When she learns of Helen's unexpected engagement, she says:

"Margaret, if I may interfere, don't be taken by surprise. What do you think of the Wilcoxes? Are they our sort? Are they likely people?"³

Like the other women of her ilk, Mrs. Munt leads an empty life. She willingly offers her services to her niece.

'Dear, I have nothing to call me back to Swanage'. She spread out her plump arms. 'I am all at your disposal. Let me go down to this house whose name I forget, instead of you'.⁴

Very reluctantly, Margaret accepts her aunt's proposal. Her own desire to express her tolerant attitude towards her sister's action stands in direct contrast to Mrs. Munt's fretful, conventional appraisal of the situation. Thinks Margaret:

If she herself should ever fall in love with a man, she like Helen, would proclaim it from the house-tops, but as she only loved a sister, she used the voiceless language of sympathy.⁵

The visit to Howards End proves disastrous; Mrs. Munt's interference is completely destructive. On returning to Wickham Place, however, her utterly complacent attitude towards life is fully revealed:

[She] soon recovered...before many days were over she had forgotten the part played by her own imprudence in the catastrophe.⁶

Mrs. Munt plays an important role in the "catastrophe" of Tibby Schlegel's life, as well. Like Maurice, he is not only the youngest member of his family, but its only surviving male. Thus, he becomes an "Important One",⁷ and is inappropriately babied. When the Schlegel sisters reminisce about the early days of their childhood, they recall an "unsuccessful visit of Aunt Juley's, when she didn't realize that Tibby had grown up".⁸ In her foolish way, she forced the boy to sing a childish song every day for three weeks. Finally, he threw a temper tantrum, much like those of Maurice and Rickie on similar occasions. Like these other characters, Tibby is humiliated and over-protected by turns. At the time of the novel's beginning, he is "intelligent...but dyspeptic and difficile".⁹ Unlike his sisters, who are "independent young women",¹⁰ Tibby requires extra affection. It is usually provided by Margaret, who is eight years his senior. As his surrogate mother, she nurses him lovingly through a bad bout of hayfever:

[It] had worried him a good deal all night...The only thing that made life worth living was the thought of Walter Savage Landor, from whose Imaginary Conversations [Margaret] had promised to read at frequent intervals during the day.¹¹

Predictably, Tibby's relations with his sisters are unstable. As a substitute mother, Margaret "cannot bear her brother to be scolded".¹² She tries to encourage a peaceful association between Helen and Tibby:

It pleased Margaret to hear her brother and sister talking. They did not get on overwell as a rule. For a few moments, she listened to them, feeling elderly and benign.¹³

Helen resents her brother's dependence on the older sister, much as Kitty and Ada tire of hearing Mrs. Hall coddling Maurice. In a letter written from Howards End, Helen states:

Really, Tibby is too tiresome, he starts a new mortal disease every month...it seems hard that you should give up a visit to hear a school boy sneeze... Men like the Wilcoxes would do Tibby a power of good...¹⁴

Occasionally, Margaret joins her sister in teasing Tibby. His effeminate gestures and thoughtlessness annoy both of them. He warms a teapot "almost too deftly", sighs, and wears his hair long.¹⁵ The girls cannot refrain from criticizing him:

'All right, Auntie Tibby', called Helen, while Margaret, thoughtful again, said: 'In a way, I wish we had a real boy in the house - ...'
'So do I', said her sister. 'Tibby only cares for cultured females singing Brahms!'¹⁶

At other times, the girls respect Tibby. When they are in trouble, they turn to him for advice, since he is,

indeed, the man of their household. Helen's pregnancy leads both sisters to Tibby's door. Like Ada and Kitty, their feelings towards their brother fluctuate continually.

As for Tibby himself, like Philip Herriton and other Forsterian males, he has been overwhelmed by the women in his family. In his discontent, he experiences vague longings for rebellion. The Schlegel sisters have been so intensely concerned with personal relationships that they have sapped their brother's interest:

He had never been interested in human beings, for which one must blame him, but he had had rather too much of them at Wickham Place...Ought Margaret to know what Helen knew the Basts to know? Similar questions had vexed him from infancy...¹⁷

Unlike Maurice, Tibby never learns to love. Ultimately, he resembles Philip, Rickie, Cecil Vyse and Clive Durham more than Maurice, in that he often escapes into the worlds of art and thought. He differs from these others, however, in that he does not even enjoy fleeting moments of comradeship. His college days do not "awaken" him to the beauty of friendship:

His Oxford remained Oxford empty, and he took into life with him, not the memory of a radiance, but the memory of a colour scheme.¹⁸

Near the end of the novel, Forster suggests that Tibby's development has been irrevocably stunted. He stands in complete contrast to his passionate, involved sisters:

The years between eighteen and twenty-two, so magical for most, were leading him gently from boyhood to middle age. He had never known young-manliness, that quality which warms the heart till death ...He was frigid, through no fault of his own, and without cruelty.¹⁹

Tibby's coldness can be viewed as an inability "to connect".* In the light of the novel's epigraph,⁹⁵ this is a serious failing, indeed. Margaret Schlegel's personal creed embodies the central theme of Howards
End:

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.²⁰

The first link in the exalted chain of connections envisaged by Margaret is sexuality. The "beast" symbolizes sex without love, and the "monk" represents prudery. Margaret's words reflect a statement of Mr. Emerson's in A Room With A View:

Man has to pick up the use of his functions as he goes along - especially the function of Love...I only wish poets would say this too: that love is of the body: not the body, but of the body. Ah! the misery that would be saved if we confessed that! Ah for a little directness to liberate the soul!²¹

* The use of the word "frigid" suggests that he is both sexually and emotionally inadequate.

Both Margaret and Mr. Emerson act as the mouthpieces for Forster when they speak of man's obligation to acknowledge sex. Bonnie Finkelstein defines this aspect of Forster's thinking accurately, when she writes:

Each person must accept sexuality internally by connecting his or her own "beast" side with his or her own "monk" side.²²

In his discussion of Howards End, Lionel Trilling observes:

The sexual theme plays through the book, lightly, without much pressure ...but with great seriousness. The great fact about the Wilcoxes is that which D.H. Lawrence saw, the fact of sexual deficiency.²³

The sexual lack is most apparent in Henry Wilcox. Middle-aged and twice married, he is as confused as the adolescent Maurice Hall. In reading the following passage, one remembers the public-school mentality defined in the early novels:

Outwardly, [Henry] was cheerful, reliable, and brave; but within, all had reverted to chaos, ruled, as far as it was ruled at all, by an incomplete asceticism. Whether as a boy, husband, or widower, he had always the sneaking belief that bodily passion is bad...²⁴

Like Maurice, Henry's excellent face and figure give him an aura of strength and attractiveness. Margaret, Forster tells us, finds him appealing:

His complexion was robust, his hair had receded but not thinned, the thick moustache and the eyes that Helen had compared to brandy-balls had an agreeable menace in them...²⁵

Only a closer examination of his physiognomy reveals its symbolic weaknesses:

His face was not as square as his son's, and, indeed, the chin, though firm in outline, retreated a little, and the lips, ambiguous, were curtailed by a moustache...²⁶

Henry's weak mouth resembles Philip's, of whose face Forster writes:

Below the nose and eyes all was confusion, and those people who believe that destiny resides in the mouth and chin shook their heads when they looked at him. ²⁷

His moustache, however, is identical to the one Maurice wears. The "Episode of Gladys Olcott" deserves to be quoted at some length:

Now Maurice, though he did not know it, had become an attractive young man...He was heavy but alert, and his face seemed following the example of his body. Mrs. Hall put it down to his moustache - 'Maurice's moustache will be the making of him' - a remark more profound than she realized. Certainly the little black line of it did pull his face together, and show up his teeth when he smiled...
He turned his smile on Miss Olcott - it seemed the proper thing to do...he pressed her little hand between his own...His touch revolted her. It was a corpse's.²⁸

In addition to the light this scene sheds on Maurice's deeply rooted homosexuality, it reveals that he is

capable of mechanical and inappropriate sexual gestures.*
 The scene recalls Henry Wilcox's first efforts to kiss
 Margaret:

She was startled, and nearly screamed,
 but recovered herself at once...On
 looking back, the incident displeased
 her. It was so isolated. Nothing in
 their previous conversation had heralded
 it, and worse still, no tenderness had
 ensued.²⁹

Henry's kiss indicates the arbitrary quality of his
 sensuality; it is the kiss of a "beast", rather than
 that of a loving man.

As our study of the early fiction revealed, for
 Forster, a failure to connect sexually results in a
 lack of self-awareness. To put it in other terms, if
 sexuality is the primary link in the chain of connect-
 ions, a sense of one's own identity is the second. In
 his presentation of Henry Wilcox's sexual bewilderment,
 Forster remarks:

It was hard going in the roads of Mr.
 Wilcox's soul. From boyhood he had
 neglected them. 'I am not a fellow
 who bothers about my own inside'.³⁰

In his ignorance of his own psyche, Mr. Wilcox is
 representative of modern man. Writes Forster:

But man is an odd, sad creature as
 yet, intent on pilfering the earth,
 and heedless of the growths within
 himself. He cannot be bored about

* This kiss also foreshadows Clive's prudish kissing
 of Maurice, on his later visit to Penge.
 cf. Forster, Maurice, p. 153.

psychology. He leaves it to the specialist, which is as if he should leave his dinner to be eaten by a steam-engine. He cannot be bothered to digest his own soul.³¹

The Schlegel sisters, of course, differ from the Wilcoxes, in that they know they must explore their own natures. It is Helen who describes the Wilcox failing most succinctly:

Perhaps the little thing that says "I" is missing out of the middle of their heads, and then it's a waste of time to blame them...There are two kinds of people - our kind - who live straight from the middle of their heads, and the other kind who can't, because their heads have no middle...³²

It is precisely this sense of "I" that Maurice develops through his acceptance of his homosexuality. As he acknowledges his feelings for Clive, he gains essential self-knowledge. The pain he experiences after rejecting his friend's first avowal of affection leads him to a new internal integrity:

Thus it was that his agony began as a slight regret...It worked inwards, till it touched the root whence body and soul both spring, the 'I' that he had been trained to obscure, and realized at last, doubled its power and grew superhuman.^{33*}

* cf. Forster, Howards End, p. 306: "Charles...had a vague regret - a wish (though he did not express it thus) that he had been taught to say "I" in his youth".

"After this crisis", writes Forster, "Maurice became a man".³⁴ Even his countenance begins to reveal true strength, rather than an artificial manliness: everyone around him has "a sense of some change in his mouth and eyes and nose".³⁵ Most important of all, the "beast" and the "monk" within him finally merge into a new wholeness:

Now he had the highest gift to offer. The idealism and the brutality that ran through boyhood had joined at last, and twined into love...it was 'he', neither body or soul, nor body and soul, but 'he' working through both.³⁶

Later, Maurice tells Clive of his new internal connectedness:

A lot of things hadn't joined up in me that since have.³⁷

His friend, in turn, attests to his own heart's growth:

'I should have gone through life half awake if you'd had the decency to leave me alone. Awake intellectually, yes, and emotionally in a way; but here' - He pointed with his pipe stem to his heart...³⁸

Maurice, in fact, does not begin to understand himself until his relationship with Clive forces him to consider his homosexuality. On the other hand, Margaret of Howards End has made many "connections" before her story opens; unlike Maurice with his "slow nature",³⁹ she is capable of drawing sound conclusions from meager data. She is sure of both her own sexuality and the main characteristics of her temperament:

She does understand herself. She has some rudimentary control over her own growth.⁴⁰

This self-control is of central importance in Forster's philosophy, and it precedes the ability to understand others. He places one of his most comprehensive expressions of this creed in the mouth of Clive Durham, who discovers it through studying Plato:

'To make the most of what I have'. Not to crush it down, not vainly to wish that it was something else, but to cultivate it in such ways as it will not vex either God or Man.⁴¹

In a note about Maurice, Forster states that both Margaret and Maurice are working at this same task. They must "connect up and use all the fragments they are born with".⁴² Because Margaret is so much more in command of herself than Maurice from the very beginning of her story, however, she can devote herself much more readily to the difficulties of others. Maurice, of course, is struggling with fragments that are much "more scanty and bizarre than Margaret's" as Forster himself points out;⁴³ nonetheless, one feels that it is essentially his obtuseness that holds him back, whereas her sensitivity sends her hurtling forward.

Howards End opens with an account of Helen's brief engagement to Paul Wilcox, "a young man out of the unknown".⁴⁴ Like Lilia in Where Angels Fear To Tread, Helen seizes the first opportunity for love that

presents itself:

A man in the darkness, he had whispered
'I love you' when she was desiring love.⁴⁵

In her eagerness for passion and romance, she meets Paul "halfway, or more than halfway".⁴⁶ Forster's comment on this incident reveals his desire to place "these chance collisions of human beings"⁴⁷ in perspective:

Our impulse to sneer, to forget, is at root a good one. We recognize that emotion is not enough, and that men and women are personalities capable of sustained relations, not mere opportunities for an electrical discharge. Yet we rate the impulse too highly. We do not admit that by collisions of this trivial sort the doors of heaven may be shaken open.⁴⁸

Margaret echoes her creator's qualified approval of physical love when she tells Helen:

"I understand...at least, I understand as much as ever is understood of these things".⁴⁹

Margaret is aware of both the potency and superficiality of flirtations like Paul's and Helen's; she has been the victim of sudden passion herself:

And she had often 'loved', too, but only so far as the facts of sex demanded; mere yearnings for the masculine, to be dismissed with a smile.⁵⁰

When she learns of her husband's shabby treatment of Jacky Bast, she reminds us of yet another crucial link in the chain of connections. In addition to self-knowledge, one must become aware of the existence of

others. Clearly, sex itself is not enough; one must be expressing love:

Far more mysterious than the call of sex to sex is the tenderness that we throw into that call; far wider is the gulf between us and the farmyard than between the farmyard and the garbage that nourishes it.⁵¹

Henry assumes that as a woman, Margaret cannot understand "the temptations that lie round a man".⁵² He gives her a standard explanation of his deed:

"Cut off from decent society and family ties, what do you suppose happens to thousands of young fellows overseas? Isolated. No one near."⁵³

Both Schlegel sisters are as vulnerable to "the call of sex to sex" as Henry is. Like most single women, they, too, have experienced profound moments of loneliness. Just as Margaret's conversation with Henry ends, Forster reminds us that a woman's sexual appetites are as great as a man's:

Margaret looked intently at the butler. He, as a handsome young man, was faintly attractive to her as a woman - an attraction so faint as scarcely to be perceptible, yet the skies would have fallen if she had mentioned it to Henry.⁵⁴

Henry's seduction of Jacky in Howards End parallels a sexual act of Maurice's father's, which is referred to several times in the posthumous novel. Forster's judgment of the sexuality of Mr. Hall senior is easily understood, unlike his interpretations of

Maurice's love affairs:

Mr. Hall senior had neither fought nor thought; there had never been any occasion; he had supported society and moved without a crisis from illicit to licit love.⁵⁵

Like Mr. Hall's, Henry's escapade has been meaningless, because it has made no demands upon him. It has not required him to develop, or to provide tenderness for another human being. "I have been through hell", says Henry, but Margaret knows that this is untrue:*

Gravely she considered this claim. Had he? Had he suffered tortures of remorse, or had it been, 'There! that's over. Now for respectable life again'? The latter, if she read him rightly... Henry was anxious to be terrible, but had not got it in him. He was a good average Englishman, who had slipped.⁵⁶

Both Henry and Mr. Hall fail to make important connections. Thus, even their attempts at intimacy remain trivial; they are mere "transient grossness",⁵⁷ rather than the beginnings of genuine personal commitments to others.

In both Howards End and Maurice, Forster struggles towards a viable approach to human sexuality. In a note about the latter work, he reveals the intensity of his interest in the morality of sex, particularly when homosexuals are involved. He queries:

* Contrast with Leonard's true remorse after he sleeps with Helen.
cf. Forster, Howards End, pp. 294-8.

Is it ever right that such a relationship should include the physical? Yes - sometimes. If both people want it and both are old enough to know what they want - yes. I used not to think this, but now I do. Maurice and Clive would have been wrong. Maurice and Dicky more so. Maurice and Alec are all right, some people might never be right.⁵⁸

Paradoxically, his conclusions in the former novel are much more definitive than in the posthumous work, where it is a primary concern. In The Longest Journey, Rickie discusses his own writing with his aunt:

'What is the long story about, then?'
 'About a man and a woman who meet and are happy'.
 'Somewhat of a tour de force, I conclude'.
 He frowned. 'In literature we needn't intrude our own limitations'.⁵⁹

Lionel Trilling correctly refers to Howards End as "Forster's masterpiece";⁶⁰ this is the work that best verifies Rickie's conjecture about the possibilities of art. Here, Forster effectively demonstrates that a homosexual author can deal successfully with heterosexual relationships. By contrast, his treatment of the theme of homosexual love in Maurice is at times both tortured and ambiguous. In a letter to Forster, dated 12 March 1915, Lytton Strachey writes:

I don't understand why the copulation question should be given so much importance. It's difficult to distinguish clearly your views from Maurice's sometimes, but so far as I can see, you go much too far in your disapproval of it.⁶¹

This criticism is particularly applicable to the presentation of the relationship between Maurice and Clive. Since Forster fails to distance himself sufficiently from his protagonist, Clive remains a sympathetic character only as long as Maurice loves him. The Cambridge intellectual is a practitioner of a "high-minded homosexuality";⁶² due to his Platonic ideals, his friendship with Maurice involves very little sex:

It had been understood between them that their love though including the body, should not gratify it, and the understanding had proceeded - no words were used - from Clive.⁶³

Maurice's first attempt to evaluate this relationship occurs shortly after the idyllic day the two boys spend together:

[One] afternoon he had a collapse. He remembered that Clive and he had only been together one day! And they had spent it careening about like fools - instead of in one another's arms!⁶⁴

Forster's subsequent comment is framed in terms that echo his remarks about the kiss of Helen and Paul in Howards End; here, however, he is much more cynical about sex:

Maurice did not know that they had thus spent it perfectly - he was too young to detect the triviality of contact for contact's sake...⁶⁵

Since this statement confirms Forster's note claiming that sex between Maurice and Clive would be "wrong", it would seem to represent the author's viewpoint.

In addition, this passage contains evidence of a positive judgment of the relationship as a whole:

Later on, when [Maurice's] love took second strength, he realized how well Fate had served him. The one embrace in the darkness, the one long day in the light and the wind were twin columns, each useless without the other.⁶⁶

Clive appears to be an eminently suitable companion for Maurice:

He educated Maurice, or rather his spirit educated Maurice's spirit, for they themselves became equal...Love had caught him out of triviality and Maurice out of bewilderment in order that two imperfect souls might touch perfection.⁶⁷

As the love between the two young men grows stronger, Forster's prose becomes over-charged with emotion and enthusiasm:

Clive knew that ecstasy cannot last, but can carve a channel for something lasting... If Maurice made love it was Clive who preserved it, and caused its rivers to water the garden...⁶⁸

Clive hopes that together, he and Maurice will make the crucial connection between the "beast" and the "monk", and Forster gives us no indication that this will not be the case; he continues to write in the same hyperbolic fashion:

When [the final darkness] descended they would at all events have lived more fully than either saint or sensualist, and would have extracted to their utmost the nobility and sweetness of the world.⁶⁹

Forster withholds his condemnation of Clive's

sexuality until the years the boys spend together draw to a close. During their last intimate conversation, Clive reveals his lack of vitality:

"To forget everything - even happiness. Happiness! A casual tickling of someone or something against oneself - that's all. Would that we had never been lovers! For then, Maurice, you and I should have lain still and been quiet."⁷⁰

Maurice's frustration with this "love such as only finer natures can understand"⁷¹ finally begins to emerge:

They lay side by side without touching. Presently Clive said, 'It's no better here. I shall go'. Maurice was not sorry, for he could not get to sleep either, though for a different reason, and he was afraid Clive might hear the drumming of his heart, and guess what it was.⁷²

In Greece, Clive meditates on his approaching heterosexuality on a prophetically bare stage:

He saw only dying light and a dead land. He uttered no prayer, believed in no deity and knew that the past was devoid of meaning like the present, and a refuge for cowards.⁷³

This imagery of death and sterility foreshadows Clive's marriage, and Forster's complete withdrawal of sympathy from Clive at the novel's conclusion. Clive's married life seems to represent a fate far worse than he deserves:

They united in a world which bore no reference to the daily, and this secrecy drew after it much else of their lives. So much could never be mentioned. He never saw her naked, nor she him. They

ignored the reproductive and the digestive functions...⁷⁴

After Clive's desertion of Maurice, the latter turns to Dickie Barry for relief from his loneliness and sexual frustration. Once again, Forster's attitude towards a given homosexual relationship appears to be ambivalent. Initially, he describes Dickie's carefree sensuality approvingly:

The boy, who had been to a dance before, remained asleep. He lay with his limbs uncovered. He lay unashamed, embraced and penetrated by the sun.⁷⁵

Since Dickie appeals to Maurice's aesthetic sensibilities as well as his passions, the relationship seems promising. Writes Forster:

The lips were parted, the down on the upper was touched with gold, the hair broken into countless glories, the body was a delicate amber. To anyone he would have seemed beautiful, and to Maurice who reached him by two paths he became the World's desire.⁷⁶

As Maurice explores his sexual proclivities, Forster continues to voice his approval:

Now, looking across at his son, [Mr. Hall] is touched with envy...For he sees the flesh educating the spirit, as his has never been educated, and developing the sluggish heart and the slack mind against their will.⁷⁷

Eventually, however, he withdraws his sympathy for Maurice's response to Dickie with a hyperbolic vehemence that parallels his sudden distaste for the platonic

relationship with Clive. There is no evidence to support the view that the following lines represent Maurice's feelings, and not Forster's, for no clearly authorial comments follow. Maurice's sexual desires suddenly degrade him:

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 very strong... 'Lust'. He said the word out loud...⁷⁸

One can only conclude that Forster's own uncertainties about the morality of homosexuality prevented him from writing a consistent novel.

The account of Maurice's love for Alex is presented with greater consistency. This affair begins with lust as well. This time, however, the relationship fulfills the promise made in Howards End, insofar as a "trivial collision" in the dark becomes a means of "opening the doors of heaven".⁷⁹ During Maurice's stay at Penge, Alex "appears to be haunting the premises"⁸⁰ As soon as Maurice sees him, his sexual appetites are aroused. He sees Scudder cavorting with two maids, on his way to Clive's house:

The girls were damned ugly, which the man wasn't; ...he stared at the trio feeling cruel and respectable... the man returned the stare furtively...⁸¹

Later, Maurice is subtly conscious of Alec's presence near the piano,⁸² and at the back of a brougham carrying

him to London.⁸³ As Maurice's sexual awakening continues, he longs to be outdoors. Like Stephen Wonham of The Longest Journey, he thrills to the beauty and sensuality of the open air:

Scents were everywhere that night,
despite the cold, and Maurice returned
via the shrubbery, that he might inhale
the evening primroses.⁸⁴

As the time of his fulfillment approaches, Maurice must undergo Pan-like rites, and reject the drawing-room asexuality of Clive Durham. He re-enters the Penge home, and Mrs. Durham notices that he has been crowned, as it were, with primrose pollen. "Mr. Borenius, is he not quite bacchanalian?" comments she.⁸⁵ Re-enforced by reminders of the simple pleasures of nature, Maurice revokes the promises of abstinence he once made at Cambridge, and readies himself for Scudder. Thinks he:

He alone - Clive admonishing - combined
advanced thought with the conduct of a
Sunday scholar. He wasn't Methuselah -
he'd a right to a fling. Oh those jolly
scents, those bushes where you could hide,
that sky as black as the bushes! ⁸⁶

In both Howards End and Maurice, the growth of the sexual aspects of one's consciousness represents a difficult stage in the process of "connecting". Forster's ambivalent attitude towards sex can also be viewed as an indication of his perception of complexities. In these two novels, he emphasizes the mysterious aspect of man's sexual appetites. In Howards End, Helen tells Margaret:

"You and I have built up something real, because it is purely spiritual. There's no veil of mystery over us. Unreality and mystery begin as soon as one touches the body".⁸⁷

Helen herself has very little control over her emotions. "Oh, Meg", she laments, as she considers her follies, "the little that is known about these things!"⁸⁸ Both her attraction to Paul Wilcox and her seduction of Leonard Bast involve "loneliness, and the night, and panic afterwards",⁸⁹ rather than a rational decision on her part. As Margaret listens to her sister's ruminations, her thoughts turn to the magical teeth that have been thrust into the wych-elm tree at Howards End. Clearly, Helen's emotions have hypnotized her, cast her under a spell from which she cannot escape. Margaret reminds Helen of the ignorance in which mankind resides:

"Except for Mrs. Wilcox, dearest, no one understands our little movements".⁹⁰

Only someone like Mrs. Wilcox*, who possesses "the instinctive wisdom the past alone can bestow"⁹¹ would be able to unravel the mystery of Helen's primitive urges and emotional responses.

In Maurice, Forster places a similar emphasis upon the fact that human passions are inexplicable.

* In Maurice, some of the attitudes of Maurice's grandfather, who worships "the unseen", and believes in the "light within" reflect those of Mrs. Wilcox. cf. Forster, Howards End, p. 85 and Forster, Maurice, pp.122-124.

Human sexuality in particular seems to have constituted an especially mysterious aspect of existence in the author's mind. Thus, he stresses the fact that Clive Durham has no control over his transformation to heterosexuality. In a letter to Maurice, Clive writes:

Against my will I have become normal.
I cannot help it'.⁹²

Forster's comment on Clive's conversion reflects a weariness in the face of man's inability to control his experience. He writes:

Who could help anything? Not only in sex, but in all things men have moved blindly, have evolved out of the slime to dissolve into it when this accident of consequences is over.⁹³

Even this conclusion about experience seems inadequate to him. He adds:

Even that remark, though further from vanity than most, was vain.⁹⁴

Clive, who feels that he has "understood his soul, or, as he said, himself, ever since he was fifteen"⁹⁵ is deeply perturbed by the irrationality of his own actions, and he clearly receives one final kernel of Forster's sympathy at this point. In order to justify Clive's dismay, in terms of the fact that man inevitably fears what he cannot understand, the author writes:

The body is deeper than the soul and its secrets inscrutable. There had been no warning - just a blind alteration of the life spirit, just an announcement, 'You who loved men, will henceforward love women. Understand or not, it's the same to me'.⁹⁶

In A Passage To India, Forster emphasizes the irrationality of sexual behaviour once again. At the heart of the novel lies Adela's strange experience in the Marabar Caves. Although the incident is never satisfactorily explained, it seems to have involved her own sexual desires and frustrations. Immediately prior to the supposedly attempted rape, she considers her forthcoming marriage to Ronny Heaslop with considerable anxiety. Ruminating wistfully on the sexual attractiveness of others, she turns her attention towards her companion, Aziz:

She did not admire him with any personal warmth, for there was nothing of the vagrant in her blood, but she guessed he might attract women of his own race and rank, and she regretted that neither she nor Ronny had physical charm. It does make a difference in a relationship - beauty, thick hair, a fine skin.⁹⁷

Later, she and Fielding wonder whether the frightening experience has merely been the product of the diseased imaginings of a hysterical virgin. Adela herself feels that this constitutes a strong possibility:

"I was not ill - it is far too vague to mention: it is all mixed up with my private affairs...you suggest that I had an hallucination there, the sort of thing - though in an awful form - that makes some women think they've had an offer of marriage when none was made..."⁹⁸

In Alexandria: A History and Guide (1922), Forster records the findings of Eristratus, who "realized the connection between sexual troubles and nervous breakdown".⁹⁹ In depicting Adela's condition during the days following her visit to the caves, Forster makes use of this morsel of ancient psychiatry himself. Thus, Adela's irrational mutterings and hysterical tears are associated with her increasing fear of physicality:

Hitherto she had not much minded whether she was touched or not: her senses were abnormally inert and the only contact she anticipated was that of mind. Everything now was transferred to the surface of her body, which began to avenge itself, and feed unhealthily.¹⁰⁰

Like Clive Durham at the time of his conversion to heterosexuality, Adela lies ill for many days; "vibrating between hard common sense and hysteria", she appears to be on the verge of total collapse.¹⁰¹ The primary symptom of her breakdown is an (imaginary?) echo, reminiscent of the ones heard in the Marabar Caves themselves:

The echo flourished, raging up and down like a nerve in the faculty of her hearing, and the noise in the cave, so unimportant intellectually, was prolonged over the surface of her life.¹⁰²

This echo reminds us of the mysteriousness of sexuality (and, indeed, of life itself) far more forcibly than any aspect of Howards End or Maurice. As long as Adela hears it, and even after it ceases to disturb her, her

sexuality, her past, present and future, remain a puzzle.

The pathetic fallacy plays a minor role in Maurice; nonetheless, it exists. When Maurice visits Clive's estate at Penge, the rains are continual, and "cast the unreality of nightmare" over everything.¹⁰³

Thinks he:

The stupidity of so much rain! What did it want to rain for? The indifference of the universe to man...here and there beauty triumphed, but desperately, flickering in a world of gloom...The indifference of nature! And her incompetence!¹⁰⁴

This view of the universe, given cursory treatment in Maurice, assumes major importance in A Passage To India. Seeing India as a microcosm, Forster incorporates the story of the personal relationships of his characters in a broad context which embraces both life's mysteriousness, and nature's indifference. "Nothing in India is identifiable", he tells us, by way of introduction. "The mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge in something else".¹⁰⁵ A little later on, he continues his explanation of this inscrutable, apathetic universe:

It matters so little to the majority of living beings what the minority, that calls itself human, desires or decides. Most of the inhabitants of India do not mind how India is governed. Nor are the lower animals of England concerned about England, but in the tropics the indifference is more prominent, the inarticulate world is closer at hand and ready to resume control as soon as men are tired.¹⁰⁶

The emphasis Forster places on man's insignificance in the universe helps to give A Passage To India a depth and profundity Maurice never attains. The latter will undoubtedly remain the author's least popular work, due to its overly intimate, personal tone. On the other hand, as Lionel Trilling accurately observes, A Passage To India is Forster's best known, most often read novel not only because of its political implications, but because "it deals with unjust, hysterical emotion, and leads us to cool poise and judgement".¹⁰⁷ It represents, in fact, his "least surprising, least capricious, and least personal" effort;¹⁰⁸ perhaps Maurice helped him to prepare for it, by freeing him of his private obsessions. In any case, a comparison of Forster's handling of the theme of sexuality in these two novels makes the differences in their tone and outlook immediately apparent. In Maurice, Forster continually tries to persuade us of the importance of his protagonist's plight; he never stands back from his story to view it with humour, cynicism, or detachment. On the contrary, in A Passage To India, he charms the reader with his casual elegance, and his philosophically sound distance from his material.

In A Passage To India, Forster presents the case of Adela and Aziz from continually contrasting viewpoints; each one qualifies the perspectives it opposes,

until something very much like Truth emerges. Thus, the description of Adela's understandably hysterical reaction to her adventure is immediately followed by an account of her friend Mrs. Moore's response to the incident. As one of the main representatives of the philosophical approach to existence, this elderly woman takes no interest in the forthcoming court trial. Says she:

"Why has anything to be done, I cannot see. Why all this marriage, marriage?...The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use. And all this rubbish about love, love in a church, love in a cave, as if there is the least difference."109

In her eyes, marriage and rape, legal and criminal relationships have become indistinguishable. She is also the character who keeps the sexual aspect of the incident in mind rather than dwelling on its political significance. Writes Forster:*

The unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love: in a cave, in a church - Boum, it amounts to the same.110

Despite the potency of Mrs. Moore's analyses of the situation, however, she, too, has stumbled upon partial truths only. Forster tells us that she speaks with "the cynicism of a withered priestess".111 Clearly, her old age gives her a kind of strength, but also limits

* Aziz's supposed crime is often labelled "unspeakable". Similarly, in Maurice, p. 131, Forster refers to homosexuality as "the unspeakable vice of the Greeks".

her ability to comprehend younger, more robust individuals.

Mrs. Moore's newly acquired outlook is the result of her own terrifying experience in the Marabar Caves. Like Adela, she, too, has heard an echo, but it speaks to her of universal chaos, rather than of the spiritual muddledom of a single individual. Forster describes the noise she has heard as follows:

'Boum' is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or 'bou-oum', or 'ou-boum', - utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce 'boum'. Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle, but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently.¹¹²

Whereas Maurice deals almost exclusively with the spiritual and sexual confusion of a single character, A Passage To India embraces the cosmos. For those who can hear the echo of the Marabar Caves, human sexuality (presented as a lofty mystery in Maurice) is merely a single phenomenon in a sea of infinite and eternal echoes. Mrs. Moore's panic is clearly justifiable, in the light of this vision:

The crush and the smells she could forget, but the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life...it had managed to murmur, 'Pathos, piety, courage - they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value'.¹¹³

Because Forster's own perception of the irrationality of existence pervades A Passage To India, he can conclude the presentation of moving scenes with reminders of the view of life discovered by Mrs. Moore in the caves. For example, the depiction of the profound dialogues of Adela and Fielding, who are themselves incapable of receiving the cave's message, closes with the following lines:

A friendliness as of dwarfs shaking hands, was in the air...When they agreed, 'I want to go on living a bit', or, 'I don't believe in God', the words were followed by a curious backwash as though the universe had displaced itself to fill up a tiny void, or as though they had seen their own gestures from an immense height - dwarfs talking, shaking hands and assuring each other that they stood on the same footing of insight...

'And I do like you so very much, if I may say so', he affirmed.

'I'm glad, for I like you. Let's meet again'.¹¹⁴

Upon reading this passage, one can only wish that Forster had occasionally presented the trysts and dialogues of Maurice Hall from this vantage point. In Maurice, each confrontation of the major characters is described with great seriousness; Maurice, Clive and Alec Scudder always appear as giants, as it were, rather than as dwarfs. The present writer believes that if Forster had viewed Maurice's dilemma with the echo of the Marabar Caves in mind, his thesis novel

would have gained immeasurably in complexity and artistic merit.

While A Passage To India deals with matters of international and even universal significance, it also encompasses a careful consideration of the private spheres of existence. Thus, it includes an ongoing discussion of sexual ethics comparable to that of both Howards End and Maurice. This subject is introduced in Part One of the novel in connection with the courtship of Ronny and Adela. In a typically Forsterian twilight, the two would-be lovers break off their engagement. However, they inadvertently find themselves touching each other. Writes Forster:

Her hand touched his, owing to a jolt,
and one of the thrills so frequent in
the animal kingdom passed between them,
and announced that all their difficulties
were only a lover's quarrel.¹¹⁵

Like the embraces of Leonard and Helen, or Maurice's "lust" for Clive Durham and Dickie Barry, the physical contact of Adela and Ronny proves deceptive, since no spiritual union is forthcoming. Comments the author:

A spurious unity descended on them, as
local and temporary as the gleam that
inhabits a firefly.¹¹⁶

In Part Two, Mrs. Moore contemplates the relationship of her son to his girlfriend, and decides that sex without comradeship is valueless:

She felt increasingly (vision or nightmare?) that though people are important the relations between them are not, and that in particular too much fuss has been made over marriage; centuries of carnal embracement, yet man is no nearer to understanding man.¹¹⁷

Finally, Adela herself confirms this viewpoint. In a moment of insight, she turns to Ronny and says:

What is the use of personal relationships when everyone brings less and less to them? I feel we ought all to go back into the desert for centuries and try and get good.¹¹⁸

Like Adela, Forster believed that we should "try and get good". In order to improve ourselves, he felt that we should learn to accept our own eccentricities, as well as those of others. In Two Cheers For Democracy, he writes:

If you don't like people, put up with them as well as you can. Don't try to love them; you can't, you'll only strain yourself. But try to tolerate them. On the basis of that tolerance a civilized future may be built.¹¹⁹

In Forster's creed, the virtue of love in the personal sphere is related to that of tolerance in public affairs.¹²⁰ Howards End, Maurice and A Passage To India reveal his growing belief in the brotherhood of man as the only means for man's salvation. As the peaceful world he knew began to disintegrate, Forster's pleas for connections beyond the self became increasingly insistent. Thus, the sexual theme in the late novels is intertwined with serious questions about the

compartments into which man has relegated man. In particular, Forster criticizes three practices of contemporary man: sexual, social, and racial discrimination. In the analyses below, his presentation of these harmful prejudices will be studied. Viewed together, Maurice, Howards End and A Passage To India represent Forster's hymn to democracy in fictionalized form.*

The theme of sexual snobbery plays an important role in Howards End. When Margaret marries Henry, she accepts "his past as well as his heart";¹²¹ then, she tries to imbue Helen with a similar liberalism:

In a long letter she pointed out the need of charity in sexual matters: so little is known about them; it is hard enough for those who are personally touched to judge ; then how futile must be the verdict of Society. 'I don't say there is no standard, for that would destroy morality; only that there can be no standard until our impulses are classified and better understood.'¹²²

Later in the novel, when Margaret learns of her sister's pregnancy, she views the unconventional, illegal, and exploitive^{at} seduction of Leonard Bast in a similarly enlightened way:

Not even to herself dare she blame Helen. She could not assess her trespass by any moral code; it was everything or nothing.

* These themes are, of course, important in the earlier novels as well. However, they are more readily observed in the later works.

Morality can tell us that murder is worse than stealing and group most sins in an order all must approve, but it cannot group Helen. The surer its pronouncements on this point, the surer may we be that morality is not speaking. Christ was evasive when they questioned him. It is those that cannot connect who hasten to cast the first stone.¹²³

Henry, of course, is one of the first to reject Helen, despite the grace that he has been granted by Margaret, with respect to his own sexual transgression. Even before the true cause of Helen's odd behaviour is discovered, he denies her equality because he suspects that she is unwell:

The sick had no rights; they were outside the pale; one could lie to them remorselessly. When his first wife was seized, he had promised to take her down into Hertfordshire, but meanwhile arranged with a nursing home instead. Helen, too, was ill. And the plan that he sketched out for her capture, clever and well-meaning as it was, drew its ethics from the wolf-pack.¹²⁴

The hounding of Helen instigated by Henry becomes a metaphor for the way in which repressive authorities trap and punish those who fail to conform to its rigorous laws. The aid of a psychiatrist is enlisted: he functions as a policeman, rather than a moral tutor. Like Dr. Barry and the hypnotist in Maurice, Dr. Mansbridge affects a coldly scientific stance:*

* cf. the hypnotist's declaration that Maurice suffers from "congenital homosexuality" Maurice, p. 158.

The doctor, a very young man, began to ask questions about Helen. Was she normal? Was there anything congenital or hereditary?¹²⁵

Margaret rebels against the dehumanizing description of Helen that the doctor invites:

How dare these men label her sister?
What horrors lay ahead! What impertinences
that shelter under the name of science!
The pack was turning on Helen to deny
her human rights, and it seemed to
Margaret that all Schlegels were threatened
with her.¹²⁶

Margaret soon sends her sister's tormentors away, but of course, replacements exist for each of them. Like Maurice, Helen is ostracized by her community because of her sexuality. Says she:

"I cannot fit in with England as I know it.
I have done something that the English
never pardon. It would not be right for
them to pardon it. So I must live where
I am not known."¹²⁷

Helen's new-found self-control in the face of great difficulties parallels Maurice's growth as a human being through his experiences as a homosexual. Persecution in these novels often calls forth latent strengths from its victims. Like Maurice, Helen shows the ability to act on the basis of her own will, in opposition to her entire society. Thinks Margaret:

It was appalling to see her quietly moving
forward with her plans, not bitter or
excitable, neither asserting innocence
nor confessing guilt, merely desiring
freedom and the company of those who
would not blame her.¹²⁸

Helen's plight is representative of the trials of womanhood. Because she is female, society is prejudiced against her from the outset. Like homosexuals, women are not given equal rights in the England Forster depicts.* When Margaret shuts the door on Henry and his companions at Howards End, Forster tells us:

A new feeling came over [Margaret]; she was fighting for women against men. She did not care about rights, but if men came into Howards End, it should be over her body.¹²⁹

"Men don't know what we want", she tells Helen a short while later, in discussing "a room that men have spoilt trying to make it nice for women".¹³⁰ Henry soon verifies this hypothesis of male ignorance, by asking Margaret unwarranted questions about Helen, much as the psychiatrist has done previously. Now, the clichés of sexuality replace those of psychiatry as Henry attempts to ascertain the name of Helen's "seducer", and suggests marriage as the natural solution to her difficulties.¹³¹ Henry becomes the mouthpiece of oppressive conventionality as he declares:

* cf. Bonnie Finkelstein's statement that in EMF's conventional society, "women and homosexuals share many of the same problems, since both are thwarted by a society that would deny them acceptance as real people".

Eternal Differences: Forster's Women (1972; rpt. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974) Preface.

"I have no doubt that she will prove more sinned against than sinning. But I cannot treat her as if nothing had happened. I should be false to my position in society if I did."132

Finally, the patient and judicious Margaret rises in anger against her obtuse husband; she points out to him the separate moral codes that society applies to the sexes,* by reminding him of his affair with Jacky Bast:

"You have betrayed Mrs. Wilcox, Helen only herself. You remain in society, Helen can't. You have only pleasure, she may die."133

The capture of Helen and the ensuing scenes are merely the climax of a long struggle between the sexes that runs throughout the novel:

Howards End is not only a novel of the class war but of the war between men and women.134

Much of the conflict between Schlegels and Wilcoxes involves opposing views of woman's role in society. On Helen's first visit to the Wilcox house, she argues with Henry, who "says the most horrid things about women's suffrage so nicely".135

* cf. Margaret's earlier question in Howards End, p. 224: "Are the sexes really races, each with its own code of morality, and their mutual love a mere device of Nature to keep things going?"

Margaret herself reveals one symbolic aspect of the contrasting families, when she muses:

" I suppose that our house is a female house, and one must just accept it... - it must be feminine...Just as another house that I can mention, but won't, sounded irrevocably masculine..."¹³⁶

Henry is completely blind to the rights of women, throughout the novel. He abuses Jacky, Margaret and Helen in ways that he is not even aware of.

Margaret's marriage to this prejudiced man requires her to modify her belief in "sexual equality".¹³⁷ "She was to keep her independence more than do most women as yet", Forster tells us, but she certainly does not keep it completely.¹³⁸ At Evie's wedding, for example, she persuades her husband to see the Basts by employing "feminine" wiles:

Now she understood why some women prefer influence to rights. Mrs. Plynlmmon, when condemning suffragettes, had said: 'The woman who can't influence her husband to vote the way she wants ought to be ashamed of herself'. Margaret had winced, but she was influencing Henry now, and though pleased at her little victory, she knew that she had won it by the methods of the harem.¹³⁹

By the novel's conclusion, however, Margaret re-asserts her independence, and helps Henry and Helen to gain theirs. These three characters begin to reject sexual stereotypes; they become individuals, instead of 'males' and 'females'. This is particularly true of Henry.

Immediately after Leonard Bast's death, he willingly displays his emotions for the first time:

He raised his eyes and gave his son more open a look of tenderness than he usually ventured.¹⁴⁰

Charles decides that his father has merely become "more like a woman",¹⁴¹ despite his son's disapproval, Henry has dared to act in a traditionally feminine manner, thereby defying the conventions. Clearly, the Schlegel ideal of sexual equality gradually becomes a reality, defeating the Wilcox principle of male dominance.*

By bringing her sister and husband together at Howards End, Margaret teaches both of them a new sympathetic attitude towards each other. "They were building up a new life", Forster tells us, "obscure, yet gilded with tranquility".¹⁴² Helen finally appreciates Henry who has, in fact, begun to "connect". However, certain difficulties remain: she is still troubled by her own sexuality. Like Stephen Wonham in The Longest Journey, love for one person will never be the greatest thing she knows. She tells her sister:

* In other words, by the end of the novel, the sexes are beginning to merge. Bonnie Finkelstein refers to the owners of Howards End as "androgynous siblings". cf. Bonnie Finkelstein, Forster's Women: Eternal Differences, 113. The concept of androgyny is an integral part of the theories of Edward Carpenter, who spoke of a 'Child of Uranus', who was to possess a "woman-soul within a man's form dwelling...so gentle, gracious, dignified, complete". rpt. in Philip Gardner, Forster: Critical Heritage, p. 480.

"I shall never marry...I simply couldn't... There's something wanting in me, I see you loving Henry, and understanding him better daily, and I know that death wouldn't part you in the least. But I - is it some awful appalling criminal defect?"¹⁴³

Like Maurice, Helen must work hard to accept herself. It is clear, however, that Margaret will help her in any way that she can. Her reply to Helen's questions about her inability to marry contains one of Forster's major statements of belief. She says:

"It is only that people are far more different than is pretended. All over the world men and women are worrying because they cannot develop as they are supposed to develop...Don't fret yourself, Helen. Develop what you have; love your child. I do not love children, I am thankful I have none...Don't you see that all this leads to comfort in the end? It is part of the battle against sameness. Differences - eternal differences, planted by God in a single family, so that there may always be colour; sorrow perhaps, but colour in the daily grey."¹⁴⁴

Margaret's hope for a universal acceptance of differences reflects Forster's own desire as revealed by his writing of Maurice. As a young homosexual, Maurice confronts a hostile society wherever he turns. Like Helen Schlegel, he learns that only in exile from England will he find congenial surroundings. His hypnotist tells him the truth, when he says:

"I'm afraid I can only advise you to live in some country that has adopted the Code Napoleon...France or Italy, for instance. There homosexuality is no longer criminal ...England has always been disinclined to accept human nature."¹⁴⁵

Despite his wealth, Maurice cannot procure proper assistance in coping with his abnormality:

On all other subjects he could command advice, but on this, which touched him daily, civilization was silent.¹⁴⁶

He visits both Dr. Barry and the hypnotist, but the former is merely shocked and the latter bored by his revelations. His confessions to Lasker Jones are "exhaustive"¹⁴⁷ but fruitless; he never manages to convey his emotions to either of these authorities. One remembers the thoughts of Margaret Schlegel after a conversation with the "vulgar and acute"¹⁴⁸ Dr.

Mansbridge:*

Science explained people, but could not understand them. After long centuries among the bones and muscles it might be advancing to knowledge of the nerves, but this would never give understanding. One could open the heart to Mr. Mansbridge and his sort without discovering its secrets to them, for they wanted everything down in black and white, and black and white was exactly what they were left with.¹⁴⁹

Dr. Barry, the Hall family's "ultimate authority for nearly twenty years"¹⁵⁰ continually encourages Maurice to hope that he will soon conform to the demands of society and marry. After one visit, Maurice thinks:

* In A Passage To India, Aziz makes a similar criticism of modern medicine. Writes Forster: "Aziz was repelled by the pedantry and fuss with which Europe tabulates the facts of sex..."
cf. Passage, 100.

It would be jolly certainly to be married,
and at one with society and the law.¹⁵¹

At the time of this crucial consultation, Maurice is still deluding himself: he hopes to follow in Clive's footsteps, and become heterosexual on his twenty-fourth birthday. Forster tells us:

Maurice had the Englishman's inability to conceive variety. His troubles had taught him that other people are alive, but not yet that they are different, and he attempted to regard Clive's development as a forerunner of his own.¹⁵²

A subsequent visit to Mr. Lasker Jones marks Maurice's further attempt to realize the same dim hope of normalcy. After his first session with the hypnotist, he returns to Penge with a heightened awareness of his differentness. He tells Clive's wife:

"Nothing's the same for anyone. That's why life's this hell, if you do a thing you're damned, and if you don't you're damned..."¹⁵³

Unlike Margaret, as yet, Maurice fails to appreciate his individuality. Only through his association with Scudder does he learn to "stop worrying", and to "develop what he has".¹⁵⁴ When the two men meet in the British Museum, Maurice tries to convey his new found tolerance. He speaks slowly, because he is thinking aloud:

"Scudder, why do you think it's 'natural' to care both for women and men? You wrote so in your letter. It isn't natural for me. I have really got to think 'natural' only means oneself".¹⁵⁵

With these words, Maurice takes his place beside Margaret as one who perceives "eternal differences".¹⁵⁶

Maurice also resembles Margaret in that he comes to recognize the fact that women are thwarted by conventional society as well. There is evidence that towards the conclusion of the novel he outgrows the misogyny of his youth. Writes Bonnie Finkelstein:

In the world of Maurice, women barely exist, for they live two stages removed from the novel's main concern, the problems of male homosexuals.¹⁵⁷

While there is truth in this statement, it is also true that tolerance of women is part of the lesson Maurice must learn; he eventually transcends the traditional biases he has witnessed throughout his life. Once again, Dr. Barry is a chief representative of the typical attitudes of officialdom. On the day of Maurice's public-school graduation, the older man assumes the boy is flirting with the housemaster's wife. With a cynical glance, he encourages the boy to become a "lady killer".¹⁵⁸ Maurice innocently replies: 'I don't know what you mean, Dr. Barry'. By his next meeting with the doctor, however, he is older and wiser. As the doctor reprimands him for cutting classes at Cambridge with Clive, Maurice recognizes his advisor's sexual snobbery:

He considered the accusation. If a woman had been in that side-car, if then he had refused to stop at the Dean's bidding, would Dr. Barry have required an apology from him? Surely not.¹⁵⁹

Despite this insight into Dr. Barry's hidden prejudices, Maurice decides to entrust him with the secret of his sexuality. At first, he refers to his condition as an illness. The doctor assumes Maurice has caught syphilis from a prostitute, and cheerfully recalls his own youthful escapades. Like Henry Wilcox, he condones the treatment of women as the playthings of men; at the same time, he vehemently rejects all homosexual relationships, including those that are based on love. He smugly extends to Maurice the following superficial advice:

"Ah, women! How well I remember when you spouted on the platform at school... you gaped at some master's wife...he's a lot to learn and life's a hard school, I remember thinking. Only women can teach us and there are bad women as well as good."¹⁶⁰

As he briskly prepares to cure Maurice of his supposed infection, the boy reveals his newly-acquired desire to treat women as his equals:

'It's nothing as filthy as that', he said explosively. 'In my own rotten way I've kept clean'...every fibre in him protested. He hated Dr. Barry's mind; to tolerate prostitution stuck him as beastly.¹⁶¹

The theme of sexual snobbery is important in A Passage To India as well as in Howards End and Maurice. In an introductory portrayal of the Moslems, the plight

of women is briefly presented. Behind the purdah, they must conform to a rigid code of behaviour, catering to their males on every occasion. Like dutiful servants, they wait respectfully for the men to finish eating dinner, before they start eating theirs.¹⁶² Later, a number of them swear to take no food at all until Aziz's acquittal, but no one is concerned:

Their death would make little difference, indeed, being invisible, they seemed dead already; nevertheless it was disquieting.¹⁶³

Furthermore, if they do not marry, these women become pariahs in society. Like the British spinsters and widows in Forster's other novels, unwed Indian females become bored and isolated, even when they possess great wealth. Aziz's aunt complains to her nephew:

'What is to become of all our daughters if men refuse to marry? They will marry beneath them, or - ' And she began the oft-told tale of a lady of Imperial descent who could find no husband in the narrow circle where her pride permitted her to mate, and had lived on unwed her age now thirty, and would die unwed, for no one would have her now.¹⁶⁴

The male response to this plea reveals their narrow-minded view of the role of women in society:

Better polygamy almost, than that a woman should die without the joys God has intended her to receive. Wedlock, motherhood, power in the house - for what else is she born?¹⁶⁵

The rights of unattractive women are revealed to

be even more meager than those of their beautiful sisters, no matter what race they belong to. In fact, in all three of the novels at hand, "looks have their influence upon character".¹⁶⁶ In Howards End, Margaret Schlegel goes "straight ahead",¹⁶⁷ without the homage of men, while Helen is constantly praised:

She was pretty, and so apt to have a more amusing time. People gathered around her more readily...she often absorbed the whole of the company, while Margaret - both were tremendous talkers - fell flat.¹⁶⁸

As a result, Margaret develops more resources as a human being. A similar contrast is drawn between Maurice Hall's sisters, Ada and Kitty. The beautiful Ada is endowed with the same amount of intelligence as her sister, but she relies on her looks to influence people in her favour. Kitty, on the other hand, is plain, and Clive Durham decides that she is not a "true woman".¹⁶⁹ In her efforts to improve her social status, Kitty decides to "go to an Institute to acquire Domestic Economy"¹⁷⁰. Like those of the Schlegel sisters, the methods of the Hall sisters diverge from childhood onwards on account of their looks. Similarly, in A Passage To India, Adela Quested suffers continually, due to her plain features. After her experience in the Marabar Caves, "the men [are] too respectful, the women too sympathetic."¹⁷¹ The men have to pretend, as it were, that Adela is beautiful, in order to feel that she is

"worth fighting and dying for":¹⁷²

Each felt that all he loved best in the world was at stake, demanded revenge, and was filled with a not unpleasing glow, in which the chilly and half-known features of Miss Quested vanished, and were replaced by all that is sweetest and warmest in private life.¹⁷³

The focal point of Forster's criticism of sexual discrimination in A Passage To India is Dr. Aziz.

Writes Bonnie Finkelstein:

Aziz, as the recipient of much of the snobbery in the novel, is extremely sensitive about the rights and feelings of the oppressed race to which he belongs, but he never connects and feels sympathy for women, a similarly oppressed group.¹⁷⁴

When Aziz meets Mrs. Moore and Adela, he "treats them like men":

Beauty would have troubled him, for it entails rules of its own, but Mrs. Moore was so old and Adela so plain that he was spared this anxiety. Adela's angular body and the freckles on her face were terrible defects in his eyes, and he wondered how God could have been so unkind to any female form.¹⁷⁵

After the Marabar Caves incident, he calls Adela "a hag":

It enraged him that he had been accused by a woman who had no personal beauty; sexually, he was a snob.¹⁷⁶

Like Margaret in Howards End, Fielding's liberal education has taught him that "temperance, tolerance, and sexual equality"¹⁷⁷ are important. Thus, he censures Aziz's attitude towards women:

Sensuality, as long as it is straight-forward, did not repel him, but this derived sensuality - the sort that classes a mistress among motor-cars if she is beautiful, and among eye-flies if she isn't - was alien to his own emotions... It was, in a new form, the old, old trouble that eats the heart out of every civilization; snobbery, the desire for possessions, creditable appendages; and it is to escape this rather than the lusts of the flesh that saints retreat into the Himalayas.¹⁷⁸

As a concluding note to the above discussion of sexual snobbery in the last three novels, the present writer would like to draw attention to the fact that the central characters of Howards End and A Passage To India make personal decisions about their sex lives that distinguish them from most people. Like Maurice Hall, Helen, Margaret, Adela, and Fielding reject marriage and/or child-bearing. With varying degrees of intensity, each of them fears that they will incur the disapproval of society; furthermore, having internalized the prejudices of their civilization, they run the risk of hating themselves later. Reading Maurice makes it clear that Forster takes exception to the view that everyone should marry and have children. Once we have observed his anger in the posthumous work, it becomes apparent that it exists in the other novels, as well. Clearly, women and homosexuals are not the only victims of sexual discrimination in Forster's fiction; single or childless individuals are scorned,

as well. In order to encourage a more open-minded view of the options chosen by these minority groups, the author not only forces us to consider the advantages of such decisions, but also helps us to sympathize with the inevitable loneliness involved therein.

Let us briefly recount the choices made by the characters mentioned above. In Howards End, Helen decides not to marry, but she is aware of the eyes of the world. "Why should you put things so bitter, dearie?" her sister asks her one day. "Because I am an old maid", comes the reply.¹⁷⁹ Helen's spinsterhood troubles her; she wonders whether her rejection of marriage constitutes "some appalling criminal defect".¹⁸⁰ By contrast, Margaret opts for marriage. Before accepting Henry's proposal, however, she deliberates cautiously:

She would come to no decision yet. 'Oh, sir, this is so sudden' - that prudish phrase exactly expressed her when her time came...She must examine her own nature and his; she must talk it over judiciously with Helen.¹⁸¹

Despite her subsequent happiness, Margaret's temperament is not completely suited to marriage. Forster tells us:

The astonishing glass shade had fallen that interposes between married couples and the world...There was an unforeseen surprise, a cessation of the winds and odours of life, a social pressure that would have her think conjugally.¹⁸²

Furthermore, she has no desire for children. In her prayer for a universal acceptance of eternal differences, she keeps her own unusual lack of maternal instincts in mind.¹⁸³ Unlike Helen, who adores her baby, Margaret prefers sterility. The novel concludes with the sound of the baby's laughter;¹⁸⁴ clearly, Margaret's decision will exclude her from participating in many pleasures, as well as helping her to maintain the independence she craves.

In A Passage To India, Adela Quested considers her forthcoming marriage with regret:

How lovely the hills suddenly were! But she couldn't touch them. In front, like a shutter, fell a vision of her married life. She and Ronny would look into the club like this every evening, then drive home to dress...while the true India would slide by unnoticed.¹⁸⁵

Her picture of marriage mirrors that of Maurice Hall. For a homosexual, of course, wedlock is a nightmare:

Objects Maurice had never seen, such as rainwater baled from a boat, he could see tonight, though curtailed in tightly. Ah! to get out to them!...He had paid a doctor two guineas to draw the curtains tighter, and presently, in the brown cube of such a room, Miss Tonks would lie prisoned beside him.¹⁸⁶

Like Maurice, Adela eventually rejects marriage; however, as a spinster, her situation is even lonelier than his. Clearly, she intends to live as full a life as she can, despite this limitation. Before leaving India, she tells Fielding:

'When I am forced back to England, I shall settle down to some career. I have sufficient money left to start myself, and heaps of friends of my own type. I shall be quite all right'.¹⁸⁷

Fielding encourages her by offering her the typical bachelor's argument against marriage. Like so many other Forsterian characters, he emphasizes the artificiality of the institution:*

"Marriage is too absurd in any case. It begins and continues for such very slight reasons. The social business props it up on one side, and the theological business on the other, but neither of them are marriage, are they?"¹⁸⁸

Fielding himself soon revokes his decision about marriage; perhaps, like so many others, he, too, has felt the censure of his fellow men. The tone of his letter to Aziz indicates that this is, in fact, the case. As he leaves India, he writes:

"It is on my mind that you think me a prude about women. I had rather you thought anything else of me. If I live impeccably now, it is only because I am well on in the forties - a period of revision..."¹⁸⁹

* cf. Forster's comment in Howards End, 165: Whom does love concern beyond the beloved and the lover? Yet his impact deluges a hundred shores...The foundations of Property and Propriety are laid bare, twin rocks, Family Pride flounders to the surface..., Theology, vaguely ascetic, gets up a nasty ground swell...Half-guineas are poured on the troubled waters, the lawyers creep back, and, if all has gone well, Love joins one man and one woman together in Matrimony.

Upon his arrival in England, Fielding decides to marry a reasonably suitable companion. However, like Margaret Schlegel, he has made a firm commitment to sterility. Earlier in the novel, Aziz questions him about his refusal to have children. He replies:

"I don't feel their absence, I don't want them weeping around my death-bed and being polite about me afterwards, which I believe is the general notion".¹⁹⁰

Imitating Rickie Elliott, who leaves the world his novels instead of his children, Fielding decides to content himself with presenting the world with his teachings. Opting for spiritual heirs, he says:

"I'd far rather leave a thought behind me than a child. Other people can have children. No obligation, with England getting so chock-a-block and over-running India with jobs".¹⁹¹

For an individual who, like Fielding, wishes to "travel light", offspring are an undesirable burden.¹⁹² Even Mrs. Moore, who has herself married twice and cheerfully borne several children, recognizes the disadvantages involved. Says she:

"In marriage, it is the children who are the first consideration. Until they are grown up and married off. When that happens one has again the right to live for oneself - in the plains or the hills, as suits".¹⁹³

Cynically, she adds:

"If one has not become too stupid and old".¹⁹⁴

Unfortunately, to those people who have sterility foisted upon them, its benefits do not appear as great as to those who have chosen the state freely. A sense of loneliness and of having been excluded from the universe can all too easily overpower feelings of freedom. Thus, in Maurice, a painful consideration of the childless future of a homosexual ensues. Maurice's realization that he will never have children provides the novel with one of its most poignant scenes. Thinking about sterility upsets him far more than it does Margaret or Fielding:

Maurice was silent. It had not occurred to him before that neither he nor his friend would leave life behind them... An immense sadness...had risen up in his soul. He and the beloved would vanish utterly - would continue neither in Heaven nor on Earth. They had won past the conventions, but Nature still faced them, saying with even voice, 'Very well, you are thus; I blame none of my children. But you must go the way of all sterility.' The thought that he was sterile weighed on the young man with sudden shame. His mother or Mrs. Durham might lack mind or heart, but they had done visible work; they had handed on the torch their sons would tread out.¹⁹⁵

Clearly, Forster commends those who dare to remain unmarried and/or childless, but he does not try to minimize the difficulties involved in overriding society's conventions. Similarly, he admires those individuals who were brave enough to become intimate with social inferiors at a time when the class system was rigid. Explaining the difficulties of inter-class

friendships, he writes:

Though it is easy enough to do this today, owing to the social break-up, it was not easy to do it in the nineteenth century, when the Victorian fabric was still intact, and drawing-rooms seemed drawing-rooms and housemaids housemaids for ever.¹⁹⁶

In this context, Forster draws our attention to the biography of Edward Carpenter, a contemporary hero in the war against class. Praising him for leaving his stodgy, upper-middle-class, Cambridge background behind, Forster writes:

Edward Carpenter lived with working-class people, adopted many of their ways, worked hard physically, market-gardened, made and wore sandals, made (but did not wear) a Saxon tunic. He may not have got into another class, but he certainly discarded his own and gained happiness by doing so... He believed in Liberty, Fraternity and Equality - words now confined to platforms and perorations. He saw the New Jerusalem from afar, from the ignoble slough of his century...He was absolutely selfless.¹⁹⁷

According to Forster's own account, it was this "Whitmannic poet" who, more than anyone else, was directly responsible for the writing of Maurice.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the fact that Maurice's beloved Alec is a member of the working-class is as significant as the fact that he is male. Forster was writing a protest against the Victorian taboos about class as well as commenting on the cruelty of English laws regarding sexuality. Perhaps the handling of the theme of class in this novel constitutes its strongest qualification for

membership in the canon of Forster's fiction. Writes Nigel Dennis in his review entitled "The Love That Levels":

It is the twinning together of the themes of sex and class that make Maurice most recognizably a Forster work. There are long moments in it, one may say, when the class theme is so strong that the homosexual subject almost vanishes.¹⁹⁹

Upon reading Maurice, one sees that Alec belongs to the same class as Gino Carella, Stephen Wonham, and Leonard Bast. In many ways, his social status is also comparable to that of Dr. Aziz. Clearly, socially unacceptable personal relationships interested Forster far more than those between equals; the beloved in his novels is consistently a character from the 'abyss', or lower echelons of society.

In a study of Forster written prior to the publication of Maurice, K.W. Gransden focuses his attention on the presence of members of the lower classes in each of the novels. He comments:

With the inhibitions of his generation and class, Forster finds it easiest to approach passion obliquely, often through someone of another class or race: the working-class Italian with his obvious physical attractiveness becomes in his work, an indispensable if equivocal symbol of sexuality...On the whole (there are exceptions) middle class England does not appear to produce good lovers.²⁰⁰

An awareness of Forster's guilty conception of his own homosexuality helps us to accept Gransden's view of the fiction. P.N. Furbank tells us:

Forster achieved physical sex very late and found it easier with people outside his own social class, and it remained a kind of private magic for him - an almost unattainable blessing, for which another person was merely a pretext. He valued sex for its power to release his own capacity for tenderness and devotion, but he never expected an equal sex relationship'.²⁰¹

Furthermore, according to Furbank, Forster never actually set up house with a lover. He adds:

'One can't picture him doing it. Forster could imagine two lovers living together in the 'greenwood' but hardly in a flat in Kensington or a house in Potter's Bar'.²⁰²

If Gransden's viewpoint is valid, and Furbank's information accurate, it becomes apparent that Forster's personal problem moulded his fiction.

When he writes at the height of his powers, as in A Passage To India, the results are superb. The highly effective courtroom scene in which Aziz is finally judged to be innocent begins with a description of a physically attractive native:

The court was crowded and of course very hot, and the first person Adela noticed in it was the humblest of all who were present, a person who had no bearing officially upon the trial: the man who pulled the punkah. Almost naked, and splendidly formed, he sat on a raised gangplank...He had the strength and the beauty that sometimes come to flower in Indians of low birth.²⁰³

Like the Italians and labourers that Gransden observes in the early fiction, this punkah is clearly a sex symbol. In the lines referred to above, Forster reveals

the subtlety with which he can link sexuality to members of the lower classes. However, with his very next words, he proves to us that he has transformed his personal concern into a subject of universal importance. He writes:

When [the Indian] race nears the dust and is condemned as untouchable, then nature remembers the physical perfection that she accomplished elsewhere, and throws out a god - not many, but one here and there, to prove to society how little its categories impress her. This man would have been notable anywhere; among the thin-hammed, flat-chested mediocrities of Chandrapore he stood out as divine...Pulling the rope towards him, relaxing it rhythmically, sending swirls of air over others, receiving none himself, he seemed apart from human destinies, a male fate, a winnower of souls.²⁰⁴

In the light of the excellent prose style of the above passage, and others like it, we are being unfair to Forster if we emphasize his inhibitions unduly. We must recognize, instead, his ability to transcend his problems in his best writing, and his genius for discovering adequate symbols for his thought.

Forster's depiction of sexually attractive members of the lower classes reflects his unceasing hatred of the snobbery of his own class. By pointing to the admirable aspects of those individuals his peers have overlooked, he hopes to dispel their prejudices. The theme of class, however, plays through his novels in countless other ways, as well. In order

to understand his handling of this subject, we must briefly recall the depiction of the class war in Howards End. In E.M. Forster, Gransden argues convincingly that this novel represents one of the "fullest and most ambitious documentation(s) of the English social scene".²⁰⁵ Throughout Howards End, Forster pays strict attention to the economic and political context in which his characters operate. In the words of Alwyn Berland, the novel "bristles with social relevance".²⁰⁶ Forster's subject is the middle class:

We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet. The story deals with gentlefolk, or with those who are obliged to pretend that they are gentlefolk.²⁰⁷

Within this class, Forster discovers at least three distinct groups of people. Lionel Trilling describes these sub-divisions as follows:

Neither the aristocracy nor the proletariat is represented and the very poor are specifically barred...At the far end of the vast middle-class scale is Leonard Bast, the little clerk. He stands at the 'extreme verge of gentility', at the very edge of the 'abyss' of poverty. At the upper end of the scale is Mr. Wilcox, the business man, rich and rapidly growing richer. Between are the Schlegels, Margaret and Helen, living comfortably on solid, adequate incomes.²⁰⁸

In Howards End, Forster defines the ways in which questions of social and economic status disturb the relations between Basts, Schlegels, and Wilcoxes.

As we have seen, the novel opens with an account of Helen's engagement to Paul Wilcox. As well as being attracted by Paul's maleness, Helen is fascinated with his capitalistic values. His very differentness appeals to her:

She had liked giving in to [him]; she had liked being told that her notions of life were sheltered or academic; that Equality was nonsense, Votes for Women nonsense, Socialism nonsense, Art and Literature, except when conducive to strengthening the character, nonsense. One by one the Schlegel fetishes had been overthrown, and, though professing to defend them, she rejoiced...When Charles said, 'Why be so polite to servants? they don't understand it', she had not given the Schlegel retort of, 'If they don't understand it, I do'. No, she had vowed to be less polite to servants in the future.²⁰⁹

The wealth and practical skills which are the common properties of the Wilcoxes thrill the dreamy Schlegel sisters. Helen's infatuation with Paul is short-lived, but Margaret captures some of its spirit in her own subsequent attempt to connect herself permanently to this family. She muses that the subjective universe that the Schlegels traditionally inhabit is perhaps limited. She tells Helen:

^The truth is that there is a great outer life that you and I have never touched - a life in which telegrams and anger count. Personal relations, that we think supreme, are not supreme there. There love means marriage settlements, death, death duties...Do personal relations lead to sloppiness in the end?²¹⁰

Through her relationship with Henry Wilcox, Margaret explores the answers to this question. By imagining the adventures of this favourite protagonist, Forster provided himself with a flexible method of comparing and contrasting the values of these two groups.

The charm of Howards End resides in the fact that Forster did not feel that a sober tone was exclusively appropriate to a novel of social realism. Thus, in the opening episode of the work, he symbolizes the social pressures that affect personal relationships by presenting us with the amusing figure of Mrs. Munt.

Writes Forster:

'Esprit de classe' - if one may coin the phrase - was strong in Mrs. Munt.²¹¹

The encounter between Helen's interfering aunt and Charles Wilcox affords Forster with an ideal opportunity for social comment in a comic mode; here, snob meets snob face to face:

So they played the game of Capping Families, a round of which is always played when love would unite two members of our race. But they played it with unusual vigour, stating in so many words that Schlegels were better than Wilcoxes, Wilcoxes better than Schlegels.²¹²

Like contemporary Montagues and Capulets, these strangely similar characters attempt to divide the would-be lovers. The senselessness of their elaborate dispute becomes particularly apparent when one discovers that, unlike Romeo and Juliet, Helen and Paul intend to part long

before they die. At the conclusion of this part of the novel, one realizes that Forster has managed to introduce his major theme with a lightness of tone that has become his trademark. All of the crucial social and economic differences that distinguish the rich, materialistic Wilcoxes from the romantic, cultured Schlegels have been skillfully revealed; the lines of battle have been drawn, as it were, with the easiness of Forster at his best.

In a second major scene, Leonard Bast meets the Schlegels at a concert. Once again, Forster emphasizes the ways in which socio-economic factors influence all aspects of life. Thus, each character hears the same performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, but interprets it differently. Mrs. Munt taps her foot in a typically British fashion, the Schlegels hear sounds that relate to their own personal lives, and their German cousins listen intensely, as though they have been permanently affected by the ideals of the European Romanticism they have inherited. Meanwhile, Leonard listens to the most unusual sounds of all. For him, the symphony represents an unobtainable culture, leisure, and beauty. Admission to the concert itself is cheap, it seems, but true acceptance into the world it symbolizes is costly, indeed. The two guineas one pays to enter the public concert-hall represent an illusory

democracy. As Leonard listens to the graceful chatter of Margaret, he thinks:

Oh, to acquire culture! Oh, to pronounce foreign names correctly! Oh, to be well informed, discoursing at ease on every subject that a lady started! But it would take years.²¹³

Forster adds:

There had always been something to worry him ever since he could remember, always something that distracted him in the pursuit of beauty.²¹⁴

The effect of Class on personal relationships is more profound than its influence on artistic sensibilities. Leonard's attitude towards the Schlegels encompasses fear and adulation; it never includes genuine personal affection. A knowledge of his own lowly position prevents him from becoming their comrades. During his first encounter with the sisters, Leonard suspects them of having stolen his umbrella. Comments Forster:

To trust people is a luxury in which only the wealthy can indulge; the poor cannot afford it.²¹⁵

His experiences as a victim have irrevocably changed his personality:

This young man had been 'had' in the past - badly, perhaps overwhelmingly - and now most of his energies went in defending himself against the unknown.²¹⁶

Due to the kindness of the Schlegels, Leonard gradually relaxes his guard. However, he merely replaces his

suspicion with adulation, thereby substituting one prejudiced reaction for another. Like Rickie Elliott or Philip Herriton, Leonard regards the women he respects as works of art. When the Schlegels attempt to discuss practical issues with him over tea, they damage his mental image of them. He thinks:

He would not have these women prying into his work. They were Romance, and so was the room to which he had at last penetrated... and so were the very tea-cups, with their delicate borders of wild strawberries. But he would not let Romance interfere with his life. There is the devil to pay then.²¹⁷

The Schlegels' relations with Leonard parallel their associations with the Wilcoxes, in that formidable social barriers prevent true understanding. Margaret and Helen pity, patronize, and secretly despise Leonard by turns; they cannot regard him as their equal. As Margaret leaves the concert-hall with Leonard, for example, her thoughts reveal that she shares the prejudices of her class:

She wished that Leonard was not so anxious to hand a lady downstairs, or to carry a lady's programme for her - his class was near enough her own for its manner to vex her.²¹⁸

Furthermore, even the Schlegels' sympathy for Leonard is tainted by class consciousness. To them, he "seems not a man, but a cause".²¹⁹ Writes Lionel Trilling:

The intellectual, in addition to the barrier of his articulateness which cuts him off from the masses as well as from the middle classes, stands behind another barrier, the necessity of regarding the mass of men as objects of his benevolence.²²⁰

Like these individuals described by Trilling, the Schlegels are the products of a liberal education. Thus, they have learnt to think kindly of those who, unlike themselves, do not "stand upon money as upon islands".²²¹ Margaret's first meeting with Leonard demonstrates that he appeals to her bourgeois desire to save others; she is inclined to be interested in him for the sake of the "glimpse into squalor" that he provides.²²² She and her sister are simultaneously attracted and repulsed by the "odours from the abyss"²²³ that attend the Basts. They pity him, but they also enjoy studying him. He is, in fact, a living embodiment of the social documents they read, and the hypothetical discussions they partake of with friends.

The social structure of Maurice parallels that of Howards End. Although Maurice mainly deals with a specialized form of sexual snobbery, a consideration of class barriers is also included. Once again, Forster presents us with the inter-actions of three representative families and their associates, in a greatly simplified form. The Halls remind us of the Wilcoxes in that they, too, are wealthy stock-brokers. They have

not made as much money as their fictional predecessors but, like the Schlegels, they have substantial incomes. Maurice's family lacks the prestige that comes from the ownership of property. The Halls are exclusively products of the suburbs of London. Like the Wilcoxes, they are surrounded by conveniences; they dwell in "the superficial comfort exacted by businessmen" depicted in Howards End.²²⁴ Clive's family, on the other hand, is well-established and land-owning:

The Durhams lived in a remote part of England on the Wilts and Somerset border. Though not an old family, they had held land for four generations, and its influence had passed on to them.²²⁵

In describing this household, Forster demonstrates that his interest in sociological details has not been submerged. In a realistic tone, he tells us:

Clive's great- great-uncle had been Lord Chief justice in the reign of George IV... A hundred years had nibbled into the fortune, which no wealthy bride had replenished, and both house and estate were marked, not indeed, with decay, but with the immobility that precedes it.²²⁶

Penge possesses a rapidly fading pastoral beauty; a newly-built train station already mars the view of the estate. Nonetheless, its park, fields, and woods are reminiscent of Howards End. Unlike the latter home, however, Penge inspires no feelings of warmth in its visitors. Clive's family is petty, snobbish, and essentially undignified. The full tragedy of Penge

becomes apparent only through a comparison with the ancestral home of Ruth Wilcox, where "comradeship, not passionate, that is our highest gift as a nation" resides.²²⁷ One remembers the sense of completeness Margaret feels upon her visit to Howards End. Forster comments:

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 with- out bitterness until all men are brothers.²²⁸

By contrast, the way of life at Penge is frustrating, fragmentary, and uninteresting. It consists of a series of elaborate, pretentious social gestures; social niceties are observed with an alarming rigour. Unlike Margaret on her visit to Howards End, Maurice finds himself restless and in a constant state of anxiety whenever he visits Penge. Despite the fact that Mrs. Durham extends a patronizing form of acceptance to the young man, he continually fears that someone is slighting him for the sake of his suburban upbringing.

Since Maurice himself is an incorrigible snob, he suffers a kind of retributive justice at the hands of Mrs. Durham.* His attitude first reveals itself in his treatment of the family servants. Visiting his home on a school vacation, he abuses them as soon as an opportunity arises:

* Dr. Barry also snubs Maurice. Says he: "What would you want with a university degree? It was never intended for the suburban classes". cf. Maurice, 79.

'They are Mother's woodstacks, not yours', said Maurice, and they went indoors. The Howells were not offended, though they pretended to be so to one another. They had been servants all their lives, and liked a gentleman to be a snob. 'He has quite a way with him already', they told the cook. 'More like his father'.²²⁹

As he develops into a "promising suburban tyrant", Maurice learns to "keep the servants in order".²³⁰ Like the Wilcoxes, he arrogantly displays his tough-mindedness by asserting the superiority of his own class. At Penge, for example, he makes a series of shocking remarks about 'the poor' to Clive's wife, and succeeds in impressing her:

'I've had to do with the poor too', said Maurice, taking a piece of cake, 'but I can't worry over them. One must give them a leg up for the sake of the country generally, that's all. They haven't our feelings. They don't suffer as we should in their place'.*

Anne looked disapproval, but she felt that she had entrusted her hundred pounds to the right sort of stockbroker.²³¹

Maurice's treatment of the lower classes reflects the viewpoint of both the Durham and the Hall households. Clive's mother patronizes her employees continually;²³² similarly, Maurice's relatives refuse to entertain the idea that "servants might be flesh and blood like ourselves".²³³

* Helen Schlegel makes a similar comment about the unfortunate Jacky Bast: "The admirable creature isn't capable of tragedy", says she. cf. Howards End, 108.

Maurice's class-consciousness hampers his development as effectively as does his distaste for homosexuality. Even as a child, he realizes that his favourite associates are not respectable companions. 'So you don't know any men?' queries Mr. Ducie. 'Mother keeps a coachman and George in the garden , but of course you mean gentlemen', Maurice replies dutifully.²³⁵ As he grows older, he finds it increasingly difficult to give this acceptable response; his beliefs and his desires clash continually. At his office, he admires various handsome clients, regardless of their social status. Only his awareness of "attendant odours from the abyss"* prevents him from becoming intimate with these individuals. Meanwhile, his suburban outlook remains inviolate:

The feeling that can impel a gentleman
towards a person of lower class stands
self-condemned.²³⁶

As Maurice gazes into his mirror after a particularly upsetting incident of this kind, he realizes that his public and private actions are rapidly diverging.+
Writes Forster:

* In his references to the lower classes in Maurice, Forster echoes the imagery used to describe the Basts in Howards End. cf. Maurice, 132 and Howards, 108-114.

+ Maurice's behaviour violates one of the primary principles for right conduct as outlined by the Schlegel sisters. According to them, "public life should mirror whatever is good in the life within". cf. Howards, 28.

What a solid young citizen he looked - Quiet, honourable, prosperous without vulgarity. On such does England rely. Was it conceivable that on Sunday last he had nearly assaulted a boy?²³⁷

By the time Maurice meets Scudder, Class has affected him in countless ways. In this new friendship, it poses many problems. Since Alec is a gamekeeper and Maurice is a businessman, there are no social conventions for them to follow.* One of the first class-oriented difficulties they encounter involves a question of etiquette. After spending the night with his lover, Maurice finds himself in a minor dilemma:

Simcox and Scudder; two servants. He would have to give Scudder some handsome present now; indeed, he would like to, but what should it be? What could one give to a man in that position?²³⁸

This initial awkwardness foreshadows the experiences of the two men in the days that follow. Their social and political affiliations are diametrically opposed; they meet across the barriers of their own deeply-rooted prejudices. As a stalwart member of the bourgeoisie, Maurice does not even like to play cricket with his social inferiors.²³⁹ Similarly, as a servant of the Durhams, Scudder has been seething with resentment towards the upper classes for a long time. He vents his anger in the following diatribe:

* Of course, the fact that they are homosexuals also determines the unconventionality of their relations. cf. Thesis, Chapter Two.

"Don't talk to me about Penge...Oo! Mah! Penge where I was always a servant and Scudder do this and Scudder do that and the old lady, what do you think she once said? She said, "Oh would you most kindly of your goodness post this letter for me, what's your name?" What's yer name! Every day for six months I come up to Clive's bloody front porch door for orders, and his mother don't know my name. She's a bitch... Maurice, you wouldn't believe how servants get spoken to. It's too shocking for words".²⁴⁰

In the light of these personal hostilities, the union of Maurice and Alec is remarkable. Indeed, before the novel's conclusion, both characters attempt to abandon the relationship. On one occasion, Maurice drives determinedly away from Penge. As he leaves, he glances behind him in confusion:

Alec was close to him, and stamped one foot, as though summoning him. That was the final vision, and whether of a devil or a comrade Maurice had no idea. Oh, the situation was disgusting - of that he was certain, and indeed never wavered till the end of his life.²⁴¹

In commenting on Maurice's outlook, Vivien Mercier asks:

Is the situation disgusting because Alec is a man or a gamekeeper?²⁴²

Whether the ambiguity of the above passage was intended by Forster or not, it seems appropriate; questions of Class in this novel are inextricably connected with the issue of homosexuality. For example, we learn that if the two lovers were tried, the police would release Maurice, and sentence Alec, because of their respective social positions.²⁴³ Thus, even in court trials of

homosexuality, class-consciousness rears its ugly head. At every turn, an inbred desire to adhere to the rigid stratifications of Edwardian England threatens to overwhelm the lovers. Again and again, Maurice in particular experiences a guilt and fear that precludes the possibility of love:

Maurice had gone outside his class, and it served him right.²⁴⁴

Only the touch of his beloved reassures Maurice, and helps him to overcome his reluctance to stay with his friend. However, his uncertainty is clearly never vanquished; as the work closes, we learn that Maurice still mysteriously maintains that "the situation" is evil.²⁴⁵ His decision brings him little immediate comfort:

Maurice said in affectionate yet dejected tones, 'All right. To Hell with it', and they passed on together in the rain.²⁴⁶

One can only hope that the future of these unfortunate lovers proves that their commitment to each other has been worthwhile.

In A Passage To India, Forster continues to document the results of various experiments in human relations. At the beginning of the novel, Aziz and his companions "discuss as to whether or not it is possible to be friends with an Englishman".²⁴⁷ This question reverberates throughout the work, as Anglo-Indians and

natives mingle and clash. Forster singles out Aziz's varied experiences with the British Raj in order to explore this issue fully. As a well-educated doctor, Aziz is the perfect candidate for adventures in inter-racial intimacy; he is more likely to gain acceptance in an all-white environment than most of the other Indians. However, even he feels caught in "the net Great Britain has thrown over India",²⁴⁸ and he is constantly snubbed by his superiors. Only brief moments of communion with sympathetic Englishmen keep him from becoming completely embittered. For example, after an unpleasant visit to the compound of Major Callendar, he meets the kindly Mrs. Moore, newly arrived from England. Encountering goodwill, Aziz is immediately heartened:

He was excited partly by his wrongs, but much more by the knowledge that someone sympathized with them...The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up, and though his words were querulous his heart began to glow secretly.²⁴⁹

The Bridge Party held to "bridge the gap between East and West"²⁵⁰ reveals how rare these genuine exchanges of sympathy are; it is merely a superficial gesture towards Democracy. First of all, it reminds us of the cruelties of the caste system, since only certain Indians are invited. Like the British class system, this social structure divides a nation, and denies the human rights

of the masses.* Beyond the circle of respectable Indians, there are the lower orders:

Clients, waiting for pleaders, sat in the dust outside. These had not received a card from Mr. Turton. And there were circles even beyond these - people who wore nothing but a loincloth, people who were not even that, and spent their lives in knocking two sticks together before a scarlet doll..²⁵¹

Forster comments sadly:

All invitations must proceed from heaven perhaps; perhaps it is futile for men to initiate their own unity, they do but widen the gulf between them by the attempt.²⁵²

Secondly, the Bridge Party reveals the nervousness and awkwardness with which the Indians and the members of the British Raj relate to one another. Like the homosexual and his friend, or the gentleman and the labourer, the official and the native depicted here have no suitable conventions with which to lubricate social intercourse. Writes Forster of the people at the Party:

There was a curious uncertainty about their gestures, as if they sought for a new formula which neither East nor West could provide.²⁵³

After the Bridge Party breaks up, Mrs. Moore asks Ronny to work for better inter-racial relations. He replies in the voice of officialdom:

* Forster also tells us that religious disputes divide the people of India. In the village Aziz moves to, he discovers how serious the divisions between Brahman, Moslem, and Hindu are: "Here, the cleavage was between Brahman and Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the running, and sometimes not mentioned for days". cf. Passage, p. 287.

"What do you want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire here? I'm not a missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I'm just a servant of the government...We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant!"²⁵⁴

Ronny's words reflect his unwillingness to "connect" the public and private spheres of existence. To him, moral considerations are the province of those who are interested in the British Empire. In his official capacity, he sees no need to attempt to cross the barriers of class or race. His attitude reflects the results of his public-school training, his bourgeois complacency, and the public stance of the Raj. In other words, he speaks in accordance with all of the social institutions that have spawned him, with one important exception: his family. By the time he wrote A Passage To India, Forster seems to have tired of creating mildly amusing, snobbish mothers. Hence, he offers us Ronny Heaslop's parent, instead. Mrs. Moore reflects the wisdom of both Hinduism and Christianity when she turns to her son, and says:*

" I'm going to argue, and indeed dictate...
The English are out here to be pleasant...
Because India is part of the earth. And
God has put us on earth in order to be
pleasant to each other. God...is...love...
God has put us on earth to love our neighbours
and to show it."²⁵⁵

* Mrs. Moore's words foreshadow the inscription of the words of an Indian poet on a poster during the course of the Brahman religious celebration that culminates in a cult in her honour. 'God si love' is a slightly garbled version of Mrs. Moore's own words. cf. Passage, 281.

At the next social gathering attended by Indians and British subjects, we are reminded once again of the difference between the public-school mentality of Ronny and the open-mindedness of Mrs. Moore. While he remains firmly fixed in the India of power politics and subtle snobbism, she begins to acknowledge an inner India, where peace and human kindness reside. In this scene, the latter realm is symbolized by Godbole, and his "song of an unknown bird".²⁵⁶ As the natives and officials converse irritably, he sits at a slight distance, quietly sipping tea. His equability is immediately apparent:

He wore a turban that looked like pale purple macaroni, coat, waistcoat, dhoti, socks with clocks. The clocks matched the turban, and his whole appearance suggested harmony - as if he had reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed.²⁵⁷

At the very moment during which Ronny, with his "qualified bray of the callow official"²⁵⁸ insults Aziz, Godbole introduces a Brahman melody to still the din. Hence, he reminds the party of the transcendent, all-inclusive nature of love. In the song, a milkmaid*

*N.B. Once again, Forster associates love and the beloved with the lower classes. Not only is the singer a milkmaid but also, "only the servants underst(an)d her song".
cf. Passage, 78.

calls to Shri Krishna, saying:

'Do not come to me only. Multiply yourself into a hundred Krishnas, and let one go to each of my hundred companions, but one, O Lord of the Universe, come to me'.²⁵⁹

While Ronny departs abruptly, completely missing Godbole's message, Mrs. Moore remains behind to ask a question:

'But he comes in some other song, I hope?'
said Mrs. Moore gently.²⁶⁰

Although she receives a vaguely negative reply, it is quite clear that the feeling of hope for mankind that she brings away from this gathering is positive, indeed.

The actual outcome of this social event is optimistic also, for Fielding and Dr. Aziz finally meet. Initially, the two men are uncomfortable in each other's presence. The barriers of race and class threaten to undermine their natural sympathies. Like Maurice upon his arrival at Penge, Aziz expects to be slighted at any moment. Furthermore, he reveals that, for his own part, he has accepted as truth certain stereotypes about the British. Thus, he is surprised to discover that Fielding lives in an untidy room. He admits that he expects an English gentleman to have
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"everything arranged coldly on shelves"*; in other words,

* Later in the novel, Fielding reveals that he, too, is sensitive about these racial stereotypes. He is unwilling to admit the somewhat pallid nature of his emotional life, fearing that Aziz will call it "everything arranged coldly on shelves". cf. Passage, 115.

he anticipates a kind of sterility. Despite these preliminary misunderstandings, however, it is clear that a British friend has been discovered for Aziz, and a potential ally for the Indians. Cyril Fielding, who is an intellectual by nature and a teacher by profession, will educate anyone, including "public school boys, mental defectives, and policemen"²⁶²; he is, in fact, the least snobbish character in the canon. Since Fielding insists upon thinking for himself, the Raj considers him to be a disruptive force. Adds Forster: "and rightly, for ideas are fatal to caste".²⁶³ Like Aziz, Fielding is well-qualified for participation in an inter-racial friendship. The following description of his liberal creed demonstrates this effectively:

The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence...He had no racial feeling - not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd - instinct does not flourish.²⁶⁴

In addition to meeting Fielding, Aziz talks to Miss Quested for the first time on this occasion. She is not as open-minded as Fielding, for Forster tells us:

In her ignorance, she regarded [Aziz] as 'India', and never surmised that his outlook was limited and his method inaccurate and that no one is India.²⁶⁵

In love with the idea of this foreign country, and fond of the concept of democracy, Adela has "no real affection for Aziz, or Indians generally".²⁶⁶ Unlike Fielding's, "her liberalism, merely intellectual, does not touch her emotions".²⁶⁷ Nonetheless, it does cause her to think about racial prejudice. "I think my countrymen are mad", she remarks, at the Bridge Party. "Fancy inviting guests and not treating them properly!"²⁶⁸ Once having said this, however, she shows no signs of knowing any better herself. Alone with Aziz at the Marabar Caves, she unwittingly insults him three times. First of all, she tells him she worries about becoming a typical Anglo-Indian female, "ungenerous and snobby about Indians".²⁶⁹ Unfortunately, she adds a truth too painful for small talk, and offends the sensitive Indian. "I am told we all get rude after a year", says she.²⁷⁰ Adela's lack of tact stems from her blind rationalism. Insulting Aziz again, she remarks:

"There will have to be something universal in this country...or how else are barriers to be broken down?"²⁷¹

Comments Forster:

She was only recommending the universal brotherhood Aziz sometimes dreamed of, but as soon as it was put into prose it became untrue.²⁷²

Finally, just before her mysterious disappearance into the caves, Adela asks what Bonnie Finel^kstein calls

"the fatal question about polygamy"²⁷³, and relations between this white girl and the Indian doctor are irrevocably damaged.

In inviting the ladies to the Marabar Caves in the first place, Aziz has run a terrible risk. Like Maurice Hall, he worries constantly about his image in the community. As Maurice becomes involved with Alec, the guilt he feels is partially due to his sense of responsibility toward the Halls:

He had also sinned against his family...
He opposed [his desire for Alec] to his
work, his family, his friends, his position
in society.²⁷⁴

Since Aziz has children to provide for, his sense of familial obligations is greater than Maurice's:

He must not disgrace his children by some
silly escapade. Imagine if it got about
that he was not respectable! His professional
position too must be considered...²⁷⁵

Once Aziz decides to carry through his plans for the expedition to the Marabar Caves, his difficulties increase. Like Maurice, he too must function without the aid of previously established rules of conduct. Working out acceptable arrangements for the outing proves to be an exhausting assignment. Meals, for example, constitute a particular problem, because he is feeding Moslems, Hindus, and Englishmen; each group has ^{its} unique customs, and fixed dietary codes. Despite all of the care he takes, of course, terrible

problems descend upon him. Writes Forster:*

Trouble after trouble encountered him,
because he had challenged the spirit
of the Indian earth, which tries to
keep man in compartments.²⁷⁶

Like Maurice, Aziz must go against what is usually natural, as well as against what is socially acceptable. In A Passage To India, uniting east and west is shown to be nearly as abnormal as the coupling of two males. As usual, Forster manifests a complex apprehension of the situation he is trying to describe. Clearly, he knows that conventions are not, in fact, completely arbitrary. Heterosexuality is "normal" by definition; most people tend to be that way. Similarly, man's tendency to affiliate himself with a small group rather than with the entire mass of humanity is also natural. As anyone who has ever belonged to a clearly identifiable religion or ethnic group knows, one's sense of security and personal identity profit greatly by the experience. Leaving this group behind could prove traumatic, indeed. Having granted this, however, Forster still expects us to have the courage, or "obstinacy", needed to take the necessary leaps into the unknown, whenever we feel that they are desirable. Thus, he sympathizes with Aziz, who finds himself excluded from society, "restrained on all sides by barriers of class and race".²⁷⁷ Like

* cf. "The fissures in the Indian soil are infinite". Passage, 288.

Maurice*, Aziz becomes an outlaw, simply by trying to act of his own free will. Writes Forster:

From the moment of his arrest Aziz was done for, he had dropped like a wounded animal; he had despaired, not through cowardice, but because he knew that an English woman's word would always out-weigh his own.²⁷⁸

Like Maurice and Alec, Aziz finds himself compelled to leave his home in search of greater social freedom. Thus he leaves India's British Raj behind him, just as the two homosexuals leave England. Writes Forster:

Aziz's impulse to escape from the English was sound. They had frightened him permanently, and there are only two reactions against fright: to kick and scream on committees, or to retreat to a remote jungle, where the Sahib seldom comes.²⁷⁹

While one must imagine the 'greenworld' of Maurice, Aziz's new residence is briefly but effectively described. Even his medical practice is affected:

Here in the backwoods he let his instruments rust, ran his little hospital at half steam, and caused no undue alarm.²⁸⁰

His life takes on some of the joys that Maurice and Alec may find difficult to attain:

* Aziz's situation is actually more similar to that of Alec, whose social status puts him in a weaker position than Maurice. "Clive on the bench will continue to sentence Alec in the dock. Maurice may get off". cf. Maurice, Terminal Note, p. 222.

Life passed pleasantly, the climate was healthy so that the children could be with him all the year round, and he had married again - not exactly a marriage, but he liked to regard it as one.²⁸¹

In this new environment, Aziz is clearly renewed:

He read his Persian, wrote his poetry, had his horse, and sometimes got some shikar while the good Hindus looked the other way.²⁸²

His existence would, in fact, seem idyllic, if it were not for the fact that his friendship with Fielding has disintegrated. At the end of the novel, the union of England and India seems as impossible as ever. In contrast with the presentation of the homosexual friendship in Maurice, Forster's handling of the inter-racial relationship in A Passage To India is realistic. In this latter work, no simple method of leaping across a vast social chasm is discovered. Thus, our last image of Fielding and Aziz is a sad one:

We shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then! - [Aziz] rode against [Fielding] furiously - 'and then', he concluded, half kissing him, 'you and I shall be friends'.

'Why can't we be friends now?' said the other, holding him affectionately. It's what I want. It's what you want'.²⁸³

Nature, it seems, still reigns supreme at the conclusion of this work. Forster continues:

But the horses didn't want it - they
swerved apart; the earth didn't want
it...the temples, the tank, the jail,
the palace, the birds, the carrion, the
Guest House...: they didn't want it,
they said in their hundred voices, 'No,
not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there'.²⁸⁴

CONCLUSION

The call to Krishna echoes throughout A Passage To India; with each repetition, it gains in significance. On one occasion, every item in a rather paltry countryside calls out, and Forster comments wryly:

There was not enough god to go round.¹ Clearly, the cry is not reserved for sacred occasions, but is an everyday reality. India, we learn, "calls 'Come' through her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and august".² On another occasion, Aziz voices his own form of the invitation. Like Godbole, he is suddenly inspired in the midst of a social event, and recites a poem out loud. He speaks of "our loneliness...our isolation, our need for the Friend who never comes yet is not entirely disproved".³ Later, he explains that the Friend is a Persian expression for God.⁴ Gradually, the nature of this godhead is revealed to us. As the novel draws to a close, Krishna makes a mysterious but effective personal appearance at a Hindu Festival held in his honour. The face of the god remains hidden;⁵ nonetheless, the Indians greet him with joyous song and dance. It is a chaotic but splendid apotheosis:

The clock struck midnight, and simultaneously the rending note of the conch broke forth, followed by the trumpeting of elephants; all

who had packets of powder threw them at the altar, and in the rosy dust and incense, and clanging and shouts, Infinite Love took upon itself the form of Shri Krishna, and saved the world. All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways and the stars; all became joy, all laughter;... Some jumped in the air, others flung themselves prone and embraced the bare feet of the universal lover...⁶

In his review of Maurice, Frank Kermode writes:

The coming of the friend, recurrent in Maurice, is a theme Forster realized finally in the coming of Krishna, after many failed invocations, in A Passage To India.⁷

In Maurice, the theme first appears in his pubescent fantasies. To the reader of A Passage To India, it becomes clear that Maurice is dreaming of Krishna:

He scarcely saw a face, scarcely heard a voice say, 'That is your friend', and then it was over, having filled him with beauty and taught him tenderness.⁸

In both works, the vision described is a fleeting one, and the face of the beloved remains hidden. In Maurice, however, the longing for an Ideal Friend also represents "a commonplace of Idealized homosexuality".⁹ Hence, in Maurice, the friend is a metaphor for an actual lover, as well as an infinite one. As was explained earlier, Maurice's dream first begins to come true when he meets Clive at Cambridge. Once again, the reference to Krishna is relevant. As the two boys become close, the word "come" expresses their feelings best. Just as the people and objects of India call their god to

come, so Maurice and Clive beckon to each other. Forster repeats the word in the following passage until it attains the powers of incantation:

Hall had acquired a peculiar and beautiful expression...It beckoned to Clive...saying, 'This is all very well, you're clever, we know - but come!'...he felt himself replying, 'I'll come - I didn't know.'

'You can't help yourself now. You must come'.

'I don't want to help myself'.

'Come then'.

He did come.¹⁰

Later, as Scudder and Maurice unite, they, too, speak in the language of Krishna. Forster describes the beginning of their first night together as follows:

Maurice really was asleep when he sprang up and flung wide the curtains with a cry of 'Come!' The action awoke him; what had he done that for?...What use was it? He was too old for fun in the damp.¹¹

At this point in the narration, Scudder magically appears:

The head and shoulders of a man rose up, paused, a gun was leant against the window sill very carefully, and someone he scarcely knew moved towards him and knelt beside him and whispered, 'Sir, was you calling out for me? - Sir, I know, - I know,' and touched him.¹²

Despite this auspicious beginning, of course, the relations between Maurice and Scudder are filled with problems. Like Godbole and Mrs. Moore in A Passage To India, Maurice becomes uncertain that his calls for a respite from loneliness will ever be answered.

As Scudder prepares to sail on the Normannia,
Maurice watches Romance wither:

Alec was not a hero or a god, but a
man embedded in society, like himself,
for whom sea and the woodland and the
freshening breeze and the sun were pre-
paring no apotheosis. 13

One recalls the worst expectations of the cynics in A Pas-
sage To India, which suddenly appear to have been fulfilled.
Personal relationships, that Forster has placed so much hope
in, seem useless:

Maurice was back with his loneliness as it
had been before Clive, as it was after Clive,
and would now be for ever. He had failed, and
that wasn't the saddest! He had seen Alec fail.
In a way they were one person. 14

This passage ends with one of the most depressing comments
Forster ever made on human relations. He writes:

Love had failed. Love was an emotion through
which you occasionally enjoyed yourself. It
would not do things. 15

From the above discussion, the close thematic relation
between these two novels is immediately apparent. Furthermore,
the origin of the subject matter in question in the author's own
experiences is easily ascertained. Having just returned from
India at the time that he wrote these novels, India and Eastern
philosophy were very much on Forster's mind. When we examine
the personal reminiscence of the festival in honour of Krishna
recorded in The Hill of Devi (1953), we find that it corresponds

to the relevant section in A Passage to India in many ways. Since the Shri Krishna of Indian philosophy is active and passive, and the god of love is the only road to transcendental meditation, one can understand why he captured Forster's imagination. In addition, he is one of the closest equivalents to Pan in eastern mythology. As a herdsman and wrestler, Shri Krishna obviously resembles this other favourite Forsterian godhead. Clearly, in India Forster discovered a new pattern of images for expressing his thoughts. Similarly, his experiences back in England prior to the writing of Maurice sparked his creativity. In the Terminal Note to Maurice, the biographical origin of the work is revealed. The passage of particular interest to us here is the one in which Forster speaks of his respect for the "yogified mysticism" of Carpenter.¹⁶ His meeting with this man prompted him to write Maurice, just as his adventures in India inspired A Passage To India. Furthermore, the theology of Carpenter is clearly eastern, rather than western, in its outlook; thus, it complemented the Indian influence.

Hence, the centrality of some traditional Eastern mythology in both Maurice and A Passage to India is clearly established, and Forster's method of transforming life into art is briefly revealed. By analysing this straightforward

instance of a thematic link between Maurice and one of the other novels, a brief conclusion to this thesis can be formulated. First of all, Forster dealt with very similar problems in all of his novels, including Maurice. The theme of beckoning to a friend recurs in each of the works.¹⁷ Secondly, just as we have discovered on countless other occasions, the use of the material in the thesis-novel is artistically inferior to its corresponding employment in other instances. In particular, the call of Krishna issuing from the mouths of Maurice and his lovers has far fewer cosmic implications than this same litany possesses when it pours from the mouths of a hundred Indias. Krishna as an infinite lover means more to a heterosexual audience than Krishna as a homosexual friend, and Forster simply does not write as well in Maurice as in A Passage to India. Thirdly, from what we have observed, one can surmise that in transferring his thoughts into forms that are acceptable to a heterosexual audience, Forster was required to emphasize the universal aspects of the experiences he depicted. Using the narrator in The Curate's Friend as his spokesman, the author himself provides evidence that this view is correct. He writes:

Though I try to communicate [...] joy to others - as I try to communicate anything else that seems good - and though I sometimes succeed, yet I can tell no one exactly how it came to me. For if I breathed one word of that, my present life, so agreeable and profitable, would come to an end, my congregation would depart, and so should I... Therefore in the place of the lyrical and rhetorical treatment, so suitable to the subject, so congenial to my profession, I have been forced to use the unworthy medium of a narrative, and to delude you by declaring that this is a short story, suitable for reading on the train. 18

In any case, Forster's actual reasons for writing fiction are ultimately of secondary importance; the artistic products that resulted are what interest us most. As a final statement, I can only emphasize that in my opinion, Forster's achievement in "the unworthy medium of narrative" is, indeed, remarkable.

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¹⁰⁶Passage, 111.

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¹¹¹Passage, 203.

¹¹²Passage, 145.

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NOTES TO CONCLUSION

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⁸E.M. Forster, Maurice, (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), 26.

⁹Bonnie Finkelstein, 143.

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¹¹Maurice, 167.

¹²Maurice, 167.

¹³Maurice, 206.

¹⁴Maurice, 204.

¹⁵Maurice, 204.

¹⁶
Maurice, 217.

¹⁷
cf. the text, p.90, ^{above} 11: "Just as Gino has called to Philip, or Stephen to Rickie, so, too, Freddy impetuously beckons to his male companions....".

¹⁸
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