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Place, Paradox, and Transcendental  
Connection in Three of E. M.  
Forster's Novels

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Alice Catherine Flynn  
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Every continent has its own great spirit of place. Every people is polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the heartland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality.

— D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*

## ABSTRACT

E. M. Forster's fiction reflects his own concern with the spirit of place and his seemingly fruitless search for a spiritual reconciliation between people and places.

Three novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, set out how place functions in Forster's fiction. In these, Forster poses what appears to be an insoluble question for the reader, and proves himself reluctant to achieve closure.

This reluctance to provide answers to the theme of place is a reflection of the philosophical uncertainty which pervades his fiction. Readers are encouraged to arrive at their own conclusions and to negotiate the ambivalence of his novels in order to find their own answers to the baffling nature of life and relationships.

Place, in Forster's fiction, contains an unseen force that is almost tangible. It determines the movement of the characters and guides them towards their intended destinations. The characters in his novels are transformed and manipulated by the device of *genius loci*; yet their changes never enable them to achieve permanent attachments with others nor with places. Although Forster's fiction shows no final harmonious home where ancestry and roots are established, the eponymous house in *Howards End* offers us a window. In it, the sisters achieve an affinity with place; however, there is still no space in which all of humanity can connect, and paradoxically, exclusion is essential to the final scene of reconciliation.

Contradiction and opposition inform all of Forster's fiction. In each novel there are localities which represent the socially-controlled space on the one hand, and on the other, the unfettered region. Although Forster shows a Modernist tendency to nostalgically idealise the past, he continues to search for that delicate equilibrium



between people and place. But just as he criticises and praises culture, he sees that the rural regions have their own contradictory attributes. This thesis traces Forster's treatment of place through personal, social, cultural, and spiritual sites, and the search for an esoteric home and transcendental reconciliation, becoming as it does an increasingly tentative and paradoxical theme.

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## PREFACE

There is a fascination with the mystery of life which eludes rational thought and which can only fleetingly be perceived. This intrigue is Forster's underlying theme and inspires not only the exploration of abstract connection, but also highlights the intangibility of relationships as expressed in his writings. My introduction to E. M. was *A Room With A View*. Although paradoxically I do not examine *A Room With A View* in this thesis, I was fascinated by the diverse characters, the vivid settings, the subtle humour, and Forster's nebulous philosophical approach to life. I felt Forster had something vital to impart about how to live life being true to one's ideals and one's values. Although it was his characters and humour that interested me most, I chose to analyse three of his novels in light of his depiction of place and the role it plays in contributing to the central theme of human connection.

Forster's own relationship with place throughout his life was one of significant intensity, and this preoccupation is reflected in all his work. The first chapter of this thesis looks at his own homes and sites, and the values he attached to them. Forster's personal attachment to places was extraordinarily intense. The emotions he invested in houses and objects served to pave the way for a dramatic portrayal of place in his fiction, and also in his non-fictional works. Spaces became for Forster more than just locations for action and characters, but a real force embedded with the powers to transform. As is shown in his first short story, "The Story of A Panic" (1904), early in his literary career place was employed to penetrate veneers of hypocrisy and respectability. And his stories are a useful indication of the patterns seen in his longer

fiction. The significance he gives to differing regions of the earth sets up a foundation to what becomes an explicit dichotomy.

*Where Angels Fear to Tread*, written in 1905, reveals Forster's emphasis on the opposition of socially-controlled conventionality and liberating unfettered places, and the different cultures and geographies that divide and unify the characters. In this novel, as in the later two, there is a similar progression through edifices towards a meeting-ground of balance and communion. In the Italian town of Monteriano, where there is the hotel, with its cultural and personal contentions; the opera house, which encourages spontaneity and instinctual reactions in the characters; the church, which prompts communication and a participation in life; the cafe, where cultural differences are reinforced and diminished, and finally Gino's house, which is conducive to reconciliation, the characters fulfil their quest in learning how to accommodate for all types of experience and alternative values. They gain a greater understanding of themselves and others. However, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* there is less significance allocated to the topography of a rural countryside and a populated city than is evident in *Howards End*, and unlike *A Passage to India*, there is less focus on finding connection through spiritual transcendence. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the final ambiguous reconciliation displays the indeterminate and paradoxical use of place in Forster's fiction, which reinforces the impossibility of utopian bonding between the characters.

*Howards End* focuses on the condition of England as a divided country and the possibility of its reconciliation. In this novel Forster presents Howards End as the ideal home for humanity and the basic values that are needed to ensure its survival. He also

identifies the city, London, as a threat to this ideal place and shows the detrimental effects of its rapid growth. Unlike in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the counterpoint between town and country is forcefully developed in *Howards End*. The countryside, however, no longer takes on that penetrative role it plays in the short stories nor the violent exposure that it insists on in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. The mysterious forces given to nature in Forster's earlier works are now embedded in a building, *Howards End*. And so this edifice is given the power to determine the fate of the characters. The Schlegel sisters, who unwittingly are on a mission to find their spiritual home, are transplanted from one house to another. They are forced to vacate their family home, Wickham Place, and they are exposed to the ancient strength of the earth at Oniton. Ducie Street represents a warning to the sisters to avoid emotional repression and grandeur that contribute to the "panic and emptiness" (40) evident in the Wilcoxes. The sisters eventually find their meeting-ground at *Howards End*. Nevertheless, place continues to reinforce the equivocal synthesis that occurs between the characters and which eludes the reader as to where and how a spiritual home for humanity will be established.

In *A Passage to India* the temple offers itself as a meeting-ground for the characters and specific structures continue to reveal the possibilities of division and separation. Initially the mosque provides a space that is conducive to compromise; the civil station is, as Ian Baucom explains, an "outpost" (102) that is cut off from the rest of India; Aziz's house invites human interaction and an expression of emotion; the courtroom scene anticipates the final spiritual unity, and the Marabar Caves are disruptive to the characters, but at the same time a source of commonality. In all three

novels, there is a place where a kind of spiritual reconciliation is achieved and Forster satisfies his desire for a humanistic connection between people who show kindness and tolerance towards each other. But in *A Passage to India* he fully develops place's paradoxical role and India becomes the ideal site for such confusion. The focus on specific buildings also seem to lose relevance as the novel emphasises spiritual fusion, rather than temporal unity. Exclusion and detachment exist on a realistic level, whereas spiritual unity aligns itself with a supreme and magnificent transcendence that only a romantic tone can accommodate. Forster succeeds in revealing that closure to such disjunction is impossible, and by giving no specific answer he continues to leave the question of how we connect unanswered, and humanity spiritually homeless.

## Forster's Earthly Localities

In an address entitled "Three Countries" given to an Italian audience, E. M. Forster spoke of India, Italy and England, and announced: "I want to pay homage to the earthly localities where my books were born" (*Hill of Devi* 289). Forster's novels were born from the geography of Italy, England and India, and undeniably each place is given a spirit which is unique to these novels. However, the places that he constructs as idyllic spaces where a "healthy home" can be temporarily established by the characters, are fictional (Heggland 399). The three novels *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *Howards End* (1910), and *A Passage to India* (1924) show a progression in the expression of Forster's hopes for finding a suitable home for humanity. Simultaneously, as specific buildings lose emphasis, Forster attempts to come closer to finding this spiritual home. In each of these novels, there is an opposition between the town and country, the urban and the rural. Forster's portrayal of the rural is primarily idealised and romantic and by no means a rendition of what, in reality, is often a cultivated and specialised region rather than an untouched wilderness. The socially-controlled regions that feature in his novels are, in contrast, often condemned as places which promote the use of the machine and show evidence of a more modern civilization. The urban regions do not offer themselves as a possible ideal home for humanity, or at least not while these cities remain alienated from the natural world.

In Forster's three novels, the characters move towards their spiritual homes and places of compromise, regardless of the divisive forces of civilization and the strength of nature. The characters feel the need to adopt positions that are aligned with the



opposing places, and by integrating these qualities come closer to achieving a balance which enables them to connect. The characters must develop aspects of themselves that previously denied them access to their more “natural” or “instinctual” attributes and balance these with reason and practicality. At the synthesis of each novel, where the characters temporarily discover a bond, there is an indication that the human components of instinct and reason reconcile, thereby enabling the characters to focus on kindness and tolerance that, in Forster’s fiction, are so important to successful personal relationships.

### **Rooksnest: Forster’s Spiritual Home**

Forster spent his childhood at Rooksnest in Hertfordshire. Here he discovered a community which exemplified the humanistic ideals he endorsed and upheld throughout his life. Forster and his mother, Lily, lived in this small farm house from 1883 to 1893. It appears that for the young boy of four, Rooksnest intensified his already inquisitive personality into the beauty of the world and the significance of small objects and houses. Monie, Forster’s aunt, observed him as an infant and concluded:

One thing I don’t believe any body [sic] makes allowances enough for, and that is his intense enjoyment of this world and all it contains. . . .

He seems to have the attachment of grown up people for each other, for inanimate objects. . . . (Furbank 1:15)

Forster’s enthusiasm for the intangible influence of places and even of the values embedded in objects, such as furniture, is consistently supported in his fiction. Places and objects could represent the manifestation of a healthy morality or the declining state

of humanity. The critic John Beer also comments on the extraordinary affinity Forster established with specific sites and his dependence on their survival. Beer remarks:

Such emotions for particular places are a part of his essential imaginative universe, of the reality by which he lives: and if they are destroyed, a part of his permanent life is destroyed with them. (42)

In 1945, when Rooksnest was under threat from local government, the severity of Forster's reaction illustrates the attachment he made with this land and the possibility of his own disposition being affected by such a loss. The spectre of such destruction could have been a source of psychological trauma for Forster. As mechanization and technological progress became more central to everyday life in the early twentieth century, Forster's fictional images became tainted by this reality of England. Modern life, according to Forster, was becoming more complex and, as a result he developed, as Wilfred Stone explains: "a favouring of smallness and simplicity against bigness and complication, and a sensitivity to the balance of nature" ("Forster: The Environmentalist" 182). For Forster, who believed that "we can only love what we know personally" ("Tolerance" 44), cities and their cosmopolitanism represented an impersonal and alienating world.

Throughout Forster's life, his desire for permanence was achieved by embedding tangible objects with meaning and value. These objects could then empower Forster, for he strongly believed in ancestral roots and a spirit of place as a source of stability. Forster's notion of the "essential past", which involves gaining strength from the memory of one's ancestors, was substantiated by the place in which he lived (*Stone Cave* 22).<sup>1</sup> Although Rooksnest was never occupied by Forster's

relations, it was a place that could for himself and his mother, represent their own family history. Rooksnest was a source of permanence and hope for Forster, in what was becoming an increasingly restless civilization.

The nostalgia that Forster shows for Rooksnest and the surrounding countryside — in the extract “Rooksnest” written in 1881 — confirms the unusually intense bond he had with the inanimate. The detailed description of the house, its neighbours and the farm, testifies to the acute attentiveness Forster showed to his environment. The account he gives shows a hint of the life he gave to the small beauties of nature:

We were very fond of the meadow. It had three fine greengage trees . . . and a large oak on which hung a swing. . . . It had hedges full of clematis, primroses, bluebells, dog-roses. . . . In it was a little dell which communicated with our pond in the back garden to prevent it getting too full. From it were most lovely views of the surrounding country.

(“Rooksnest” 339)

Just as Forster personifies the pond that interacts with the dell, so too did he give animation to the eponymous house of *Howards End*. Howards End is allocated a position of omniscience that acts as a catalyst to the maturity of the characters as they inadvertently reach the destiny assigned to them and designed for them.

But Forster’s appreciation for Nature’s innocence and its capacity for greatness resulted in his tendency to idealise the rural life. The rural life he experienced at Rooksnest remained throughout his life the embodiment of an ideal. As Nicola Beauman explains,

these early years in the country gave . . . Morgan a lifelong empathy with rural values. It is a theme that will often recur but at Rooksnest he concluded that life in the country is more 'real', has more integrity, is more in touch with preceding and successive generations. (41)

The outdoor life represented for Forster the healthy life where physical activity, intimate personal relations and a proximity to nature are sustained. Forster portrays the rural life as closer to the authentic. It is more "real" because it is not as affected by the stimulus of city life and less affected by the pressures of modern life. Forster believed village inhabitants were more in touch with what Alina Slaza calls, "the deeper rhythms of nature" (27); their lives lack pretension and they thoroughly participate in life. The natural processes of the land is not a theme Forster overtly explores, although he does question the relationship between humanity and the earth, and the effects of their detachment and connection.

The contrast between smallness and bigness reveals Forster's admiration for what is intimately knowable.<sup>2</sup> The small village, as opposed to the large and impersonal city, promotes qualities that aid in connection rather than detach the characters from each other and their environment. Forster found Rooksnest to be a symbol of his beliefs in tradition and ancestry, and it represented all those quaint attributes that the increasingly cosmopolitan city had lost. As Nicola Beauman states:

Rooksnest is small: one reason why Morgan loved it. He, unlike Lily, already felt . . . intimidated by houses like Milton or Abinger, or even beloved Battersea Rise. . . . Rooksnest was old enough to be ageless and

it was unpretentious. . . . It had been home to generations of simple people and had itself remained simple. (40)

Throughout Forster's novels, sincere and unpretentious characters inhabit small and modest houses. In *Howards End*, Mrs. Wilcox owns Howards End and Leonard Bast lives in a small flat.<sup>3</sup> By endowing these characters with an admirable simplicity, Forster shows a pattern that houses and spaces can often reflect the moral, emotional and physical state of a person or family.

When Forster and his mother were turned out of Rooksnest in 1893, it deeply affected them both. Nicola Beauman claims Forster "felt so bitter" (52) about their eviction that in 1948, when he was an elderly man being turned out of West Hackhurst, he felt the same despair and sense of homelessness. His attachment to West Hackhurst had the same basis as his connection with Rooksnest. Forster regretted, as Beauman states, "that Lily had lost her chance to establish a tradition, an ancestral home. But what he missed most of all was the countryside" (52). Forster's obsession with roots and finding his own spiritual home intensified later in life. When Bob Buckingham, a life-long friend, suggested to him a modern semi-detached house in East Molesey, Forster refused the offer because he could not imagine himself or his furniture living in it.<sup>4</sup> He was offered a place at King's College which he accepted and he lived there until his death in 1970. However, he never had the same sense of security that he had found at Rooksnest: "The house is my childhood and safety. The three attics preserve me" (Furbank 1:16).

After leaving Rooksnest, Forster felt the carefree life he found there had diminished. In 1893 he and Lily moved to Tonbridge and Forster entered the Tonbridge School. Here he suffered persecution from other schoolboys, and his dislike for the public school system began. In later years, Forster claimed the worst thing that school did to him was “to pretend that it was the world in miniature. For it hindered me from discovering how lovely . . . the world can be” (Furbank 1:48). It was not until he attended university and travelled to Europe that Forster felt he could abandon the memory of these unpleasant years. The public school came to represent the aspects of English middle-class life that Forster most despised, such as hypocrisy, pretension and practicality. Forster was also averse to the “undeveloped heart” which was a result of a school system focused on the notion of masculinity (“Notes” 13).<sup>5</sup> In “Notes on the English Character” in *Abinger Harvest*, Forster holds the school system responsible for producing emotionally immature men:

Just as the heart of England is in the middle class, so is the heart of the middle class in the public school system . . . [Englishmen] go forth into [the world] with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds and undeveloped hearts. And it is this undeveloped heart that is largely responsible for the difficulties of Englishmen abroad. (13)

With the help of his Indian friend, Syed Ross Masood, Forster came to understand that emotion was not something to be measured out. On one occasion Forster scolded Masood for displaying an excess of emotion, provoking Masood to reply: “Emotion has nothing to do with appropriateness. It matters only that it shall be sincere” (“Notes” 14). Forster then admitted that Masood had behind him a “tradition, not of middle-

class prudence, but a kingly munificence and splendour” (15). To some extent, in Oriental relationships Forster found a interaction based on kindness and emotion. To him, the East achieved successful personal connection more so than the West. Nonetheless, Forster did not find the East to be a site for connection or India a place free from contention. India was, like other countries in Forster’s fiction, a place where cultural and social values can separate characters.

### Italy: “Where Things Happen”

In 1901, after Forster had completed his study at Cambridge and had not yet published any writing, he travelled to Europe where he found alternatives to English culture. Italy’s picturesque natural surroundings contrasted to the ugliness of the suburbs and the signs of industrial progress that were beginning to invade England’s countryside. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Monteriano, an Italian town, is the site of focus, and Forster admits in *The Hill of Devi* that he chose to represent the city based on his Italian experience. Forster wrote:

On the one hand was the English suburbs with the gray inhibited life that I knew only too well, and on the other was Monteriano, a romantic hill town which I established in Tuscany on the basis of San Gimignano.  
(291)

Italy was a country that evoked for Forster an unfettered place where his characters could be freed from the restrictions of English conventionality. Within its picturesque environment, Italy gave Forster imaginative inspiration, but it also created the

association he would continue to make between the discovery of one's natural instincts and places foreign to England.

England represented to Forster, as Philip Dodd explains, a repressed life of propriety ("England" 213). For many writers of the modern period, Italy was "the symbolic alternative to late Victorian middle-class values" (214). Dodd elaborates:

the commitment of the Italians to love and to people rather than to ideas and things is offered as a model for the English, who shelter themselves from experience and each other in ice-houses of customary behaviour.  
(214)

A conclusion such as this one is, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, implemented by Forster. The novel exhibits social conventions and class distinctions which are more strictly enforced in England than in Italy. Forster could see that Italian society also had its own limitations and prejudices; nevertheless, throughout his work he tended to idealise the "natural" life that is reinforced in Italy as beneficial, and depict English culture as more repressing and stifling to the individual person. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* reveals Forster's preoccupation with such concerns, but eventually he outgrew this focus and concerned himself with more irreducible and abstract concepts.

In 1901 Forster and his mother toured through Milan and Florence visiting "churches, pictures and museums daily", but it was not until they travelled further south that the country began to have an effect on Forster (Furbank 1:84). Naples, unlike the rest of Italy, successfully avoided creating an atmosphere of English suburbia. It was in Naples that Forster absorbed the exotic atmosphere and experienced the "sensuousness of the East . . . in the heat, noise, squalor, the almost intolerably exotic beauty, the



drains and spices” (Beauman 109). This contrasted to the more ordered atmosphere of the English suburbs with their monotonous appearance. In Italy Forster had arrived into a mess, which like Gino’s room in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, “comes of life, not of desolation” (142). Italy — a country with its own social conventions — allowed the mess, which pertains to a more spontaneous approach to life, to enter its domestic and public spaces.

Forster criticised English culture for its conventional standards of behaviour, but his empathy with metropolitan culture also indebted him to England. His associations with the Bloomsbury Group, his literary reviews, his radio broadcasts, and his love for the English countryside, all testify to an element of patriotism he never denied. English culture, to some extent, aided his literary pursuits. Forster was aware that the cultured life was central to his own success as an author and its class system enabled him to lead a relatively privileged life. But the following statement, made when Forster was eighty four, confirms his awareness of the drawbacks of living in places where social conventions dominate over natural expression. He wrote:

how *annoyed* I am with Society for wasting my time by making homosexuality criminal. The subterfuges, the self-consciousness that might have been avoided. (Summers 30)

Although Italy was not a place in which Forster could openly express his sexuality, it was a country where his imagination flourished. Italy was an earthly locality where the spirit of place took effect, and in an Italian valley Forster, like his characters, was exposed to the power of nature and the influence of the *genius loci*. In this valley he was inspired to write “The Story of A Panic” (1904), and thereafter he perceived Italy

to be “the beautiful country where they say ‘yes’, and the place ‘where things happen’” (Furbank 1: 96).

### **“The Story of A Panic”: The Unfettered Space**

“The Story of a Panic” foreshadows the function place has in Forster’s novels. This story sets up an opposition between civilization and the unfettered region of the countryside. In this short story, the idealised place where there is a concentration of earthly forces is the Fontana valley — where the Pan-God attacks a group of English tourists. The characters are propelled to confront their own impulsive reactions and abandon their roles as tourists. Pan, embodying the valley’s potent spirit, penetrates the protective barrier which divides the active participant and the passive observer. The tourist must perceive Italy in reality, rather than view it as merely a picturesque Italian valley. As James Buzard explains, the

special project of Forster’s early work (establishing patterns for the later writings) is to investigate existence within the discourse and the ‘state’ of tourism and the possibilities of circumventing or transcending the obstacles tourism places between ‘travellers’ and the understanding they seek, both of themselves and of the places they visit. (292)

When the English characters are exposed to Pan, all obstacles are destroyed and for an instant they see themselves and the place in an authentic simplicity. The Fontana valley, which is like a “many-fingered green hand, palm upwards” (19), embraces the characters and transports them to an unfettered public space where interaction with the forces of the earth are all-enveloping. The characters are removed from the tourist state

of only observing another place or culture, to actually exploring the land or participating in cultural activities. Eustace, a young English boy, is driven by the spirit of Pan to escape from the restrictions of his middle-class English conventions.

The place in which these disconcerting and liberating events occur reveals how the outdoor realm and foreign territory are sites for transformation. Forster's aim is to awaken the characters from their unnatural existence into the "real life" — a notion explored in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* — where instinct, intuition and passion are expressed and where stifling conventions are abandoned. Forster, in "The Story of A Panic" shows, as James Buzard reveals, that the

tourist can participate in the native culture of the visited place by piercing the veil of respectability . . . . To Forster's mind, one must 'give oneself', as it were, 'bodily', with abandon, to the spirit of the place; it will take over from there". (295)

Nature forces the English characters to confront a "brutal overmastering physical fear" which temporarily pierces their veil of respectability ("The Story" 23), but Eustace is the only character who reasserts the role of his carnal impulses and gives himself completely to the genius loci.

In "The Story of a Panic" the Pan-God acts as a catalyst to the English tourists' awakening. Pan's role is ambivalent in the story, and in the novels the forces of nature also shows the potential to be both sinister and benevolent. The English characters are terrified by their experience, whereas Eustace is liberated from social constraints enabling him to find companionship with Gennaro, an Italian fisher boy. It is from his interaction with Nature that Eustace is able to acknowledge his own human impulses

and express his admiration for Gennaro. Mr. Tytler, the narrator of the story — whose inability to see beauty in Nature is reflected in his belief that Pan is dead — remains mostly immune to the power of Italy. Tytler insists that social conventions are upheld and believes the attachment he detects between the boys is unnatural. As an advocate for social-control, Tytler is at odds with Pan and Nature, and feels more at home in England. Mr. Tytler reminds Gennaro of the differences that separate him from Eustace:

And remember that, though Signor Eustace is sometimes silly and foolish . . . yet you must always behave respectfully to him; for he is a young English gentleman, and you are a poor Italian fisher-boy. (30)

Social convention enforces a separation between Gennaro and Eustace, thereby hindering the possibility of human connection. Patricia Merivale concludes: “Forster’s characters die . . . not from the vision [of Pan], but from the consequences of a civilization that denies the vision” (181). This is a tragedy similar to those that overtake Gino’s baby in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and Leonard Bast in *Howards End*. But contact with Pan, who operates regardless of social control, allows Eustace to make a connection with Gennaro until the latter’s death.

Forster’s romanticised unfettered regions contain a beauty and brutality that is reflected in Pan’s interchangeable qualities as a sinister and benevolent force. The penetrative power of such a raw and primal energy finds its source from the earth. The earth’s chthonic forces are necessary to liberate the characters from the shackles of society and promote a better understanding of themselves, but they are also unthinking and ignore the delicacy of humanity. Nevertheless, such unfettered places have often

been idealised throughout literary history as a sort of paradise; a Garden of Eden.

Raymond Williams reveals the consistent patterns evident in literature: “the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue” (1).

But this glorification suits Forster, who emphasizes the ability of the natural or rural life to transform his characters, to attach them to the land and reestablish, what Jeane Olsen describes as, their “intuitive link with his or her own inner human qualities” (391). The unfettered regions encourage passion and mystery within the characters.

The urban setting, in contrast to the country, promotes the cultured life of art and literature; emphasises education, and enables the characters to achieve what Forster believed was refinement. Raymond Williams also substantiates the notion that “the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication and light” (1). Forster recognises the moral, social and intellectual benefits of English culture; a culture that also emphasises, as Calvin Bedient states, “a provincial colony of duty, conventionality, science, work, and charity . . . ” (183). In the city, integrity and repression can coexist. Forster’s empathy with the cultured life aligns him with the Matthew Arnold. In *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold expresses the same kind of hopes as Forster: “that culture can oppose the forces of selfishness and materialism and bring society to an awareness of its ideal destiny” (Duckworth “Critical” 301).<sup>6</sup> But the failure of Arnold’s idealised state of perfection through the pursuit of culture is shown in Forster’s novels, and this contributes to the paradoxical nature of the theme of human connection. In reality, a fundamental need in the pursuit of culture is money. Tensions arise that Forster cannot resolve.

“The Story of A Panic” presents an extreme case of the paradoxes and oppositions that are exemplified in the later novels. In Forster’s fiction houses and specific buildings are restricting because they are a domestic space and, to some extent, prevent the characters from interacting with each other. But there are houses which, like Rooksnest, offer an example of integration; an integration of the domestic space with the outdoors, and therefore, with the properties of the earth. People can connect within this house, for the rooms may be small, but they can expand to accommodate different views and one’s life experiences. Architecturally small houses can have a large capacity for events and people. Eustace’s room, in contrast, is a space of imprisonment and stifles his moral and physical growth. Gennaro refuses to fetch Eustace from the garden where he is praising nature, for in the house “he might die” (35). His room comes to represent the limitations of society and when the other English characters have retrieved him from the garden, Eustace pleads: “Not to my room. . . . It is so small . . . I nearly saw everything, and now I see nothing at all” (36). Although smallness is an attribute Forster admired, this smallness is a reflection on the opportunities that are missed as a result of both imaginative confinement and social constraints. The paradoxical qualities Forster gives to spaces and buildings reinforces the uncertain scale he appropriates to place in his fiction.

As in Forster’s novels, the successful connection Eustace makes within his own nature and with Gennaro comes at a price. Gennaro dies, while Eustace escapes from society; these events confirm that reconciliation does not necessarily conclude with a utopian bond which stretches across culture and race. “The Story of A Panic” shows the opposition between town and country, but it also clearly reveals the paradoxical

progression the characters make towards detachment from humanity and a place conducive to compromise where human connection can be achieved.

### Modernity, “The Machine Stops”, and World War

Between 1901 and 1908, Forster developed objections to the pestilent nature of modern progress. His focus on place in his fiction also took a shift from that of a purely natural setting to a greater concern with the effects of civilization on nature. Industrial progress and the machine age disconcerted Forster, and his anxiety is illustrated in this statement:

It really *is* a new civilization. I have been born at the end of the age of peace and can't expect to feel anything but despair. Science instead of freeing man . . . is enslaving him to machines. . . . The little houses that I am used to will be swept away, the fields will reek of petrol, and the airships will shatter the stars. (Stone “Forster: The Environmentalist” 172, original emphasis)

The threat posed to Forster's intimate and knowable houses by the spread of suburbia, the polluted cities and the rapid growth of industrialism, intensified his perception of the urban place as a toxic and malignant force that was destructive to the natural beauty of the rural areas. Although Forster knew that his little houses were also made from modern materials, he could never equate the problem. In *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951), a collection of his essays, Forster wrote of his dilemma: “People must have houses” , but “I wonder what compensation there is in the world of the spirit for the destruction of the life here, the life of tradition” (57). In Forster's fiction, it is the

grand and ostentatious houses occupying the city that he disapproves of, and he views their dominating presence as a sign of the break between humanity and what is personally knowable. The towering flats, factories, and crowded suburbs were a reflection of the general detachment of humanity from nature, and an indication of civilization's moral decay.

Forster's short story "The Machine Stops" (1909) exemplifies the pattern in his longer fiction: that the machine and socially-controlled places cause division and separation. This story situates the machine at the centre of the universe; all nature has been destroyed. Kuno, a young man who wishes to visit his mother Vashti, is warned by her that "the surface of the earth is only dust and mud . . . the cold of the outer air would kill you" ("The Machine" 110). In this futuristic story Forster depicts a place devoid of human intimacy and nature. This detachment, taken as it is to the extreme, causes humanity to become a victim of its own invention: "the entire communication system broke down . . . and the world . . . ended" ("The Machine" 137). In this place, what Wilfred Stone terms an "anti-Wellsian dystopia", Forster's pessimistic attitude towards the machine age climaxes ("The Environmentalist" 184). Ten years after *A Passage to India* was published, Forster wrote in the pageant for the Abinger Church Preservation Fund in 1934 — which progresses through the history of the Abinger Woods — an epilogue. In it Forster remarks:

Houses and bungalows . . . flats, arterial roads, petrol pumps and pylons  
— are these going to be England? Are these man's final triumph? . . .  
look into the past, and remember that all this beauty is a gift which you  
can never replace, which no money can buy. . . . ("The Abinger" 399)



The endurance of Nature and family houses, for example, were essential to what Forster viewed as a rooted civilization, which would preserve what was priceless and prevent ugliness from invading the countryside. An emphasis on inherited values and family pride could somehow begin to transform the indifferent attitude taken by humanity towards the survival of tradition. Forster believed that by safeguarding the spiritual home and the earth, where roots can be laid and intangible values embedded, a sense of stability could be regained. Forster feared that value was being found in the wrong places and in the wrong objects and that it was not until Nature had been ruined would civilization see its error.

Critics have located Forster's concern for the destruction of nature and the decline of civilization as a part of the shift in values brought about by World War One. The war put an abrupt end to the relative calm of the Edwardian era and destroyed people's faith in the goodness of humanity.<sup>7</sup> The war disturbed Forster and his contemporaries in the Bloomsbury Group. As P. N. Furbank explains, the Group believed that

it was not their war . . . that all they had stood for, the new age of tolerance and enlightenment inaugurated in G. E. Moore's Cambridge, was about to be destroyed. (2:1)

World War One brought about a questioning of the fundamental ideals of liberal humanism, and confirmed to Forster the decline of humanity's moral integrity. Previously in 1924 when Forster was having difficulty finishing *A Passage to India*, he explained:

I find it less possible to finish novels since the war than before it . . .  
 when all contemporary life seems crumbling I find more difficulty than  
 ever in attempting a picture of it, and turn with greater relief to criticism,  
 and the past. (Stallybrass 12)

Although Forster expressed displeasure towards the disharmony climaxing with the war and the rapid changes occurring within civilization, his imagination could create places where people might bond and where the earth had a power to resist man's machinations. In fiction Forster could create edifices and regions which — once spaces of contention and divisive forces — could transform into spaces of harmony; spaces where his notion of a utopia could be attained.

In his fiction, Forster was able to express his hopes and address the issues that he believed to be significant. But as is shown in his three novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*, there is a tension between reality and imagination; between the spiritual and the physical; between the transcendent and the temporal. This tension is undoubtedly influenced by the particular emotions he felt for places he owned, inhabited, and visited. The tension between the town and country can be used as a trope for the opposition of qualities that exist and require reconciling within the characters. The opposition between town and country is also between urban and rural, socially-controlled and unfettered. Thus the dichotomy created within the novels opposes the city, often representing the qualities of reason, practicality, pragmatism, and social conventionality, against the country which perpetuates the mysterious, innocent, and instinctual attributes within the characters. And with Forster's idealisation of the countryside, the unfettered regions are associated with the

imagination, and the city with a physical reality. Yet, when the characters do temporarily reconcile, they must balance attributes from both districts.

## Culture, Geography and the Paradox of Connection

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the opposition that exists between the unfettered region and the social domain is explicit. This novel reveals an uncompromising contrast that introduces the patterns of division and reconciliation, and highlights the influence of culture and geography on these conflicts and unions. The distance and cultural differences between England and Italy seem to divorce the characters from each other, but at the same time unite them and bring them closer to discovering aspects of themselves. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* focuses on these conflicts and reconciliations more than on an overwhelming intangible spirit of place, which as I will discuss later, pervades *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*. Nevertheless, Italy has a spirit of place that can accommodate the qualities of opposing places and there, a superior balance is achieved by the characters. Forster's first novel shows the characters' gradual movement through specific buildings towards a site of compromise and a transcendental experience, and it reveals the power of place to contribute to their progression and transformation. The synthesis that occurs in the final place of intersection is paradoxical, for while the characters are detached from the rest of humanity they succeed in discovering an unconditional bond that could be the genesis for universal communion.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Sawston, a suburban town of London, is a place where a social-control is often impervious to compromise. Sawston, "within easy reach

of London” (10) and exposed to the qualities that can be seen as quintessential to city life, prevents the characters from achieving harmony. The city invites them to have a closer relationship with the cultured life of art and society, but restricts natural responses. In the first scene of the novel, Mr. Kingcroft, a “country chap” from Yorkshire, is frustrated by the “London porters” (10) in his efforts to show a natural generosity to Lilia and her chaperone, Caroline Abbott. This reveals how London, unwilling to recognise an act of kindness or accommodate the slower pace of rural life, shows an indifference to human relationships.<sup>1</sup>

The culture of Sawston perpetuates a detachment from the countryside and from unfettered regions, which prevents the characters from generating an intimate relationship with the earth and actively expressing emotion. Caroline Abbott, a young woman from Sawston, comments on the “raw over-built country” (86) of the suburbs, and its “semi-detached houses” (99). The crowded physical environment of Sawston is a reflection of the intangible constraints inflicted on the inhabitants as they conform to an impersonal and planned community. The spacial narrowness suggests, for example, that imaginative and physical limits are placed on the characters and that their ability to comprehend life beyond their own ideals or “view” has been severely stifled.<sup>2</sup> Caroline Abbott and Philip Herriton, have, in Sawston, been exposed to the negative views and attitudes of other Sawstonians. In Italy they are initially intolerant of difference and accustomed to only insular middle-class values. But their pretension is soon abandoned as they depart from Sawston, where even the architecture of the schools communicates a conceitedness (99).

As a zone which contains a culture of primarily English middle-class values, Sawston reinforces the rigid social values that disadvantage the characters as they attempt to connect. The community's "Book Club, the Debating Society, the Progressive Whist, the bazaars" all reflect a planned social life — a quality Philip Herriton loves to ridicule when he returns from Italy "full of passion" (18) — which is challenged by the informal social scene of Italy. In Sawston the impersonal forms of communication between the characters, such as receiving and writing letters, displays the absence of physical interaction. The Herritons, who epitomise a disdainful middle-class family, write letters which cease communication rather than encourage it. Mrs. Herriton forbids Lilia, her daughter in law, to write to her daughter, Irma, and Mrs. Herriton also ironically condemns the postcard from Lilia's Italian husband, Gino Carella, as "nothing but insincere compliments and hypocrisy" (105), when in fact, the letter she herself writes to Lilia Herriton is extremely callous. Mrs. Herriton unsympathetically informs Lilia that she has been ostracized from her family for marrying Gino and advises her to never return to England. For Mrs. Herriton, it is more important to maintain her reputation than show sensitivity and kindness.

Sawston displays the vices produced by a formal and structured community. The English characters' fear of intimacy is exemplified particularly by the steely Mrs. Herriton, who "makes a point of kissing" (96) Caroline Abbott, rather than showing natural affection. Mrs. Herriton determines both personal and geographical distances between the characters and so, to a certain extent, she contributes to the characters' inability to connect. She is the primary enforcer of respectability, thereby frustrating her children's attempts to act naturally. As Alina Szala states,

suppression of one element of life threatens the balance of human personality. . . . The character in the novel that best represents the suppression of natural human reactions incompatible with refinement is Mrs. Herriton. (32)

This haughty woman's belief in the importance of respectability originates from, and is bolstered by Sawston's emphasis on duty, respectability, and moral rigidity which are a reflection of a culture which values appearances over truth, and allows no space through which the characters can explore their instinctual impulses and display affection.<sup>3</sup>

Italy represents an opposition to Sawston. Although Italy is a site of ancient civilization; represents an enlightened nation; is associated with the Renaissance, and is therefore as Philip remarks, a place for learning or "school" (12), it is also a country where leisure and enjoyment can occur. It is a "playground of the world" (12). So although Italy has a cultivated landscape, it also contains spacious views and natural landscapes which represent, for Forster, an ideal space for liberation and freedom from the restrictions of English society. But Forster, like Calvin Bedient, somewhat idealises the Italian landscape. Bedient claims that the countryside

with its beauty, distances, and spontaneous people clear the fog from the Northern soul, inner distances open up, the body awakens from a sleep, the majesty of the earth springs into view. (192)

The panoramic views offer, as they do for Lucy Honeychurch, room for an excavation of the soul. Italy represents the unfettered place where new experiences provoke natural responses in the English characters and a clearer perception of reality can be

established. Philip Herriton, as an aesthete whose distorted perception of Italy has lead him to believe there can be no vulgarity in such a country, is confronted with the brutal image of Dentistry:

A dentist in fairyland! False teeth and laughing gas . . . at a place which knew of the Etruscan League, and the Pax Romana . . . he feared that Romance might die. (32)

His inability to accept the paradoxes in reality have thwarted his sense of truth and divert his attempts to actively participate in events. For instance, he must find and partake in the emotion and actions of love. Italy, with an abundance of olive trees, vineyards and areas where the open-air landscape dominates, acts as a catalyst for the eruption of elemental passions. Lilia falls in love with Gino, and ignores the conventions which condemn her for dishonouring her family's reputation. She is one who possesses an "ungoverned heart" (Purkis 14) — she ignores the social codes which normally manipulate her behaviour. Lilia is inclined to be guided solely by her passions rather than her intellect; she admits that in Monteriano "one really does feel in the heart of things" (15). In Monteriano, first Lilia, then the other English characters, find that their body's vitality and carnality flourishes, and eventually reason gives way to affection.

Italy's raw geographical landscape forces the English characters to confront the inadequacies of their own culture. Exposure to the mysterious and violent realm of Italy enables the characters to, on occasion, abandon their inhibitions. The Italian landscape offers to Philip an initiation into the physical elements of his human nature



and the Italian spirit shows its opposition to his “quiet profitable existence” (13) in Sawston:

He was in the enemy’s country, and everything — the hot sun, the cold air behind the heat, the endless rows of olives, regular yet mysterious — seemed hostile to the placid atmosphere of Sawston in which his thoughts took birth. (28)

Italy’s geography rejects the aestheticism that causes Philip to idealise and romanticise the country. Italy requires that Philip transform from being the person Caroline Abbott describes: as a man “without passion”; a man who “looks on life as a spectacle”; who never “enters” life, and only finds life “funny or beautiful” (201). As James Buzard observes, Philip is guilty of maintaining “the touristic version [of Italy] England understands” (20); he views the country with preconcieved ideals based on a Baedeker. So although Philip insists that Lilia not go to Italy with “that awful tourist idea that Italy’s only a museum of antiquities and art” (7), he wants to see the impressive parts the guide book has recommended, and not deviate from the beaten track. But to his surprise, Philip soon learns that an English interpretation does not sufficiently capture the reality of Italy.

Despite Forster’s romantic depiction of Italy, the dichotomy that exists between Italy and England is not a simple one. The Italian landscape can be beautiful, represent the innocence of nature; yet it is also brutal and uncompromising. As J.S. Martin explains, Gino, a representative of Italian society, is

sensuous, hedonistic, shiftless and sociable; capable of tenderness and brutality; an embodiment of some of the vital contradictions that Forster discerned in the Italian spirit. (14)

Italian society has its own limitations. Philip Dodd takes the view that Italy is not presented as simply “nature” (“England” 212), and its own culture is not necessarily preferable to Sawston’s. Nevertheless, the explicit contrast that is depicted in this novel between English conventionality and Italian spontaneity emphasises the dichotomy between regions, rather than contradictions in cultures: “No one realised that more than personalities were engaged; that the struggle was national” (74). In Italy the candid expression of genuine emotion is accepted; yet even Italian cultural limitations correspond to those that are embodied in the Herriton house in Sawston.

The conflict between the two worlds of Sawston and Monteriano, and the oscillation of the characters between these poles, is the antithesis that creates the foundation of this novel. But a narrower focus on the specific buildings shows the characters progression towards a climactic reconciliation, and the attributes that they negotiate while inhabiting and visiting these edifices. The Herritons’ house, a place where the forces of social control are concentrated, refuses the characters exposure to the qualities that encourage kindness and affection. There is no mystery within the small space of the house, only the emanation of matriarchal power. The house — a safe cocoon for Mrs. Herriton — represents the ordered nature of society. Thus, when the chaotic influence of the land enters, it is essential that it is eliminated.<sup>4</sup> Although she only exits the house once, Mrs. Herriton’s control is not confined within the walls of

her house; to a great extent, she determines the events in Italy. Harriet's puritanical sense of duty, instilled in her by her mother, acts as a catalyst in her decision to kidnap Gino's baby. Philip continues his mission to obtain the baby primarily because it is his mother's wish. Philip is his mother's puppet, but he has the insight to accurately evaluate her personality. Her control creates a mechanical atmosphere in the Herriton house, and shows the futility in allowing social standards to impinge on one's zest for life:

Her life, he saw, was without meaning. To what purpose was her diplomacy, her insincerity, her continued repression of vigour? Did they make anyone better or happier? Harriet with her gloomy peevish creed, Lilia with her clutches after pleasure, were after all more divine than this well-ordered, active, useless machine. (98)

Although the Herriton house contains a concentration of social control, the beneficial qualities of culture remain absent. For "Mrs. Herriton did not believe in romance, nor in transfiguration, nor in parallels from history, nor in anything that may disturb domestic life" (12). Preoccupied with herself and the management of appearances, Mrs. Herriton and the space that she controls, deny the English characters access to a higher and more sophisticated understanding, for she has no aspirations to make a welcoming home, or a place where unconditional affection exists. In Italy the characters, detached from such an atmosphere, find the ability to abandon the demands of their community and transcend cultural divisions.

Geographically, the Herriton house cannot offer the same freedom that Italy's landscape provides. As is shown by the meager "kitchen garden" (18) attached to her

house, Mrs. Herriton and her family have little knowledge of the potential for human understanding. James McConkey supports the claim that, this family's devotion to social codes has stifled their emotional growth. He believes the Herritons

with [their] submission to convention and hypocrisy: their withdrawal from basic truth has made them so 'sterile' that the theft of a baby, offspring of . . . an Italian primitive, is highly fitting. (104)

Mrs. Herriton's infertility is confirmed when she attempts to grow vegetables. She "was conscious she had never sown better" (19) but the sparrows take the seeds, denying her any fecundity. Her life of "telegrams and anger" (*Howards End* 41) occupies her and she insists on stopping the union of Lilia and Gino, whose joining culminates in the birth of a baby. By reproducing a manicured garden — like those within their district — Harriet and Mrs. Herriton try to control and order what would usually take on a natural irregularity. When they plant seeds, "Harriet stretched a string to guide the row straight, and Mrs. Herriton scratched a furrow with a pointed stick" (18).<sup>5</sup> They are both guilty of ignoring the random quality of nature. Although Harriet and Mrs. Herriton have benefitted from their own culture — Harriet is brave and Mrs. Herriton has a certain amount of intuition — their tendency to repress their natural emotions and passions has, to an extent, destroyed their potential for fertility of mind and body. Both Harriet and Mrs. Herriton believe they can control nature, and human nature; consequently alienating them from the benefits gained from places such as Italy.

In Italy, Caroline Abbott describes the kitchen-garden up on the Rocca, but unlike the Herritons' garden, this has "a ladder up to a broken tower, where you can stand and see all the other towers below you and the plain and all the other hills" (123).

This garden, although small like the Herritons' and within the limits of the city, is capable of opening up inner distances, and therefore reflects Monteriano's ability to develop and broaden the minds of the characters. Alina Szala suggests, "civilization [can] offer man only as much as a well-tended garden beyond which there stretched an immense and unknowable wilderness" (38). The Herritons' contained "garden" explains the imbalance in their human natures, and it is not surprising that Harriet shows no appreciation for the Italian countryside. She cannot establish a harmonious relationship with the outdoor environment; whenever she opens the window a smut gets in her eye.

On the other hand, Italy offers a "wilderness" where natural human behaviour can flourish; yet as exemplified by Lilia, this must also be balanced with the rational thought more prevalent in places such as Sawston. Lilia follows the instructions of Philip, who has not yet left the enclosure of Sawston. He remarks: "love and understand the Italians. . . it is only by going off the beaten track that you get to know the country" (17). But it is not until he explores the wilderness of Italy that Philip discovers he is capable of love and affection. Gino, who essentially begins Philip's initiation into his development, represents all those qualities that the English repress. W.R. Irwin describes Gino as a "Pan-type", whose "primal energy" corresponds to the raw and violent nature of the Italian environment. Like Pan, Gino ignores the intellect and follows instead the "promptings of blood, muscle, viscera and glands" (Irwin 160-1). Mrs. Herriton's seeds are arranged neatly; Gino is the

human counterpart of the sea of violets that floods the little wood below Monteriano, Gino lives in happy disregard of cultivated rows, of high-principled limits. (Bedient 193)

In taking on an uncultivated way of life, Gino shows Philip the way to expression and involvement, rather than resisting the influence of Italy. Philip, encouraged by Gino's intimacy to ignore the codes which separate them, and by interacting with Gino in his home and social arena, unselfconsciously establishes an affectionate bond with another human. This bond contributes to Philip's insistence on confronting Gino about his child and consequently enables Philip to attain a moment of insight.

The Italian landscape — as a concentration of the codes which endorse natural human reaction and passion — rejects any cultural construction placed on it. When Harriet and Philip intend only to observe the monuments they have planned to see, a hostile Italian climate and natural world conflicts with their actions:

And on the second day the heat struck them, like a hand laid over the mouth, just as they were walking to see the tomb of Juliet: From that moment everything went wrong. They fled from Verona. . . . Then as she was going through Mantua at four in the morning, Philip made her look out of the window because it was Virgil's birthplace, and a smut flew in her eye, and Harriet with a smut in her eye was notorious . . . nor did Florence improve matters. . . . Harriet had never been to Florence . . . she crawled like a wounded creature through the streets, and swooned before various masterpieces of art. (106-7)

As an advocate for restrictive social codes, Harriet's rigidity is challenged by the liberal Italian environment.<sup>6</sup> Her bottle of ammonia bursts over her prayer book so that purple patches appear on her clothes (107). Indeed, as J. P. M. Scott claims, in Italy

traditional reactions prove useless. . . . Italy makes thoroughly short shrift of northern devices and proprieties. . . . We see the transferring, under Italy's cruel competence, of religion used as a device for self-endorsement ('purple patches') to outward living, all disconcertingly publicized. (45)

Harriet's guide to a moral and dutiful existence — her prayer book — is tainted by the unpredictable and passionate world of Italy, where pleasure, affection and instinct are emphasised over duty and respectability. Harriet's hopes to uphold her idea of personal integrity are frustrated by the often vulgar, but liberating atmosphere of Italy.

Eventually, an element of her passion erupts and she kidnaps Gino's baby, who dies in the "little wood" (30) near Monteriano.

The enchanting little wood exposes the English characters to the transforming qualities of Italy, and therefore, it contributes to their final greater understanding of humanity. This natural site represents the extremes that Forster's Italian characters confront openly: life, death, and rebirth, good and evil. The wood also gives a cyclical movement to the novel as we read that it is Spring when Philip first notices the wood and its violets, and it is Winter when the baby is killed in the wood. The wood is a place of death and abandonment: Gino's baby dies there; it has "small and leafless" trees (30), and Philip's pretense is abandoned. But the wood also represents renewal,

for as James McConkey explains, Philip does appreciate the flowers and this “is the hint we require that Philip is capable of salvation, capable still of response to real ‘life’” (104). His salvation comes from the “same wood” and “out of death comes rebirth; it is Philip Herriton who is ‘born’ from the death of the baby” (McConkey 105-6). Philip, once confronted with the horror of death, must participate in the agony of helplessness.

The wood is also a symbol of fertility and life. It has violets that stood “as rocks stand in the summer sea”, which also create an image of “the advancing tide of spring” (30). Although the violets die, the following Spring they will return, and this intensifies the sense of permanence that surrounds Nature in Italy. The little wood not only presents an image of beauty, it also plays an essential part in Philip Herriton’s transformation, and introduces the role of the Italian city, Monteriano, as a meeting-place for the characters. When Philip and Gino meet at the hotel, Gino quotes the first lines of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Translated, it reads: “In the middle of our life’s journey I came to myself in a dark wood, for the straight road was lost” (Limentani 3). Both Caroline and Philip come to a “dark wood” — a metaphor for their states of blindness — where the paradoxical attributes of confusion and clarity exist. In the wood where they cannot see, they begin to perceive their failure to reconcile their personalities. They also begin to question if the “straight road” must be replaced by an alternative route which will liberate Philip from his inertia and aestheticism, and enable Caroline to perceive the meaninglessness of Sawstonian life. Since it is also in the wood that the baby’s life is lost, Caroline and Philip are forced to accept the consequences of their indifference. The little wood, as well as Monteriano, cause the



English characters to reconsider the paths they have taken and directs them towards a new destiny.

In Italy it is not just open-air places that act as catalysts to the characters' transformations. A hotel, the Stella d'Italia; the opera house; and the Caffè Giribaldi offer themselves as constructed spaces where the characters can undergo change by allowing the spirit of place to affect them. Philip moves from the tourist site, the Hotel Stella d'Italia — which houses all of the English characters at some stage — to the cultural site of the Italian opera house, with its vibrant and penetrative atmosphere, to the often vulgar but intimate nucleus of Italian life, the cafe. Within this physical progression, Philip moves down to a level of perception and into the centre of a circle that, allows him to see, for once, the reality of a place and not his idealized or distorted view. But while making this transition, to what seems a lower class of living he, in fact, makes a simultaneous discovery of something supreme and magnificent. He finds that bond among humanity that is based on affection; a bond which transcends the social and geographical differences that separate people.

The Stella d'Italia is a place where conflicts arise, thereby forcing the characters to confront the differences in their cultures. When first arriving in Italy, Philip is so alien to physical contact, that he views Gino's gesture which topples Philip onto the bed, as an assault. Before being pushed, Philip had met Gino at the dinner table and had displayed the tension between his instinctual reaction and conventional values:

the youth [Gino] was hungry, and his lady filled his plate with spaghetti . . . his face relaxed and became for a moment unconscious and calm.

And Philip had seen that face before in Italy a hundred times — seen it and loved it, for it was not merely beautiful, but had the charm which is the rightful heritage of all who are born on that soil. But he did not want to see it opposite him at dinner. It was not the face of a gentleman. (37)

Philip continues to perpetuate the formality characteristic of socially-controlled areas and he applies his snobbery — created by a rigid class system — to Italy.<sup>7</sup> He does not yet see that Gino's vulgarity is an essential part of his beauty.

At the hotel, differences in language — which later prove to be beneficial — also intensify conflict between cultures. Although Lilia and Gino are married, Caroline Abbott must interpret for the two lovers and “the situation became uncouth and revolting in the extreme” (37). A strained air pervades the hotel. Philip, as the mouthpiece for social codes, is intolerant of differences and adverse to “international amenities” (38). Gino, on the other hand, is oblivious to the undesirable nature of his own conduct and the artifice which socially-controlled areas such as Sawston enforce. Gino remarks: “England is a great country. The Italians love England and the English” (38). But Gino's assertion of the valuable aspects of Italian culture is brief, and the “brutality so common in Italians” (39) which he displays, reestablishes the tension at the hotel.

The contrast between the physical and the intellectual also emerges from the interaction that occurs in the hotel, and a need for the balance of the two is made clear. The intellectual nature of Philip and the brute strength of Gino conflict. Philip tries to

“make his power felt by restraint” (44) and “the remembrance of his long intellectual supremacy strengthened him” (39) but Gino, who has “square shoulders” (43) and “a face without refinement . . . but not without expression” (45) triumphs over Philip’s pragmatic approach to the situation. The vitality and physical strength of Italy is in conflict with the refined and cultivated intellect of Sawston, and Sawston is overwhelmed. Gino

gasped and exploded and crammed his hands into his mouth and spat them out . . . and gave Philip an aimless push, which toppled him onto the bed. . . . For some time Philip lay on the bed pretending to himself that he was hurt grievously. . . . (46)

Both ardent believers in the morals and manners endorsed by Sawston, Philip and Caroline plan to leave immediately. Caroline who, succumbing to the freedom of Italy’s unfettered landscape has felt “drunk with rebellion” (88), reasserts her inhibitions and insists that she will return with Philip to Sawston. She exclaims: “I daren’t stop here” (46) where passion can overcome reason. The first scene at the hotel shows the English characters’ retaliation against Italy, it establishes the strength of Italy, and shows the contention of forces between places and people.

Later in the novel, Harriet, Caroline and Philip meet again at the Stella d’Italia and the tension continues. This time it is not Philip who prevents the acceptance of another culture and environment, but Harriet. On the hotel stairs Harriet creates an impasse in the hope that Philip will act immediately on their assigned task. She tries to make her interaction with Italy as fleeting as possible, but Italy ignores her complacency. She may claim: “I don’t care for the lot of you. I’m English . . .” (114),

but as it is Harriet who kidnaps Gino's baby, which dies when their carriages collide, she is forced to care even if her remorse is transient. On the other hand, Philip uncharacteristically adopts an attribute of an expressive Italian as he gesticulates at the façade of the hotel (116). Here, where cultures can interact, so too can the characters, and they begin to show a more affectionate attitude towards each other and Italy.

Caroline is the first to admit: "Sawston was different: we had to keep up appearances. But here we must speak out . . . otherwise we'll never start clear" (120). Although she becomes more aware of Sawston's limitations, Caroline still displays the ability to resist the enticing spirit of Italy, which indicates she has not yet completely abandoned herself to place. But as Caroline strokes the outline of a Gothic window at the hotel she becomes, as Frederick McDowell explains:

physically identified with one of Monteriano's manifestations of the spirit, its architecture. An inner liberation begins as her humane instincts assert themselves and take her further than her conscious ideas would sanction. (46)

The hotel begins Caroline's recognition of her instinctual nature, and by physically touching the building Caroline identifies with the spirit of the place, for her actions show admiration for the city's structure and the beauty of its form. Soon after Caroline acknowledges the many experiences in life and the need for an acceptance of "Beauty, evil, charm, vulgarity, mystery" (126), fidelity to instinct, sincerity, and an acceptance of social convention. Italy teaches her that all aspects of life must be recognised if completeness is to be achieved; if the "complexity of life" (126) is to be embraced.

On his second stay in the hotel Philip is no longer in conflict with Italian culture. Instead, he appreciates it for its adherence to the natural impulses of life. He is beginning to succumb to the the warmth of the Italian charm and interact with them socially. He remarks on the Italian opera playing in Monteriano, Lucia di Lammermoor, and the Italians' participation in life:

These people know how to live. They would sooner have a bad thing than not have it at all. That is why they have so much that is good.

However bad the performance is to-night, it will be alive. (127)

Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbott, by the end of their second stay in the hotel, are displaying greater spontaneity in their behaviour and gradually succumbing to the affectionate and connective attributes that, according to the novel, the Italian people display.

The opera house is a place where the characters are exposed to, and revel in, an experience of Italian culture. This house is a place for communication; it is what Alan Wilde describes as a place "where people can relate to one another — the actors to the audience, the audience to the actors and to each other, the English to the Italians" ("The Aesthetic" 212). In the relaxed atmosphere of the house, where the lively and passionate spirit of Italian culture thrives, and where affectionate physical contact is accepted, Philip and Caroline's inhibitions are abandoned. The opera house aims to produce art: the art of opera and theatre performance; nevertheless, it also "aims not at illusion" (Wilde "The Aesthetic" 133). This description of the theatre reveals the opera house's ability to reject the aesthetics of art, while maintaining a truth of beauty.

Instead of impressing superficially, the house focuses on the heart or emotion of Italy, which Philip is now capable of appreciating: “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” (131). In this place, Philip is able to combine culture — while not allowing his aesthetics to dominate his judgement — with physical interaction. Finally he will live the experience rather than remain a spectator.

The opera house becomes a place where human connection is possible. Philip abandons the restricting formality of his culture and reveals his ability to engage in the unconscious life of instinctual behaviour: “He forgot himself as well as his mission. . . . For he had been in this place always. It was his home” (134). Gino’s hand affectionately seizes Philip’s from over the balustrade and this symbolic link enables Philip to abandon his aesthetic view of life and allow “human love and love of truth . . . to conquer where love of beauty fails” (79). So the opera house becomes a temporary spiritual home where Philip can develop an appreciation for the spirit of Italy and where he can display affection. By becoming unselfconscious in the theatre, Caroline and Philip focus not on the standard of their own behaviour, but on the magnificent building surrounding them and the vibrant people who embrace the magnificent emotion in opera.

Within the disordered opera house, “violent waves of excitement” create a “mad scene” (134); however there is also a sense of formality in the meeting of Philip and the Italian men. Gino and his friends have a private soldier as their guest and he and Philip “had to stand side by side in the front, and exchange compliments, whilst Gino presided, courteous, but delightfully familiar” (136-7). As shown, the element of social

etiquette and refinement in Italian conduct, which is an etiquette present in the culture of Sawston, does not impinge on or preclude natural affection and enjoyment. Philip, at times confronted with a “spasm of horror at the muddle” (137), can in an instance be again “enchanted by the kind, cheerful voices, the laughter that was never vapid, and the light caress of the arm across his back” (137). The disordered quality of Italian social events has kindness and affection at its centre. Even Harriet is welcomed into this sphere of human connection when she receives a bouquet. As Alan Wilde suggests, the bouquet sings, “ ‘Welcome! Join us! Be part of us!’”, but Harriet, resilient to the contagious nature of the theatre’s spontaneity and vibrancy (“The Aesthetic” 212), leaves before the artlessness of Italy can take effect. The opera house acts as a catalyst for Caroline and Philip’s transformations as they accept their own natural responses, and as these impulsive responses are associated with the unfettered region of the Italian landscape, it does not surprise the reader that the characters see the stars and sky shine brighter and become more pure than ever before (138). They establish a harmonious relationship with the culture and geography of this foreign land.

The aura of the theatre causes Caroline to perceive the limitations of her culture and its imposing values; for she dreams about “a joyless, straggling place, full of people who pretended. When she woke up she knew that it had been Sawston” (139). From the opera house emanates a passion and spontaneity which balances with the refining and formal aspects of culture. For Philip, the opera house is most beneficial, for the joy he experiences is permanent and he became “more anxious than heretofore to be charitable towards the world” (162). The opera house, a brief spiritual home for Caroline and Philip, propels them towards their union in Gino’s house. The house

enables them to perceive the enjoyment that can be had within a place where social conventions exist, but where conventions do not force them to suppress their pleasure.

Since Philip and Caroline have achieved exposure to Italian cultural activities and have shown a willingness to incorporate the culture's spontaneous and affectionate qualities to their lives, they now progress towards the place where Italian social interaction occurs. The cafe can be seen as a place where the physical quality of instinct and natural human reactions thrive. The Caffè Garibaldi is a symbol of the "body" (163), thereby allowing for the affection and contact which is a central part of human nature. At the cafe, Gino meets his friend Spiridione, who, while discussing Gino's marriage, "addressed the other men, none of whom he had ever seen before" (58). This relaxed interaction eliminates fear and suspicion, and encourages affection, for after "courtesies were at there height they suddenly linked arms and swung down the street, tickling each other with lemonade straws . . ." (62). Affection is not forced as it is in Mrs. Herriton's house.

The novel reveals a pattern where physical contact promotes healthy human relations and is therefore essential to the achievement of human connection. As Raymond Williams confirms, it is "face-to-face contacts within which we can find and value the real substance of personal relationships" (16). Monteriano has a knowable community — although distinctly male — who, as the cafe scene shows, are more active in the public realm than in the domestic. Gino is often absent from his house, whereas Mrs. Herriton is always depicted within the domestic realm, and she avoids any personal diplomacy by sending her children to Monteriano, rather than going herself. She communicates chiefly through mailed instructions; Gino exclaims: "what



was the good of letters? Friends cannot travel through the post” (75). The cafe scene reinforces the affectionate quality of the Italians. When Gino and Philip meet for a second time, Gino lays “a sympathetic hand on Philip’s knee” and on departure “they shook each other warmly by both hands” (172). Within the cafe scene, there is no tension between differing cultures, and the sense of public space that is illustrated, contrasts with the domestic and enclosed, such as the Herriton house. In Italy, the difference between what is expressed privately in the home, and what is expressed publicly is less than, for example, the private domineering role of Mrs. Herriton and her public show of feigned kindness and tolerance.

However, the cafe is also a place where the patriarchal quality of Italian culture is perpetuated. It reinforces the “brotherhood of man” (55) and condones the violent behaviour which threatens Lilia. After apathetically concluding that Lilia shall have no more visitors, because he does not “see why an English wife should be treated any different. This is Italy” (63), Gino and Spiridione return to the cafe. Gino’s denial to acknowledge the difference in Lilia, echoes nature’s own repudiation of social categories. The unthinking and careless quality of nature, that provides no leniency for Gino’s baby are also characteristics often detectable in Gino himself, and this intensifies his affinity with the natural world. In the cafe, the inequality of Italian culture manifests itself. The levels of respect towards women, which are maintained in Sawston, are absent. The brutal and elemental qualities of human nature are not modified by cultural refinement. Frederick Crews explains that in Monteriano,

Birth, love, and death compose the visible fabric of existence there, and the human tendencies that are most efficiently thwarted in Sawston are

openly expressed: extravagance, superstition, theatricality, violence, coarse democracy among men, and ruthless subjugation of women (73).

These characteristics evident in Monteriano are unappealing, but they are part of Italy's culture. They are a part of its basic reality, and if failed to be recognised, it can lead to the suppression of human affection that is evident in Sawston.

The cafe, like the opera house, disintegrates the barriers of communication between the characters. When Gino and Philip depart, language — which was in the hotel a source of tension — is now a medium through which they attain a rapport. In this scene the two men reject stereotypes and preconceived ideals:

So the two young men parted with a good deal of genuine affection. For the barrier of language is sometimes a blessed barrier, which only lets pass what it good . . . we may be better in new clean words, which have never been tainted by pettiness or vice. Philip, at all events, lived more graciously in Italian, the very phrases of which entice one to be happy and kind. (173)

In Italy misunderstandings can be solved through the expression of kindness regardless of whether the expression is understood. The cafe offers itself as a place where Philip can discover the complexity of Italian culture and begin to adopt the intensely passionate, but carefree approach to life that Gino displays.

Within the city of Monteriano, the towers, the church, and the city itself, are places where Philip and Caroline complete their spiritual journey. The city of Monteriano provides an antithetical example of the oppressive forces which are present

in Sawston and concentrated in the Herriton house. Monteriano becomes a symbol of balance, where values from social areas and the more unfettered places harmonize:

The Piazza, with its three great attractions — the Palazzo Pubblico, the Collegiate Church and the Caffè Garibaldi: the intellect, the soul, and the body. . . . For a moment Philip stood in the centre . . . thinking how wonderful it must feel to belong to a city, however mean. (163)

As a symbol of the balanced individual, the city permits — more than Sawston — the characters to develop and become intergrated individuals. Unlike the Herriton house which Harriet fears is “a house divided against itself” (18), the city offers a communal atmosphere where the inhabitants are interdependent. The Italian city, although its patriarchal system oppresses women, seems to establish with its inhabitants a sense of affiliation. The Herritons’ house does not run smoothly, for the seeds are taken; in Italy a little girl springs out of the ground “as Italian children will” (116). Monteriano and its inhabitants have a tranquillity that the Sawston household lacks.

As a meeting-ground for the characters, Monteriano reveals an indeterminant quality that reinforces its role as a middle ground. The English characters have come to the city in the middle of their lives journeys — as Gino states earlier — and are discovering things that will both increase the complexity of their lives, but make those lives more fulfilled. Monteriano appears to be detached from the rest of the land; “it seemed to float in isolation between trees and sky”, and a place where there is no sign of civilization, for “it revealed not a single house” (34). It is nonetheless, a city bound to its countryside by history and the seventeen towers which attach it to the earth. The contradictory nature of its appearance reinforces its role as an accommodating space

which accounts for an array of experiences. It can absorb extreme events, such the intense passion initially displayed by Gino and Lilia. When Philip and Caroline observe the towers, Philip remarks: "It reached up to heaven and down to the other place. . . . Is it to be a symbol of the town?" (126-7). The tower is to be a symbol of the town, but they also represent the opportunity given to the characters to make the transitions from their mere existence in Sawston to a more liberated and authentic life. Frederick McDowell believes that the broken towers signify "that modern Italy may lack the full integration of powers that characterized her during the Middle Ages and Renaissance", but "in comparison to modern England, Italy still retains a sense of the complexities of experience; and the towers emphasise this truth" (47). The ability of the structure to reach up to heaven signifies the city's intense spirit of place, and its capacity to capture a spirituality in its architecture. Unlike Sawston, whose suburban houses reflect a kind of dutiful Protestantism, the towers of Monteriano mirror a Catholicism that attempts to embody a magnificent force in its buildings. An image of the structure as radiating a divine light is painted: "the towers began to glow in the descending sun" (34). Yet, the towers also show that the city can speak with stark reality and clarity, since Gino's baby dies within its sphere.

Monteriano can provide qualities not of the earth, such as the intellectual and spiritual, and also qualities associated with the earth, such as the carnal. The city accommodates the physical — as we see with Gino's torturing of Philip and the death of the baby — but it can also provide a place for those with spiritual aspirations — as we see Caroline becomes an untouchable goddess and the focus of Philip's love. J. S. Martin interprets the hilltown as being chosen for its potentially purgatorial character,

for Philip experiences a kind of hell when Gino tortures him. While staying in Monteriano Philip experiences a state of suffering and goes through a form of purification. The distorted state of his soul is corrected by exposing him to both extreme pain and pleasure. Martin writes about the city:

Its towers, its church, its patron saint combine to suggest its celestial aspirations; yet its life, as the novel so clearly shows, is capable of tapping demonic springs. (21)

Martin goes on to describe the city as a “halfway house” which testifies to its role as a meeting-ground for differing cultures and an intersection for qualities such as reason and instinct.<sup>8</sup> So Monteriano — although small — is a place in which paradox can coexist. The city’s walls may enclose the small hill town which is rooted to the earth by its towers and ancestry; nevertheless within this area, intangible forces awaken the English characters to their potential for passion and affection, and these forces are somewhat embodied in the city’s majestic architectural structures which also symbolise the potential for a kind of glorious and exalted transcendental synthesis.

The church of Santa Deodata highlights the spiritual atmosphere of Monteriano. This site both thwarts the characters attempts at harmony, and, to some extent, guides them further towards a spiritual resolution. Santa Deodata is the patron saint of Monteriano and the antithesis of Harriet, who belongs to St. James’s, which is “a small and depressing edifice” (16). In contrast, Santa Deodata is considered one of the most beautiful churches in Italy (16). Although a space for worship and humility, the Church — which is linked to the theatre by its bright scarlet calico (163) — permits a

candidness between Philip and Caroline which encourages their unselfconscious exchange. It is in the Church where Caroline gives Philip insight into his own soul and she also contemplates her own participation in their quest to kidnap Gino's baby. She begins to understand the paradoxes of life while in the church, and asks Philip:

Do you want the child to stop with his father who loves him and will bring him up badly, or do you want him to come to Sawston, where no one loves him, but where he will be brought up well? (167)

But the baby, christened at Deodata, is killed; Lilia, who is prayed for by Gino in the Church, still dies. The spirit of Santa Deodata is powerful and essentially, as John Purkis states, "anti-English" (14). The baby dies so Sawston never gains what belongs to Italy, and the two countries remain, inevitably Italian and English.

In her beneficial role, the patron saint is a reflection of the English characters' indifference to life and, as John Purkis emphasizes, she represents an "affront to Sawstonian values" (14). The Herritons insist on being active, but without good intentions being the motive for their actions, their activities become meaningless. Harriet and Mrs. Herriton attain no sanctity from their deeds. Ironically, Deodata gains idolization by being inert, but Caroline and Philip receive only emotional and physical pain by refusing to actively stop the kidnapping of Gino's baby. In doing this, Forster implies that Philip's lack of accomplishment is not an admirable quality, and that Deodata's idleness emphasizes the necessity for him to participate in life. Inertia will bring Philip nothing but pain, and so he must take the opportunity at Monteriano — a place for transformation and transition — to choose an alternative path to the one that Sawston offers. The church, like the opera house, is a place for communication; it has a

window with a metaphorical “view” (166) of the Italian landscape, which allow the players to question their own morality, and it contributes to their gradual advance towards a new splendid level of human understanding.

Finally, the pair move into Gino’s personal domain where they fuse with Italian life and spirit. The house is a place where the characters can strive to attain a balance. It is the “heart” (48) of the city where they may interact, for

The ground floor and the upper floor of that battered house are alike  
deserted, and the inmates keep to the central portion, just as in a dying  
body all life retires to the heart. (48)

In the centre of this house is Gino’s room where he and his son live. It is not a small and closed off room, for Gino can “live day and night” on the loggia, “with leagues of olive-trees and vineyards and blue-green hills” (48). This wilderness outside Gino’s room contrasts to the garden enclosed behind the Herriton house. Yet, in Gino’s house, there is still the presence of Sawston’s codes in the formal “reception room” which is now covered with “heavy white dust” (141). This deserted room is sacred to the dead Lilia and is juxtaposed with the chaos and living bodies in Gino’s room. The rigor mortis of emotion and passion which Sawston’s most restrictive codes produce, conflict with the abundance of life — which Gino’s baby symbolises — and the harmonious relationship Gino has with the unrestrained realm. Gino’s space allows for the disordered and the unregulated. The room is in a “shocking mess. . . . But it was the mess that comes of life, not of desolation” (142). Initially, the instinctual, unconditional and uninhibited love Gino shows for his child, dominates. This is soon

balanced by the presence of Caroline who, with her rational behaviour, adds an element of restraint.

Despite being restrained, in Gino's house Caroline allows the physical element of human nature to affect her. Caroline's awakening is primarily physical and she develops an unrefined love for Gino. Later, she remarks to Philip: "If he had asked me, I might have given myself body and soul" (204), and therefore, she has felt a physical passion which Sawston previously denied her. Gino's own physical nature is emphasised by the "first great passion of his life": to have a son (77). Alan Wilde explains that this passion is

a mark of Gino's physical quality and of his kinship with all things that spring up and grow in a natural manner. The feeling Gino experiences is for life itself. . . . It is supreme evidence of Gino's closeness to the heart of things that he feels this strongest of all desires. ("The Aesthetic" 210)

Although Caroline visits Gino's house to fulfil the expectations of Mrs. Herriton, who insists on bringing the baby back to Sawston, her emotions begin to flourish. In this "large house" (147), where a space for discovery exists, Caroline must confront her carnal desires. The house, attached to the reality of the earth like the towers, "for it slides for two storeys down the hill behind" (47), is capable of providing a space for a range of experiences, and Caroline must recognise the sexual attraction she feels for Gino.

In this house, the reality of Monteriano confronts the ideals of Sawston, and the spirit of Monteriano triumphs over Sawston's disciple — Caroline. The baby becomes no longer just an object which the Herriton's dictate; Caroline is forced to see the baby;



the real thing, lying asleep on the dirty rug. . . . It did not stand for a principle any longer. It was so much flesh and blood, so many inches and ounces of life . . . ” (145).

She begins to see that the baby’s personality should not be dictated by social principles and “various ideals” (145), and as the tension grows within Caroline, she becomes affected by Gino’s presence and the beauty of the child. She attempts to realign the imbalance: “. . . she had practised self-discipline. . . . To recover her self-esteem she tried to imagine that she was in her *district*, and to behave accordingly” (146, my emphasis). But the rigid morality seen in Harriet and Mrs. Herriton no longer has the potency that Sawston affords it. In this house the paternal bond that connects Gino to his son reigns, and the careless attitude he exhibited in the café is replaced by instinctual impulses which compels him to protect and love his child. The aims of Sawston are useless against such an intensely natural reaction.

In Gino’s house Philip is exposed to the physical quality of the codes represented by unfettered places. The Italian landscape initiates his exposure to these codes, but it climaxes in Gino’s house. When Philip observes Caroline, Gino and the baby, his cultural interpretation prompts him to idealise the scene as the “Virgin and Child, with Donor” painted by “Bellini . . . or Signorelli” (157).<sup>9</sup> He reverts back to aesthetic evaluations to interpret the lived experience. After the death of the baby, when Philip has been reborn out of the little wood — and accepts partial responsibility for this tragedy — Gino tortures him by twisting his broken arm and choking him. Philip’s rational plea to Gino to “think first” (188), before he acts, continues to be undermined by the anger and violence in Gino’s behaviour. Gino’s Pan-like

promptings of the blood are aroused and it is not until Caroline, with her logical reasoning, states: "What is the good of another death? What is the good of more pain? . . . I will have no more intentional evil" (190-1), that these impulses are controlled. When Philip's arm is "sending out shoots of the essence of pain" (189) his initiation nears completion. He has suffered for his negligence and has had to be exposed, by force, to extreme pain to learn the necessary role of physical participation in life. Caroline then unites the two men with the milk intended for the baby — which now becomes the milk of human kindness.

Gino's all-accommodating and genial house enables Philip and Caroline to transcend their cultural and emotional differences. Philip has accepted Gino's intense hatred and has been shown the consequences of indirectly trying to apply his aestheticism to a foreign culture. Italy's conventions refuse to be manipulated by the Herritons. But the characters' connection remains paradoxical and ambiguous. As Caroline unites the two men; acknowledges her affection for Gino, and Philip's love for Caroline intensifies, they begin to gain a greater understanding of life, but at the same time distance themselves from the rest of humanity. The unification that occurs is one of idealization and idolization. Philip sees Caroline as a goddess; Caroline remains a goddess in the eyes of Gino, and that is what saves her from giving herself to him. She realises that she must moderate her passion with rational thought and acknowledge that "centuries of aspiration and culture" divide her from Gino (203). So although the characters can, for an instance, spiritually transcend the division that separate them, permanent communion proves unattainable. As they separate; Caroline remains in

Sawston, and Philip chooses to live in London, place once again determines their fates as divorced individuals.

The characters move away from humanity and consolidate in a room, which although conducive to a kind of synthesis, isolates the rest of the community from a similar experience. Therefore the issue of reconciliation in the novel becomes confused. The space in which they unite has “room” enough to accommodate for the experience, but it is an exclusive event. After Philip returns to England he continues with his rejection of physical participation; at the height of his passion for Caroline he never attempts physical contact. Philip and Caroline are, what Calvin Bedient describes as “abortive Romantics”, who are unwilling to act on their impulses (216). They have found their emotions too late in their lives and have negotiated them, but have been unable achieve more than a temporary balance. In this sense the novel, as Bedient explains, “pays a sad respect to the power of culture bent not on curbing but on breaking Nature, by showing how irreparable its damage can be” (Bedient 195). Although the English characters and Gino successfully reach some understanding in Gino’s house, their inability to perpetually endorse the revelations they achieved, denies an assertive closure to the novel. Italy has provided a place for connection and Monteriano is a city capable of accommodating Philip and Caroline’s exploration; yet, the fracturing of their union reveals how powerless the bonds of affection and kindness are to conquer geographical and cultural differences.

## Howards End: England's "Ideal Destiny"<sup>1</sup>

In *Howards End* the basic rural-urban and Italy-England dichotomy that *Where Angels Fear to Tread* neatly displayed, is now complicated by a narrower and more specific focus. In this novel, unlike the former, the conflict is represented not through opposing cultures, but through the divided condition of England. It is a country of mechanical and technological advancement, but also of idyllic rural villages in which Forster believes a national identity can be found. Although a divided country, Forster does provide a place within England where reconciliation between the characters is possible, and the values that divide them can be transcended. The spirit of place functions as it did in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*; however, in *Howards End* one house, Howards End, contains the potent genius loci that Italy and Monteriano exhibited in the earlier novel. The inconsistent scaling of space remains, and continues to reinforce the paradoxical quality that surrounds the depiction of place and the connection of his characters. Still, the characters connect when they have excluded others, have rejected places as a home, and made a gradual progression towards their spiritual home. Nevertheless, they do achieve a transcendental connection which closes the novel with a sense of optimism and hope for the realisation of a supreme harmony.

As a specific region of focus in the novel, London resists aiding the characters' final spiritual unification. The city illustrates England's modern urban geography. The effects of London's most extreme limitations are presented in the form of the Basts' flat

on Camelia Road. This basement flat illustrates all that is oppressive and harmful in the modern city. In the city, where the cultured life of art and literature thrive, the unrefined, lower-middle-class Basts strive for financial independence and social respectability. But without the means to gain a social status that affords a refined existence, Leonard and Jacky Bast are unable to escape from London. They are caught in London, a place that promotes “suburban spread, socialism . . . urban living, speed, change” and the qualities of rootlessness and poverty (Widdowson, qtd. in Murfin 358). On one level Forster perceives the unrealistic hopes of Matthew Arnold’s ideal culture: a culture that “looks beyond machinery . . . hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light” (69).<sup>2</sup> *Howards End* reveals that survival in the city depends on money; without money the sinister quality of the city denies the Basts access to the vibrancy of a cultured life. Arnold’s vision, like Forster’s, does not accommodate the very poor.

London appears to pull the Basts into its hub and refuse them an exit into the country. Leonard Bast, an essentially “natural” man (*Howards End* 113), has neither the means to move into the country, where he belongs, or the ability to move away from the edge of the abyss of poverty. The Basts are literally and metaphorically trapped underground and are unable to rise above their predicament. When Leonard attempts to “get back to the earth” (124), London’s influence over the destination of his spiritual home denies him a route to freedom. As Jon Heggland states:

Forster merges [Leonard] and his environment so thoroughly that his attempt to visit a quintessential English landscape only leaves him with

an experience as artificial as the suburban surroundings from which he comes. (413)

The familiar quality of London's environment is so entrenched into Leonard's imagination that his exposure to an original or unfettered area is injurious, and indeed, he dies when he does finally escape to Howards End.<sup>3</sup> Leonard is burdened with a sense of homelessness since he can find no roots in London nor Howards End.

The Basts' flat on Camelia Road, like the Herritons' house in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, represents the most restrictive qualities of the social domain and is impervious to the influence of the countryside. The basement flat reflects the exiled state of these lower class characters.<sup>4</sup> The Basts are hidden away because they are undesirable and exiled from what is, in this novel, the normality of English upper-middle-class life. According to "other men", such as Henry Wilcox, the Basts' "semi-basement" flat is more of a "cellar" than a place to live (60, my emphasis). Henry Wilcox accurately clarifies that "civilisation is moulded by great impersonal forces" (192), and these are forces that deter the Basts from finding a connection with places or people. Although the Basts' flat attaches them to the earth, it simultaneously confirms the flimsy and isolated nature of their existence. London acts as a frame which they are unable to break, and the flat also seals off their access to the natural world. The description of the house testifies to the flat's lack of traditional English attributes, which when present, create an image of a healthy, inhabitable house. When Leonard arrives at his flat, he

glanced suspiciously to right and left, like a rabbit that is going to bolt into its hole. A block of flats, constructed with extreme cheapness,

towered on with either hand. Further down the road two more blocks being built . . . bricks and mortar rising and falling with the restlessness of the water in a fountain, as the city receives more and more men upon her soil . . . [the flat] struck that shallow makeshift note that is so often heard in the modern dwelling-place. It had been too easily gained, and could be relinquished too easily. (59)

Leonard suffers instability due to the fact that, as Jon Heggland explains, modern suburban houses are “built neither for strength nor duration” (412). The modern city, and especially the cheap houses that occupy the sites of old traditional houses, are condemned in this novel as insufficient to house a national identity. And with the loss of identity comes the loss of social and cultural values that Forster sees as strengthening England’s people. The novel confirms that as a city and a potential place for human connection, “London only stimulates, it cannot sustain” (155). Intimate personal relationships cannot endure in a place where historical value is forsaken for more modern town houses.

Intensifying the fragility of the Basts’ position is their lack of ownership. Leonard “was renting the flat furnished: of all the objects that encumbered it none were his own except the photograph frame, the Cupids and the books” (61). Henry Wilcox’s obsession with possessing numerous estates indicates his inability to perceive the true value of a spiritual home. For Henry, property investments have only financial significance. As E. F. Schumacher has perceptively stated, “there can be nothing sacred in something that has a price” (Stone “Forster: The Environmentalist” 181). Indeed, Henry fails to see the sanctity in *Howards End*, hence it is Margaret who inherits the

house. However, the Basts' lack of possession is not an indication of their perceptiveness. Rather it enhances the absence of stability; a stability which is found in inherited possessions. Unlike the Schlegels' furniture and Wickham Place, Camelia Road is devoid of family history and emotional investment.

Within his "dark as well as stuffy" (62) flat, Leonard is not offered the opportunity to assert his instinctual and adventurous nature. In this impoverished area of London, he is disconnected from his place of origin. He is denied the physical health of a rural life and the benefits of the cultured and privileged life. As Margaret Schlegel perceives, he is a displaced yeoman:

One guessed him as the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization had sucked into the town; as one of the thousands who have lost the life of the body and failed to reach the life of the spirit. Hints of robustness survived in him, more than a hint of primitive good looks, and Margaret . . . wondered whether it paid to give up the glory of the animal for a tailcoat and a couple of ideas. (122)

As Frederick Hoffman explains, in Leonard Bast "we have a living example of what the Wilcox London has done to *Howards End*" (252). London — indirectly, through Henry Wilcox — has put a garage in the paddock, thereby destroying something of beauty and nature, to shelter his motor car, a symbol of mechanization. London contaminates the "robust" and "primitive" qualities of *Howards End* with its flimsy and modern edifices. Unable to assert or ensure the survival of their agricultural traits, Leonard and *Howards End* are unsuited to the city life of culture. Leonard has been "wrecked in trying to



cross” the “gulf that stretches between the natural and the philosophic man” (123), and so he is denied both spiritual or physical redemption from his degradation.

The cultured life of ideas and intelligence is incompatible with Leonard’s near-destitute life. He compares a “luminous” church, which he reads about in Ruskin’s *Stones of Venice*, with his own dark environment. In this spatially restricted and somewhat polluted space, filled with “metallic fumes” (65), there is minimal opportunity for intellectual and spiritual growth. Culture eludes the reality of Leonard’s poverty, for Ruskin “had never been dirty or hungry” (62).<sup>5</sup> The obvious contrast between Ruskin’s “rich man speaking . . . from his gondola” and the poor man, Leonard, listening in a basement flat, reveals the damaging effects of a strict class system. Jacky, Leonard’s fiancée, finds the “art of conversation” “difficult and tiring” (64) and is “indifferent” to Leonard’s pursuit of culture. She encourages the spiritual and intellectual poverty that invades the space of the Camelia Road flat.

London itself is presented as a place that promotes a cosmopolitanism that Forster, to some extent, condemns. Forster criticizes, through the image of London, the inevitable move society has made away from the knowable community. This type of transition — from a small knowable community to the cosmopolitan city — creates the sort of impersonal and restless atmosphere that is depicted in London in *Howards End*. Forster illustrates a preference for the identifiable community as he did in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Monteriano, like the English “country community . . . is an epitome of direct relationships: of face-to-face contacts”, where close human bonds are maintained (Williams 165). The interdependent quality of life that is shown in Hertfordshire, and the flexibility that is shown in places such as Monteriano, in *Where Angels Fear to*

*Tread*, is absent in London. The city is spacious enough to accommodate experiences; however small and significant values and objects are lost in its abyss. Forster confirms the impossibility of harmony in a place such as London:

London was but a foretaste of this nomadic civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly, and throws upon personal relations a stress greater than they have ever borne before. Under cosmopolitanism, if it comes, we shall receive no help from the earth. Trees and meadows and mountains will only be a spectacle. . . . (HE 256-7)

The city's tendency to amplify the divisive forces of cosmopolitanism intensifies the impossibility of it offering itself as a place for human synthesis. It is detachment that dominates the image of London in the novel and particularly the city's power to increase the disharmony between humanity and the earth.

In *Howards End*, the urbanized and industrialized environment of London emphasizes the need for humanity to reevaluate the course of civilisation, and to acknowledge the evidence of the nation's spiritual and emotional deterioration.<sup>6</sup> As Raymond Williams indicates, there is isolation among the crowds of people,

there is . . . the sense of paradox: that in the great city itself, the very place and agency — or so it would seem — of collective consciousness, it is an absence of common feeling, an excessive subjectivity, that seems to be characteristic. (215)

The collective nature of culture — depicted in the crowded city — is flawed by an individualism which is a consequence of the modern capitalist society. Matthew Arnold claims that “the idea of perfection . . . of the mind and spirit is at variance with

the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us”, and he goes on to confirm that modern life is at variance with the “expansion of human nature”, for we are too absorbed in our own pursuits to fully respond to our spiritual and bodily impulses (49). It is not surprising then, that Mrs. Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and Henry Wilcox — two characters who cannot achieve connection and are reluctant to compromise — are affected by their urbanized environment to the extent that their conduct lacks spontaneity. Those characters who do eventually reconcile, reject the city and move to the rural village of Hertfordshire.<sup>7</sup>

Social intimacy suffers from the impersonal quality of an industrialized and urbanized environment, but also the physical appearance of the city and the physical condition of its inhabitants. It is suggested that Leonard Bast’s death is influenced by his unhealthy lifestyle, and that in the case of Mrs. Wilcox’s death, “London had done the mischief” (97). These deaths augment the view that Wilfred Stone holds. He writes that part of Forster’s and D. H. Lawrence’s vision was

a sense that aesthetic values — industrial ugliness itself — could be a clue to what was wrong. ‘The real tragedy of England,’ writes Lawrence, ‘is the tragedy of ugliness. The country is so lovely: the man-made England is so vile’. (“Forster: The Environmentalist” 175)

Peter Firchow argues that Forster “is not an advocate for the picturesque. He does not prefer the country to the city merely because one looks nice and the other does not” (122). But Forster does believe that the rural life offers a healthier moral life where personal relations can succeed. He prefers the country because its communities seem to value tradition and inheritance over material wealth and financial gain. The state of

London's environment is primarily an indication of its inhabitants decline in moral health.

Closely tied into Forster's disapproval of urbanization and industrialization is the notion of, what Peter Widdowson aptly describes as, a "depersonalized largeness" (*E. M. Forster's* 45). Wilfred Stone also confirms that,

It is not only the speed of change, but also the size that worried Forster; and the conflict of bigness versus littleness is one of the critical issues of value negotiated in the novel. ("Forster: The Environmentalist" 177)

Henry Wilcox is unable to negotiate the codes of the countryside for he belongs to the "big machinery", whereas characters such as Margaret, who appreciate the smallness of Howards End, recognises and intends to protect the sacred space of Howards End.<sup>8</sup>

Charles Wilcox, a similar character to his father, describes Howards End as "a measly little place". Henry believes it is "impossibly small" and that "nothing pays on a small scale" (205). Neither men can, without emotional maturity, acquire a spiritual bond with any place, and their desire for expansion into foreign land reveals that they avoid knowing anything personally. As K. W. Gransden writes, Forster thought that modern age "internationalism" should be replaced with "genuinely felt values derived from specific traditions" (60). And this movement towards intimacy and traditions confirms Forster's belief that the "good place must be small enough to be known by heart" (Gransden 59). Howards End is such a place.

In *Howards End* the countryside is idealised as a natural place, although it is never wholly uninhabited or divorced from the influences of civilisation. In this novel,

as in *Where Angels Fear To Tread*, some of the characters are forced to recognise their natural impulses and in *Howards End* alone, the importance of a comradeship with other characters is emphasised. For in the heart of the Hertfordshire fields, events such as death and “yearnings for love, have their deepest expression” (264). The English countryside catalyses the characters’ development towards an alliance between the imagination and the heart, and therefore, instigates an integration that moves them closer to spiritual reconciliation.

Although the natural world of the novel can be brutal and uncivilised, there is evidence that only under its intangible power can the characters achieve fulfillment. Like Philip in the opera house in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Helen feels “the supreme joy of life” (37) when she adopts the unconscious life of instinct and, within the landscape, acts on her desire for Paul Wilcox:

He had drawn her out of the house, where there was the danger of surprise and light; he had led her by a path he knew, until they stood under the column of the vast wych-elm. A man in the darkness he whispered ‘I love you’ when she was desiring love. (39)<sup>9</sup>

The potential *Howards End* has to influence the events in the novel is suggested, and the influence of the “open air” (37) landscape as a place where the characters can transcend divisions and social convention is foreshadowed. According to George Thomson, at *Howards End*, Helen makes a “spectacular evolvment, a sudden opening out, like a flower, into the fresh air and sunshine of the clear spirit” (177), and ignores the reason that instructs her to repress her passion.<sup>10</sup> Eventually she is able to control her unruly romantic nature and at *Howards End* she reaches a compromise.

The ancient and chthonic forces of nature surrounding Howards End and its land have an omnipresence, which correspond to Monteriano's role in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* as an omnipotent force. In *Howards End* there is a predetermined path for the characters to take towards their spiritual home. The Wilcox family attempt to thwart Margaret's journey to her home, Howards End, even though Mrs. Wilcox requested that Margaret inherit the house. Although Mrs. Wilcox's rejection of conventions regarding family inheritance are "treacherous to the laws of property" (108), the Wilcoxes have been shown to be unsuitable guardians for a house that represents the past and future of England. In the hope of rationalising their mother's request, they damn the decision as "unbusinesslike" (108), but the intangible spirit of the land, that cares not for human emotion, insists that the rightful heir of Howards End inhabit the house.

The landscape of Shropshire, and the house Oniton — which is situated in Shrewsbury — are unfettered places where the environment is dominated by an "agricultural green" (211). Oniton, just as the Basts' flat epitomises the limiting qualities of the city, represents the beneficial attributes associated with spacious regions. Oniton has outcrops of rock, occasional woods which "all hinted at the wildness to follow", and in accordance with its surroundings, the house is "unintellectual but kindly" (211). Like Italy, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, this countryside retains a mysterious and poetical quality that evades the kind of ownership Henry Wilcox attempts to supplant. Oniton is unaccommodating to the materialist attitude of Henry Wilcox, in his efforts to modernise it. To Henry, Oniton is merely

another business venture which may be financially beneficial, and he tries to manipulate the area to be suitable for social entertainment. It refuses to succumb to his requirements and remains detached from the expectations of society:

The shooting was bad, the fishing indifferent, and womenfolk reported the scenery as nothing much. The place turned out to be in the wrong part of Shropshire. . . . As soon as a tenant was found, it became a house for which he never had had much use, and had less now, and, like Howards End, faded into limbo. (208)

In *Howards End*, houses and the attitude of the characters towards them is a test of their integrity. Characters such as Henry, and Mrs. Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, are not worthy of Howards End or the beautiful views of the Shrewsbury countryside:

Quiet mysteries were in progress behind those tossing horizons: the west, as ever, was retreating with some secret which may not be worth discovering, but which no practical man will ever discover. (210)

Only when Henry has abandoned the stifling efficiency that clouds his soul, will he then have access to the opportunities that such a “wilderness” or “view” offers.

Within the unconstrained landscape surrounding Oniton, the characters representing the organized world of London become useless and unable to assert their power. All conventional notions are undermined when Charles and his friend, Albert Fussell, attempt to swim in the river:

In the first place the key to the bathing-shed could not be found. . . . Then came the difficulty with the springboard, and soon three people were running back and forwards over the meadow with orders and

counter-orders and recriminations. . . . If Margaret wanted to jump from a motor-car, she jumped . . . if a clerk desired adventure, he took a walk in the dark. But these athletes seemed paralysed. They could not bathe without their appliances, though the morning sun was calling and the last mists were rising from the dimpling stream. (217)

In the Wilcoxes there is no spontaneity and no harmony with Nature, as they depend heavily on the conveniences of modern life. Charles is in conflict with Oniton and this place does not approve of his maxim: "Everyone for himself" (215), for Oniton promotes a more interdependent atmosphere which is evident in the small village. Hence Charles' motto "rang grimly enough among the ruins of Oniton" (215).

In Shropshire, under the "fair weather by the walls of their future home", Margaret hopes that Henry will achieve wholeness and finally "set his soul in order" (219). Here she believes that the "conversion of Henry himself to a rural life" will occur and he will fill his "panic and emptiness" (40) with sincerity and emotion. Instead, at Oniton, Henry's disconnection from his natural impulses continues and the forces of the natural world reveal their brutality. The conflict heightens when Henry must confront his own past rejection of the convention that he forcefully upholds. His affair with Jacky Bast confirms that at one stage his passions refused to be repressed. While "improvising emotion" (243) Henry tries to excuse himself from his lapse in moral principles with what, Mary Lago calls, "old Imperial rationalisation" (42). He claims: "I was far from good influences — . . . I was very, very lonely, and longed for a woman's voice" (243). But the influence of place exposes Henry, for the raw environment will allow for no pretense.



The Wilcoxes are at odds with the spirit of Oniton and Oniton refuses to accept the family as spiritual heirs. Both in private and public spaces human relations fail, for Margaret's attempts to convince Henry to help Leonard Bast are unsuccessful. This scene concludes confirming that the Wilcoxes will never find their roots or a spiritual home. They will continue to

have no part in the place, nor in any place. . . . They have swept into the valley and swept out of it, leaving a little dust and a little money behind. (246).

Although Forster directly confronts the issue of place in *Howards End*, and here displays the disunity between the Wilcoxes and homes, there still remains a more complex approach to the divisions and unions brought about by the spirit of place.

Not only do broad regions determine the outcome of human connection in this novel, but the more confined parameters of houses also reinforce Forster's tendency to portray place in a paradoxical way. When the novel focuses on London and the specific buildings that the characters occupy, it is Ducie Street — the Wilcoxes' house, and Wickham Place — the Schlegel sisters' house, that both assist and deter the characters' development towards transcendental communion. At Ducie Street, the inequality of culture and the superficial qualities of materialism dominate.<sup>11</sup> As Matthew Arnold explains, "materialising our upper-class . . . and brutalising our lower class . . . this is to fail in civilization" (qtd. in Hoy 223). Ducie Street is a large "flashy" (67), "ornate" flat which "cuts off the sun" (68) to the smaller Wickham Place flats opposite. The reader could imagine its domination over an "old and little . . . red brick" house like Howards

End (19). The size of the flat is again an assertion of Henry's alliance with imperialism and the desire for expansion. Of course, its spatial quality also indicates the potential for discovery and perhaps accommodation for a range of experience like Gino's house in *Where Angels Fear To Tread*. But Ducie Street's "overfurnished" rooms with "maroon leather chairs", which resemble the offspring of the "motor-car" (166-7), align it with the forces of modernity, the machine, and technological advancement, rather than the ideal simplicity of Italian life. Margaret acknowledges her own incompatibility with the place's adherence to power and extravagance:

The room suggested men, and Margaret, keen to derive the modern capitalist from the warriors and hunters of the past, saw it as an ancient guest-hall. . . . Even the Bible — . . . Charles had brought back from the Boer War — fell into position. Such a room admitted loot. (167)

Financial success, associated with the upper-middle-class Wilcoxes, ensures their attachment to the life of culture, but their inability to utilise education and wealth appropriately, leaves them fragmented and incapable of human connection.

In Ducie Street, where interest in economics, politics and social events is required, Mrs. Wilcox, who is the spirit, or genius loci, of *Howards End*, finds that "there is nothing to get up for in London" and that, as Margaret detects, her

voice, though sweet and compelling, had little range of expression. It suggested that pictures, concerts and people are all of small and equal value. Only once had it quickened — when speaking of *Howards End*. (80)

Once Margaret has married Henry and moves into Ducie Street, she also finds herself detached from her intellectual “Chelsea friends”, and “theatres and discussion societies . . . attracted her less and less” (257), and so cultural activity loses relevance as she replaces the first Mrs. Wilcox and takes on her intuitive and instinctual quality. But London cannot be her spiritual home. The closer Margaret moves towards Howards End the less she verbalizes and intellectualizes her instinctual reactions, but the reader can detect the omnipresence of Howards End influencing her thoughts as she begins to fulfil the prophetic tone of the novel. She admits: “I believe we shall come to care about people less and less. . . . It’s one of the curses of London. I quite expect to end my life caring most for a place” (137). By the end of the novel place — by distancing Margaret from humanity and thus fulfilling its paradoxical role — has moulded the guardian it requires for survival and manipulated her proximity to its sacred centre, Howards End.

Ducie Street is antagonistic towards the passionate and spontaneous qualities that the English countryside encourages, and Henry’s lack of physical finesse reflects the confining influence of this space. Although a spacious house, it limits the imaginative and physical qualities of its inhabitants. Henry Wilcox is, like Mrs. Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, in conflict with the naturalness of the rural region (he suffers from hay fever) and is alien to the wilderness it offers. But Henry’s antagonistic relationship with nature far exceeds that of Mrs. Herriton, for she had no influence over the Italian landscape. Henry decides to

shorten [the Thames'] long tidal trough by taking shares in the lock at Teddington, and if he and other capitalists thought good, some day it could be shortened again. (137)

By stunting Nature, Henry confirms his own stifled emotions. In this sense Henry is the antithesis of Gino in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, who shows physical sureness and rejects the detaching aestheticism which originates from an immersion in cultural conventions. Henry's inability to accept the physical component of life is displayed:

Outwardly he was cheerful, reliable and brave; but within, all had reverted to chaos, ruled . . . by an incomplete asceticism. Whether as boy, husband or widower, he had always the sneaking belief that bodily passion is bad. . . . The words that were read aloud on Sunday to him . . . were the words that had once kindled the souls of St. Catherine and St. Francis into a white-hot hatred of the carnal. (188)

His fulfilment of expectations to be practical and unsentimental, as Margaret acknowledges, has caused Henry to be inadequate in "times of sorrow or emotion" (138). The ornate and superficial quality of Ducie Street does not encourage Henry to be natural or integrate those romantic aspects of his soul.

In the house of the sisters Helen and Margaret Schlegel, Wickham Place, there is tension between the mystery of the unfettered regions and the more practical cultured life of the city. Although Wickham Place is situated in London where cultured conventions are accepted into the sisters' lives, they do not impinge on their behaviour. Within this space the beneficial side of cultural activity and wealth are apparent. Margaret's response to Helen's brief engagement and her own expression of passion

reveals the sisters' ability to retain some of that passion that Ducie Street does not accommodate. Unlike Mrs. Herriton, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Margaret accepts the need for this passion and appreciates its beauty. Wickham Place reflects a similar spatial limitation to the Herritons' house, but Margaret still establishes her compatibility with the unorganised and undirected quality of nature.<sup>12</sup> She remarks:

“I hate plans. I hate lines of action”. . . . If she herself should ever fall in love . . . she . . . would proclaim it from the house-tops. . . . “I have it in Helen’s writing that she and a man are in love. . . . All the rest isn’t worth a straw.” (24)

In contrast to Mrs. Herriton, Margaret refuses to allow the union of two humans to be destroyed by “inquiries, questions, plans, [and] lines of action” (25). Social mores are in existence, but are not endorsed to the point of repression. Therefore, it is understandable that Wickham Place is “separated” from the “main thoroughfare” (23) of London and the Schlegels are able to escape from the oppressed Basts and the repressed Wilcoxes. The sisters have created their own domestic space where harmony reigns.

However, there is still evidence of an application of social convention and inequality. When Leonard Bast comes to retrieve his umbrella, which Helen has accidentally taken, Helen is insensitive towards him. She remarks: “It’s an appalling umbrella. It must be mine” (54). Leonard’s loss of his umbrella affects him simply because he cannot afford to lose it. Jacky also visits Wickham Place and her presence distracts the Schlegels, who are soon attending an intellectual “discussion society” (122). Jacky “poisons” their intellectual thoughts as they are confronted with the reality

of poverty. They mock her tramp-like appearance: "Mrs. Lanoline had risen out of the abyss, like a faint smell . . . telling of a life where love and hatred had both decayed" (122). The presence of Jacky indicates, as Daniel Born explains, that "the urban blight of London has begun to invade the privacy of the Schlegel home" (153). But the Schlegels can move to Howards End and divorce themselves from the unpleasant aesthetics of the city. They may journey towards their spiritual home, but Howards End is detached from the stark reality of poverty and is, therefore, somewhat a domain sheltered from the 'real' life Forster wants his characters to achieve. The contradictions persist.

When Mrs. Wilcox attends Margaret's luncheon party, her "simple" tastes and her slight "knowledge of culture" are in conflict with the discussion of the New English Art Club, journalism and literature which Margaret and her intellectual friends engage in (84). Mrs. Wilcox is described as a "a wisp of hay, a flower" (84); she is associated with the delicate and innocent quality of nature. Her affinity with the environment of Howards End, particularly the wych-elm, the pony and the land, all reinforce Mrs. Wilcox's role as an earth-mother figure.<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Wilcox is, therefore, overwhelmed by the concentration of rational thought and intellect which exists in Wickham Place, although she continues to communicate the "greatness" (86) of the natural world. Her uniqueness is not destroyed by the monotony of London and she has an aura which extends beyond the limited space of Wickham Place. She explains to Margaret's friends: "We never discuss anything at Howards End" (87), revealing that within Howards End intellectual pursuits are not a priority. At her spiritual home Mrs. Wilcox

has a unique bond with her surroundings. Verbal and physical interaction are redundant as environment and human become one.

Tibby Schlegel, the sisters' brother, also resides within Wickham Place and he intensifies the house's attachment to the cultured life of the modern city. He has the same aesthetic nature of Philip Herriton, and therefore, they become representatives for the passive spectator who never really participates in life. Tibby is indifferent towards people and incapable of spontaneous response. Like Philip, who transforms Caroline, Gino and the baby into the Virgin, Donor and Child, Tibby observes Helen and "they were absorbed into the figure of St. Mary the Virgin" (252). But Tibby, unlike Philip, maintains immunity against the spirit of place. When his sisters are moved into Howards End, Tibby remains in London. He enhances the "politico-economical-aesthetic atmosphere that reigned at the Schlegels' " (68), and expectedly, shows no interest in finding a spiritual home.

Wickham Place is inevitably destroyed by the fluctuating quality of London. The house is overtaken by the force of London's thoroughfare whose noise and hurry blocks out the natural rhythms of the earth. The flux that is "emblematic of their lives" (115) robs the Schlegels of their home and a stabilizing sense of place. The description of Wickham Place's destruction reveals not just the Schlegels' loss, but also their sensitivity towards it, which separates them from the citydwellers who care not for tradition or a spirit of place:

Houses have their own way of dying, falling as variously as the generations of men . . . the spirit slips before the body perishes. It had decayed in the spring, disintegrating the girls more than they knew. . . .

By September it was a corpse, void of emotion. It stood for a week or two longer, open-eyed, as if astonished at its own emptiness. Then it fell. Navvies came, and spilt it back into the gray . . . they were not the worst of undertakers for a house which had always been human, and had not mistaken culture for an end. (253)

Although the death of Wickham Place affects the sisters, it is necessary for their occupation of Howards End, where the beauty and mystery found in Hertfordshire encourages their spiritual union. Since London has created no sense of permanence, Howards End becomes the private space where the sisters' can intimately interact.

As the city cannot offer a space for compromise, the characters move away from London and closer to the English countryside. It seems that in England's land, Forster finds a force that attempts to resist the progress of the modern city. As Jon Heggland states, in *Howards End* Forster "voices his nostalgia for a nation outside urban modernity" (400). It is the land surrounding Howards End and the house itself that represent a temporary retreat from London. But as Widdowson admits, Forster knew that his "vision of England as an essentially (an idyllically) rural country of reasonably prosperous farmers" was in reality "an idealized and largely literary myth" (qtd. in Murfin 358). The overwhelming force of the land appears to be the only solution, or hope, for the conservation of a space that is under invasion and threatened by machinery. As Wilfred Stone explains, it is in such passages as these that Forster's "patriotism and religion" resides:



If one wanted to show a foreigner England, perhaps the wisest course would be to take him to the final section of the Purbeck hills, and stand him on their summit, a few miles to the east of Corfe. . . . Seen from the west, the Wight is beautiful beyond all laws of beauty. It is as if a fragment of England floated forward to greet the foreigner — chalk of our chalk, turf of our turf, epitome of what will follow. (“Forster: The Environmentalist” 170)

This glorification indicates the reverence Forster had for such untouched places and it is here that he hopes to expose a recalcitrant force which resists the invasion of civilization. Forster would like Hertfordshire to be one of these places, but it too is threatened by the creeping “red rust” (329) of London’s suburbs.

The Hertfordshire village of Hilton is presented as an idyllic place in which a traditional knowable community exists.<sup>14</sup> Forster perceived that within these English villages, with their idealized rural lifestyle, stability, continuity and a rooted connection with the earth, the characters’ can unite. Indeed, Miss Avery and Tom — members of neighbouring farming families — introduce themselves to Margaret, offer milk and eggs and welcome the Schlegels into Howards End. Although Miss Avery has motives for her hospitality, she still displays genuine kindness. She gives Evie Wilcox a pendant which, carrying sentimental value, could become a family possession inherited by future generations. Evie rudely returns it, claiming that she cannot accept something so valuable from a poor family. Her failure to see the connection, and Margaret’s perception of it, confirms Evie’s incompatibility with village life.

Hilton, like Monteriano, has vast open spaces that are absent in London. Mrs. Munt — the Schlegels' aunt who is rescuing Helen from *Howards End* — like Lilia in Italy in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, observes a spacious landscape before she reaches “untroubled meadows and the dreamy flow of Tewin Water” (29). The Hilton railway station’s “indeterminate” quality conveniently poises the village between the rural and the urban, therefore revealing its ability to accommodate all experiences:

Into which country will it lead, England or Suburbia? It was new, it had island platforms and a subway. . . but it held hints of local life, personal intercourse. . . . (30)

Hilton accepts the unavoidable progress of modernity and its new “subway”, while also maintaining the traditional rural life characteristic of the English countryside. As a place which contains the meeting-ground — *Howards End* — Hilton shows a neutral and unprejudiced quality: “The appearance of the land was neither aristocratic or suburban”, and Margaret believes that the countryside is not “snobbish” and would vote “liberal” if it were left to itself (263). Hilton willingly accepts Margaret, who is someone integrated with both the “natural” and “philosophic” aspects of life.

Hilton reveals a rural community whose inhabitants have an understanding of inheritance and ancestral roots and are in harmony with their natural surroundings. The “mechanical cheerfulness” of London is replaced with natural response and a more communal atmosphere:

Hilton was asleep, or, at the earliest, breakfasting. . . . Here men had been up since dawn. Their houses were ruled, not by a London office, but by the movements of the crops and sun. That they were men of the

finest type only the sentimentalist can declare. . . . They are England's hope. . . . Half clodhopper, half board-school prig, they can still throw back to a nobler stock, and breed yeomen. (314)

At Mrs. Wilcox's funeral, a local woodcutter boy is perched in a churchyard elm and from here he sees "the sunset . . . scarlet and orange . . . the plantations; and behind him an unspoilt country of fields and farms" (97). Here Forster aligns himself with the English "pastoral" myth that idealises traditional country life.<sup>15</sup> Predictably, as Raymond Williams writes, "a natural country ease is contrasted with an unnatural urban unrest" (180). The village of Hilton is a representative of what C.F.G Masterman describes as "the spacious place of old, silent. . . . England; close to the ground, vibrating to the lengthy, unhurried processes of Nature" (qtd. in Born 147). This mystification of England heightens the idealisation of the countryside in *Howards End*, but it also, with its enigmatic tone, elevates the spirit of the earth to a supreme force and somewhat justifies the sisters' transcendental union.

Howards End, like Gino's house in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, offers itself as a meeting-ground for the characters. It is a place in which the divisions that the characters confront can be resolved and compromise can be achieved. The house and its surroundings reveal the potential for integration of the private building and the unfettered space. When the Schlegel sisters arrive, they open the windows and "the inside, too, was rustling to the spring" (293). Neither is it suprising that the Schlegels' furniture and carpet fit "extraordinarily well" (267), for Margaret has completed the quest to occupy her spiritual home. She takes on a more esoteric relationship with the

house and recognises its “wonderful powers” (293). The Schlegel sisters then realise that at Howards End,

their salvation was lying round them — the past sanctifying the present; the present, with wild heart-throb, declaring that there would after all be a future, with laughter and the voices of children. (292)

The house represents a sort of timeless zone which belongs to all of England and embodies the country’s past traditions and future destiny.

The wych-elm tree also represents the organic quality of Howards End, for it stands “on the boundary between the garden and meadow” and it also leans “a little over the house” (19). Meadow, tree, and house are parts of an harmonious whole. The wych-elm’s beneficial medicinal effects (pigs’ teeth, which cure toothache are embedded in the trunk), show the acceptance of human inhabitants and the necessity for continuity in cultural heritage. This English folklore must be passed onto the house’s next spiritual inheritor. But most importantly, the tree is a symbol of universal love: “It was a comrade . . . in its utmost fingers tenderness. . . . House and tree transcended any simile of sex” (206). In this house it is possible to find a spiritual and sacred level where social conventions and personal differences become irrelevant.

The Schlegel sisters find the permanence of stability which is “rooted in common things” at Howards End (292). Mrs. Wilcox also found stability there, for she belonged to the

house, and to the tree that overshadowed it. One knew that she worshipped the past, and that the instinctive wisdom the past can alone

bestow had descended on her . . . assuredly she cared for her ancestors,  
and let them help her. (36)

Although the sisters have their father's sword, their books, and a burial site nearby, that links them to their "essential past" and the land, it is a basic human bond that they discover. Their insight also enables them to perceive the necessity for continuity, and this is symbolised in the abundant crop of hay that fills the field. Moral and physical growth are ever-lasting at Howards End. The image of hay-cutting, with blades "encompassing with narrowing circles the sacred centre of the field" (325), indicates that a smooth and cyclic motion has returned to the sisters' lives and that the fragmentation which pervades London has been escaped.

The intangible spirit of Howards End and its animate world draw the sisters into their spiritual home. The house allows the Schlegels to ignore social propriety. Helen can live where she is not known and, being detached from the pressures of London can return to her more "irresponsible and charming" self (289). Margaret takes on a protective role over the house and will not allow its equilibrium to be altered.<sup>16</sup> Although Henry owns Howards End, Margaret refuses to "let those who know nothing about human nature" and are "shocked by physiology" enter Howards End (282). Conventions are disregarded and a focus on affection prevails. In this sacred space, it is a kindness and integration, rather than division, that dominate.

Howards End is a place which accommodates England's divided condition and is presented as an ideal destiny for the fate of England's national identity. Although *Howards End* presents more complex tensions than *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, and continues to lessen distinction between human form and architectural structures, there

are still paradoxes that complicate the final connection made between the characters. A union between Leonard Bast and Helen is impossible, as Forster sees the unlikelihood of crossing class boundaries, and therefore Leonard Bast is killed off. Henry Wilcox is also broken by Charles' imprisonment. Henry's steadiness must be destroyed before he is accepted at Howards End. For Helen and Margaret, like Caroline and Philip in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, it is their transcendence that enables them to achieve connection, but this spiritual communion also detaches them from humanity. They create a bond that exists independently of other people and their mutual understanding is exclusive.

Place fulfils its role as a contradictory theme and its inconsistencies continue to accommodate Forster's vision and often irreconcilable hopes. The tension between his own aims for a utopian bond between his characters and portraying a realistic novel, climax in the closing scenes of *Howards End*. Yet, the ambiguities surrounding the characters' connection do not undermine the optimistic tone of the final synthesis as they do in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Helen, Margaret and the child achieve some kind of permanent reconciliation, but Caroline and Philip, in the previous novel, lose the momentum that instigates their unification at Gino's house. The son of Helen inherits Schlegelian culture, intelligence, passion and money, and also an instinctual, physical and agricultural component from Leonard. The child becomes a symbol of compromise and hope. So, although the Schlegels are the ones who "go further still, and move outside humanity altogether, it is confirmed that "a place, as well as a person, may catch the glow" (328). Howards End is the home which is capable of housing a kaleidoscopic national identity, and is thus an ideal destiny for the child, the Schlegels,

and the people of England who are prepared to preserve their country's unique attributes.

## *A Passage to India: Contrast and Compromise*

In *A Passage to India*, Forster returns to a foreign country, as he did in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, to show the opposition between the unconstrained and socially restrained regions, and also the progression of the characters through sites where division and assimilation occur. In *A Passage to India*, the basic dichotomy is represented by the Indian countryside and the city of Chandrapore. As he did in *Howards End* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Forster uses a specific building to house the values he respected and encourage the same kind of transcendental mutual understanding that was achieved by the Schlegel sisters in *Howards End* and Caroline, Philip and Gino in Gino's house. But the exclusive spiritual union that occurs in *A Passage to India* is more assertive than the relatively ambivalent connections made in the first two novels. The spirit of place is allocated a complexity that gives greater solidarity to its role as a paradoxical force, but less pronouncement to the basic dichotomy explicit in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Spaces in this novel are less determinate and affirm the difficulty in finding a home for humanity in either the Indian earth, temple or in death. The notion of connection is confused by the powers of place; yet, in concordance with the other novels, there is still a place which enables the characters to eclipse those qualities that separate them and thus a humanistic closure is achieved.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Sawston limited the characters' discovery of the 'real' life; in *Howards End*, London failed to protect tradition and preserve buildings which gave a sense of stability to England; in *A Passage to India*,



Chandrapore fails to threaten the barriers that separate races and cultures, and so Forster approaches the theme of connection with a universality that gives greater significance to the influences of place. His aim to establish a spiritual home for all of humanity gives place a more forceful omnipresence. Although in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Forster attempts a similar task in Italy, he fails to capture the vast and unmanageable quality of the earth, and its relationship with civilization. Forster claimed that *A Passage to India* was “about the search of the human race for a more lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the Indian earth and the Indian sky. . . .” (*Devi* 298), and in this novel he reminds the reader that any moment our “triumphant machine of civilization may suddenly hitch and be immobilized into a car of stone” (220). In India, Forster finds his “inviolable” place “in a world being overrun”, which can withstand the forces of machinery and humanity (Stone “Forster: The Environmentalist” 179). As the final scene of the novel shows, the chthonic rhythms of the earth overwhelm humanity’s attempts at fusion.

Chandrapore is a city which reinforces class and cultural differences. Its space is divided into zones and the city’s architectural structures intensify these divisions. The city itself takes, like Hilton and Monteriano, an active role in determining the destiny of the characters. But at the outset, the focus is taken away from Chandrapore and given to the Marabar Hills:

Except for the Marabar Caves — and they are twenty miles off — the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the

bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. . . .

The streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine

houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys. . . . (9)

The city's inconsequence is deceptive, for its "hidden" potential reflects the power the buildings have to temporarily join and permanently divide the characters.

Chandrapore's limited "view" makes the city an unlikely site for connection, and indeed it is in Mau, another Indian state, where the most significant and substantial synthesis occurs. Social barriers plague Chandrapore, but it plays a by no means nugatory role. The geography emphasises the unity and exacerbates the divisions inherent in human relationships.

As London is for the English, Chandrapore is the nucleus of cultural activity for the Indians. In this city they are more at home than the Anglo-Indians. In the public spaces their mosques and temples are erected, and they are able to fuse a closer relationship with the Indian earth. The land, as it does for the Basts in *Howards End*, determines both the flimsiness and stability of the Indians' existence. But India's maleability does, to a greater extent than Monteriano and Hilton, manipulate the paradoxical state of the characters. The buildings in the city seem "made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving" (9), but the reader is also told that, "the general outline of the town persists . . . like some low but indestructible form of life" (9). Although the Indians reside in Chandrapore, they are offered no permanence from the earth. Unlike the modern buildings in London that seem to dominate the landscape, in *A Passage to India* no such strength is allocated to man-made structures. Even the buildings celebrating the presence of a supreme force, such as the temples, are made ineffective

and somewhat dwarfed by the energy of India. The temples, in contrast to the powerful role Santa Deodata is allocated in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, are presented as helpless against the spirit of India.

In opposition to the city is the brutal, but enlightening force of the Indian earth. It moves the characters towards a greater understanding of themselves; whereas the specific buildings in this novel unite the characters and teach them to respect alternative cultures. The Anglo-Indians try to organise or find order in India, but the country denies them this familiarity. India's diversity and its unpredictable environment has the power to deceive, and deny the characters a stabilising sense of place. India's messiness, like Gino's room in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, is also a positive sign of life. According to Forster, "all that is pre-arranged is false" and therefore nothing organised and structured can be natural (*Aspects of the Novel* 99). So when the Anglo-Indians try to identify or arrange the natural world of India, "the mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge into something else" (90). Both Indians and Anglo-Indians are unable to authorize events as India's lack of distinction — one side of its duality — can suddenly invalidate their planned itinerary. When attempts are made by the Turtons, Cyril Fielding and Aziz, to bring people together through arranged meetings, India separates them.

In Chandrapore, Fielding, an English principal, brings Indians and Anglo-Indians together at a tea party, but the land is hostile towards this attempt at social harmony. The tea party ends with antagonism between the two cultures and "it was as if irritation exuded from the very soil" (82). India's aridness, unlike Italy's abundant

olive groves in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, tests the characters' resources and their patience, for "There is no reserve of tranquillity to draw upon in India" (82). Aziz also detects the cantankerous quality of the Indian earth:

There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. (20)

The irascible land destabilises the characters and alienates them from their surroundings; however this indirectly contributes to their transformation by disrupting their familiar modes of interpretation and perception. For Adela Quested, India refuses her the ability to create a stable code of identification and eludes her rationalisations. She has yet to learn that "nothing embraces India" (151). Towards other characters such as the elusive Godbole, India is less hostile for he accepts its unmanageable diversity. Similarly, Mrs. Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* accepts and reflects the enclosed environment of her house. But for most of the novel it appears that India is an unlikely homeland for humanity, for it is just too vast and diverse; incomprehensible and antagonistic.

Adela, who insists on finding "something universal" (152) in India, is disappointed by the landscape, as the countryside is unwilling to accommodate her perception and eagerness to assign. In the same way the reality of Italy contributes to Philip Herriton's transition from aesthete to participant, India undermines Adela's touristic expectations and insists that she adopt an authentic view of the country; a country whose spirit is hazy and undeterminable, thereby intensifying her confusion. While travelling towards the Marabar Caves she awaits the dawn with enthusiasm, but

the sky — which heightens her awareness of the Indian countryside — denies her the comfort of familiarity:

As she spoke, the sky to the left turned an angry orange . . . at the supreme moment, when night should have died and day lived, nothing occurred. . . . Why, when the chamber was prepared, did the bridegroom not enter with trumpets and shawns, as humanity expects? The sun rose without splendour. (144)

Adela tries to interpret a landscape that bears “no relations to anything dreamt or seen” and is, therefore, disappointed (130). Although, reflecting its changeability, India can also relate to everything in the universe; India’s space can expand and contract. The uncertain or scaleless space allocated to houses in Forster’s earlier novels, applies now in *A Passage to India*, to all of India. Like the eponymous house in *Howards End*, India becomes a zone where time stands still and where linearity is lost. Certainly, elements of a primordial past and events in the present coexist in the caves. India has its own synchronicity that is guided by the earth and so becomes like the town of Hilton in *Howards End*, somewhat ignorant of man’s built environment. As expected, anything Adela is unable to comprehend rationally becomes a muddle rather than a mystery. She cannot accept the inexplicable quality of the universe nor can she acknowledge that in India there is diversity within unity. India is the perfect paradigm for Forster’s exploration of paradox.

In *A Passage to India* the Marabar Caves are the nucleus of the Indian countryside, that to some extent, like their own hollow form, create an absent centre.<sup>1</sup>

When the characters refer to the caves nothing is understood, nor are events resolved; for the reader they evade explanation. Gerald Dougherty's comment is applicable:

At one level India is a conflictual field where all codes compete for hearing and where no code has final authority. At another, India represents difference, the uncodable factor, that eludes the explanatory system through which the English would fix, circumscribe and subdue it.

(107)

The first section of this novel focuses on the man-made — the Mosque. Then, in the Caves the action moves into a purely natural world, where the characters undergo disruptive and unifying changes. In this shift Forster moves from the ordered realm of civilization and human habitation, into the chaotic and old natural world that existed before humanity; the caves “. . . are older than anything in the world” (129). The characters' journey to the caves, for perhaps only an instant, exposes them to the impulses that fundamentally join humans to one another. The caves show, as Oliver Stallybrass explains, that “no two types, however much opposed, can be considered as absolutely distinct” (325). Echoing this merging is the indistinguishable quality of the caves, and as Gerald Doherty explains,

no cave is center or source: each one represents only the absence or lack which reduplicates itself in the next one. (112)

In these apparently empty holes, all the fundamental bonds that link each human to another exist, and they exist regardless of society's divisions. But unable to identify the caves, the characters are tempted to label them with white paint (208). According to the Anglo-Indians, mysteries must be explained and disorder must be arranged.

Mrs. Moore, while inside the cave, is exposed to the meaninglessness of the universe.<sup>2</sup> She has a vision of the universe where “Everything exists and nothing has value” (156). Without distinction the system through which Mrs. Moore sees and interprets the world is made void. Marriage, poetry and filth become the same. India projects formlessness, but Mrs. Moore fails to see that it also displays individual distinction. India is also revealing, as Jeffrey Heath explains, that “Everything exists *and* everything has value” (294, original emphasis). What appears to Mrs. Moore as emptiness can also be transformed into fulfilment. But confronted with her own vision of desolation, nothingness and a universe without distinction, the Marabar Caves become a source of evil. She sees “horror of the universe and its smallness” (216) at the same time. But she is able to recognise an element of her own projection when she comments: “Nothing evil had been in the caves, but she had not enjoyed herself” (154). Therefore, the Marabar Caves can be both “shelter and tomb” (Dauner 261), both “womb” (Trilling 157) and the “voice of negation, chaos and old Night” (White 647). Ambivalent in its function, the Marabar Caves can create sensations of both togetherness and separation.

For Adela the Marabar Caves emanate a benevolent and malignant spirit. They expose her to the “animality” which, as Matthew Arnold explains, is repressed when a human strives for that cultured state of “*harmonious* perfection” (47, original emphasis), and thus, empower her. But by exploring the caves, Adela can discover aspects of herself. Victoria Carchidi makes an explicit link: “Adela’s misguided efforts to see ‘the real India’ lead her to a surprisingly intimate discovery of the parallels

between herself and the subcontinent" (17). Indeed, Adela gains the strength to avoid manipulation from her colleagues at the trial, just as the disordering forces of India corrupt England's efforts to civilise and create order (Carchidi 175). If, as William Tindall proposes, the caves are for Adela, "the primitive, the unconscious and the sexual elements in human experience" (qtd. in Shahane 26), then the caves awaken her to the possibility of life without the social conventions that have previously been forced upon her. They give her the power to resist the imposing standards of English culture. But, in contrast, Adela's experience in the cave prompts her to accuse Aziz, an Indian, of attacking her, thereby widening the gap between Anglo-Indian and Indian. So still paradoxically, the caves represent both a force that fuses qualities essential to Adela's own transformation, but aggravates racial disunity.

Like Adela, the caves will never be ordered or explicable through someone else's interpretation, and by exploring them and asserting her sexuality, she simultaneously discovers India and parts of her own "nature" (Olsen 391). After Adela's experience in the caves, she and India becomes similar in their power to be "of it and not of it at the same time" (237). Yet this "double relation" (237), of gaining transcendental knowledge while maintaining a clear attachment to reality, detaches Adela from her colleagues. India's "double relation" also intensifies its duplicitous role and reveals how the caves can be a hollow, yet dense space, and a sinister yet empowering source. So too can India in its earthly state create an atmosphere of spiritual synergy. Just as the "panic and emptiness" (HE 46) that the Schlegels must confront in *Howards End*, so in the caves evil and deception can be traced to its source. However as is shown by Adela, truth can also be the outcome.



Adela's thoughts are focused on sex and love when she enters the cave, and therefore, to some extent, she is frightened by her own doubts about her love for Ronny. The cave she enters "mirrors its own darkness in every direction infinitely" (131), and since, when inside it, the cave can "hear no sound but its own" (161), Adela only hears the emptiness of her love for Ronny. But simultaneously she is aware of a culmination of the sexual impulses she experienced earlier with Ronny: "Her hand touched his . . . and one of the thrills so frequent in the animal kingdom passed between them" (92).<sup>3</sup> And after the trial she notices that:

Hitherto she had not much minded whether she was touched or not: her senses were abnormally inert. . . . Everything now was transferred to the surface of her body. . . . (201)

Adela has somewhat of an awakening in the caves, but she is unable to permanently acknowledge it. For a short time Adela achieves clarity as the wilderness of India has a liberating effect.<sup>4</sup>

As in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End*, it is not only open-air spaces that determine the fates of the characters, but also specific constructed sites. Within Chandrapore is the Anglo-Indian civil station. The Anglo-Indians believe their culture and race to be superior to that of the Indians'. Ian Baucom discusses the lack of "intimacy" demonstrated by the "architecture of this outpost" and that in comparison to the rest of the city,

the civil station appears to be a world apart, a world closed in on itself, a world serenely, or perhaps nervously, refusing to make contact with the India that surrounds it. (102)

As a private and spatially narrow site, the civil station becomes like the Herriton House in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, a place without personal interaction and genuine affection. The tension within the station arises mainly from prejudiced characters such as Major Turton, an Anglo-Indian collector, who prohibits intimacy between Indians and Anglo-Indians: "Intimacy — never, never" (171). This lack of contact is, as Baucom states, reinforced by the streets and walls of the civil station. The civil station is detached from the earth by its elevated position above the rest of the city, a position which reflects the Anglo-Indians' attempts to be disconnected from the rest of the city. But they remain in contact with the earth and must share this space with the Indians.

The civil station's layout reflects the focus on the ordering forces of the intellect and reason which is at odds with the disordered state of India. The station

is sensibly planned . . . and the bungalows are disposed along the roads that intersect at right angles . . . it shares nothing with the city except the overarching sky. (10)

The Anglo-Indians have insisted on arranging their surroundings. From the civil station, "Chandrapore appears to be a totally different place. . . . It is a tropical pleasaunce washed by a noble river" (10) and the city resembles a forest. Ironically, it is from the Anglo-Indians' perspective that the city looks like "a city of gardens . . . a forest sparsely scattered with huts" (10), for they are less familiar with the qualities associated with the land and the reality it offers. From this place,

The toddy palms and neem trees . . . that were hidden by the bazaars now become visible and in their turn hide the bazaars. . . . Especially after the rains do they screen what passes below, but at all times, even when scorched or leafless, they glorify the city to the English people who inhabit the rise, so that new-comers cannot believe it to be as meagre as it is described, and have to be driven down to acquire disillusionment. (10)

The inaccurate image of the city that the Anglo-Indians perceive is a reflection of their own distorted views and lack of insight. Removed from the reality in which Leonard Bast in *Howards End* and the majority of the native Indians live, the Anglo-Indians and, for example the Wilcoxes, fail to see the truth: that essential to human connection is an expression of both passion and reason.<sup>5</sup> The Anglo-Indians' lack of sensitivity explains why the civil station is said to "provoke no emotion" and "charms not, neither does it repel" (10). This "biblical turn of phrase", as John Beer confirms, "is helping to suggest the atmosphere of Sawston which pervades the station" (138). So here, in India, the Anglo-Indians have no spiritual home and fail to escape the boundaries that are set by the English civil station.

The club is situated within the civil station and contains the same limiting forces that are apparent in Sawston in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. The adherence to duty and assumption of superiority that is evident in Harriet is also demonstrated in Ronny Heaslop, who believes he is not in India to be pleasant to Indians, but "to hold this wretched country by force" (53). There is also a sense of conformity and rigidity which Ronny follows. He speaks to his mother using phrases that "were in current use at the

club. . . .” (36). Mrs. Turton, the wife of a Collector, echoes Mrs. Herriton’s disapproval of Gino and the strict social codes of Sawston when she remarks: “Mr. Fielding wasn’t pukka, and had better marry Miss Quested, for she wasn’t pukka” (31). The club represents the presence of English insularity in India and as Jeane Olsen confirms, the club is the new Sawston,

as sanitarily cordoned off from the vibrancy of Indian life in the temples and bazaars as Sawston itself was hermetically sealed off from Italy in earlier novels. (399)

Because of their culture, the Anglo-Indians are denied exposure to essential qualities of behaviour that are evident in those who live closer to the earth, just as in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* Caroline and Philip, in Sawston, are denied discoveries attainable from interaction with Italy. The club, like the Herriton’s house, intensifies social and cultural differences and provides no sacred space in which mutual understanding can thrive.

The failure of the Anglo-Indians to abandon “standard tourist activities” (Buzard 27) and conventions in India, is revealed at the bridge party that is held in the club. Like the law courts, as Gerald Doherty explains, the bridge party is a “nucleus of social containment and order” (109), which is threatened by the informal quality of India. Mr. Turton, insists on arranging the party “to bridge the gulf between East and West”, but ironically the “Public School attitude” flourishes “more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England” and “conventional judgements” (43) are reinforced. The club can provide no meeting-ground for the Indians and Anglo-Indians as the characters “sought for a new formula which neither East nor West could provide” (45). It is not until the characters reach a place such as the temple, where a universal religion attempts

to unite humanity, and where words are no longer necessary, that transcendence can occur and a new spiritual meeting-ground is established. The conventions of the Raj are threatened by the intractability of India. The bridge party merely confirms this sense of desperation; this need to retrench with “greater force” (52). As John Beer writes,

the characteristics of Sawston were bound to become exaggerated in a situation where it lived both complacently assured of its own rightness and consciously embattled against forces which could easily, through some error or miscalculation, overwhelm it. (131)

Sawston’s codes were threatened by the unrefined and spontaneous quality of Italy in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*; in *A Passage to India* the club — which represents Sawston transplanted to India — is intimidated by the unmanageable forces of this foreign country. Since the club is an arena alienated from the rest of the Indians and countryside, it is a section of Chandrapore where a reconciliation of differences will never occur.

The remainder of the city — that is not the civil station or club — has an affiliation with the muddled quality of India, for the Indians “are by nature a most informal people” (72). They have an alternative system of communication and interpretation, for “What they said and what they felt were (except in the case of affection) seldom the same” (117). Unlike the Anglo-Indians, they often respond to their own emotional impulses and refuse to adhere to social constraints. When Adela leaves the courtroom, the city’s bustle aligns it with the Indian earth:

The faint, indescribable smell of the bazaars invaded her, sweeter than a London slum, yet more disquieting . . . the heat of the sun had boiled and fried all the glories of the earth into a single mess. (241)

The proximity of the city and the Indian earth creates an attachment that the elevated civil station is denied.

This connection with the land is reflected in the house of Aziz. When the Anglo-Indians request to meet at his house, Aziz remembers his home with horror: "It was a detestable shanty near a low bazaar. There was practically only one room in it, and that was infested with small black flies" (73). Instead of receiving them at his home, Aziz invites them to visit him in the Marabar Caves. Fielding also visits Aziz in his house and "the floor [is] strewn with fragments of cane and nuts, and spotted with ink, the pictures crooked upon the walls" (114). Equivalent to Gino's home in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Aziz's mess is an untidiness that "comes of life, not of desolation" (WA 142).<sup>6</sup> Aziz can accept the diversity of India and his "truth of mood" (75) testifies to a participation in life which, if neglected, results in a greater detachment from other humans and from the land.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the city — where the Indians reside — not unlike Aziz's house, has the "Scented East of tradition" which is "blended with human sweat" (240). It has a reality where artificial order is abandoned.

When Aziz enters the ordered and imposing atmosphere of the civil lines the rational elements are overwhelming:

As he entered their arid tidiness, depression suddenly seized him.

The roads . . . intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes . . . the sensitive edges of him — feared a gross snub. (18)

As Glen Allen perceives, when discussing the three sections of the novel, “the Moslem belongs to emotional nature, to the Anglo-Indian the intellect, and to the Hindu the capacity for love” (qtd. in *Stone Cave* 311). Aziz’s tendency to act on his emotion, rather than his reason, aligns him with sensuousness rather than the intellectual side of human nature. He embraces “poetry” and believes that India can be built up only on what humans “feel” (122) rather than think. In contrast to Major Turton’s and Ronny Heaslop’s beliefs, he admits that “kindness . . . is the only hope” (122), if compromise is to occur between English and Indian people. Thus, Aziz’s sensitivity is contrasted to the unsympathetic behaviour of the Anglo-Indians’, although Forster is careful not to idealise him. Exclusion is central to Aziz’s ideal homeland for it will have “no foreigners of any sort” (335). His home is a place where he and Fielding can converse, but ultimately Aziz’s possessive nature excludes his home or mosque as a neutral arena, and the caves become his ideal site for their meeting.

In the courtroom in Chandrapore there is tension between the stereotyped mysterious East and rational West. Attempting to assert the factual and legal process of justice is the Magistrate, Mr. Das, who like his assistant and the Anglo-Indians, is “cultivated, self-conscious, and conscientious” (226). But invading the courtroom is the influence of India’s natural world which moves in the form of the punkah wallah, a naked figure who has “no bearing officially upon the trial” (133). The punkah — like Gino in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* — is a symbol of nature. He

had the strength and beauty that sometimes comes to flower in Indians of low birth. When that strange race nears the dust and is condemned as untouchable, then nature remembers the physical perfection that she accomplished elsewhere . . . to prove to society how little its categories impress her. (226)

The Punkah is the spirit of India who brings the primal qualities of India's countryside into the courtroom, for he is a "beautiful naked god" who is detached from society and self-consciousness, for he "scarcely knew he existed" (226). Thus, it is here that Adela achieves wholeness as her rational thoughts — which tell her Aziz attacked her — are undermined by the truth that is communicated to her through the punkah and Mrs. Moore.

The courtroom, although it attempts to retain order, cannot refuse the natural world entry. Standard Western procedures try to "censure" (228) and control the proceedings, but in this "ramshackly room" (225) the muddled quality of India dominates. There is little order. In this atmosphere Adela is forced to question the validity of her system of reasoning:

Her particular brand of opinions, and the suburban Jehovah who sanctified them — by what right did they claim so much importance in the world, and assume the title of civilization? (226-7)

Adela's disregard for the expectations of her community and the rationalising effects of her intellect bring her closer to the truth. And when Adela begins to perceive the truth; when a "new and unknown sensation protected her, like magnificent armour" (236), she



is able speak the truth. It is then that she achieves a harmonious relationship with nature and the potential benevolence in the Marabar Caves is revealed to her:

Why had she thought the expedition ‘dull’? Now the sun rose again . . .  
the masses of the rock flowed around her . . . all beautiful and  
significant, though she had been blind to it all the time. (237)

The court scene anticipates the eventual move from a social and cultural focus to the spiritual emphasis on which the novel ends. As Philip and Caroline moved from the opera to the café, and then to the personal space of the house in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, so too do the characters in *A Passage to India* make a progression from a social and spirited arena — the courtroom — to the public space of the College of Education, to the temple, where intimacy and divine harmony reigns.

The ordered civil lines and laws of the courtroom offer a contrast to the relaxed atmosphere of the College of Education where Cyril Fielding, a principal who has isolated himself from the Anglo-Indian community, lives. At first the college appears to be a potential place for compromise, since it remains “isolated from the rest of the universe” (247). Although it is not in the heart of the city, its detachment from both the socially-controlled Chandrapore and the natural world presents it as a neutral space ideal for agreement. Although the college is “Europeanized” (74), it also displays an affinity with the unfettered regions, for “the grounds included an ancient garden and a garden-house” (67). It is where an “unconventional” tea party can be held; “where formalities are ruled out” (71). The customs of the Anglo-Indian club are abandoned; there is an absence of “order” and a place is created which has “nothing to intimidate

poor Indians” (67). Intimacy is promoted in the college, for Fielding believes that “fundamental good will” must persist, and this allows for easy social interaction and an unofficial atmosphere.

Fielding ignores the expectations of the club and the prejudiced views of Indians it perpetuates. Reinforcing his detachment from his community are his messy shelves which show a rejection of stereotyped English behaviour. Aziz comments on Fielding’s dwellings:

“But I always thought that Englishmen kept their rooms tidy. It seems that this is not so. I need not be so ashamed.” He sat down gaily on the bed; then forgetting himself entirely, drew up his legs and folded them under him. “Everything ranged coldly on the shelves was what *I* thought . . . . (69, original emphasis)

The informal layout of the furniture, as it does for the Schlegels in *Howards End*, makes Aziz feel at ease in this environment. In a place such as this, Fielding has found his own spiritual home, but it does not accommodate for the other characters. The characters disperse after the tea party and their uneasy separation foreshadows the conflicts that arise at their next meeting place: the Marabar Caves.

Initially the mosque — like the college which shows the transition of the characters from unity to separation — appears to be a place of momentary synthesis. The mosque is a place where Aziz’s “imagination” can thrive and where his faith, Islam, becomes more “exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home” (21). This is Aziz’s spiritual home, and the mosque’s atmosphere of

agreement is reflected in the communication between Aziz, an Indian, and Mrs. Moore, an Englishwoman. Two representatives of different religions and races meet and an equality is established. Mrs. Moore takes her shoes off, thereby respecting the Moslem religion, and by showing no assumption of superiority she allows their friendship to be based on mutual understanding. The architecture of the mosque is also conducive to equality. Unlike the civil station with its rigid and divisive appearance, the mosque puts its inhabitants at ease. In *Abinger Harvest* Forster depicts a mosque describing itself and the actions of its resident Prophet:

I was the area to which he proceeded . . . where his companions joined him. . . . I contained no ornament or shrine, nor was one part of me more holy than another. (305)

Unlike Ducie Street in *Howards End*, the mosque does not endorse materialism, or perpetuate the qualities found in Henry Wilcox which prevent him from achieving successful human relationships. There are no dominating leather chairs, but instead a symmetry which creates a place of tranquillity. It is a place where fulfillment can be found, for its harmonious architecture is the manifestation of a divine force. In the mosque there is no hint of the influences of modern life or the effects that in *Howards End* cause the characters to alienate themselves from their environment. The mosque's arches — which connote a fluidity between shadow and light, inside and out — enhance the viewer's ability to see the moonlight from within its walls. Unlike Ducie Street, which robs "so much air and so much sun" (HE 4) from other buildings, the mosque maintains a reciprocal relationship with its site and inhabitants, for it not only

supplies the city with water, whereas the civil station “shares nothing with the city”(10), but it also provokes the characters to display kindness.

After successfully connecting with Mrs. Moore in the mosque, Aziz relaxes his attitude towards British invasion and his conflict with Hinduism. He sees India as belonging to all its inhabitants:

As he strolled down-hill beneath the lovely moon, and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as much as anyone owned it. What did it matter if a few flabby Hindus had preceded him there, and a few chilly English succeeded? (26)

But later Aziz displays his sense of ownership. When he talks to Mrs. Moore he remarks: “Do you ever remember *our* Mosque”?, consequently tainting it with a “sense of possession” (149).<sup>8</sup> The inevitable separation of Aziz and Fielding also corroborates the inability for reconciliation to occur where possession is present. The narrator claims: “Aziz was a memento, a trophy, they were proud of each other, yet they must inevitably part” (332). But once again Forster shows elements of paradox, for possessions are also a source of strength. The religion and values which Aziz attaches to his mosque, and which intensify his sense of possession, also root him to the earth through his traditions and ancestry. Although in India there is a sense of impermanence surrounding Aziz’s, and humanity’s existence, he is:

rooted in society and Islam. He belonged to a tradition which bound him. . . . Though he lived so vaguely in this flimsy bungalow, nevertheless he was placed, placed. (124)

But as Penelope Pether states: “It is Islam, rather than any place, which is Aziz’s home” (200). Unlike Godbole whose home is anywhere and everywhere, Aziz excludes those people and places which are not Islamic. When observing the mosque he thinks: “Here was Islam, his own country, more than a Faith, more than a battle-cry. . .” (21). It offers him a sense of tradition like *Howards End* for the Schlegels, but Aziz’s feelings of ownership make compromise impossible. Even as Aziz moves away from what he feels he possesses, to a public and shared space, the Indians and Anglo-Indian communities remain divorced.

The spacious maidan — located outside the boundaries of the inner city — where Aziz learns to play polo is

free from all human tension. He forgot the whole damned business of living as he scurried over the brown platter of the Maidan, with the evening wind on his forehead, and the encircling trees soothing his eyes.  
(61)

An Anglo-Indian also plays polo and he temporarily abandons social mores by freely interacting with Aziz. Equality, as it did in the mosque, becomes apparent, for according to their sporting ability, “forces were equal” and “they somehow became fond of one another” (61). The same comradeship that the fields of Hertfordshire prompted in *Howards End* causes “the fire of good fellowship” to arise. However, “Nationality was returning, but before it could exert its poison they parted” (61). Once again cultural differences part the characters and deny affection: a triumph for social division. Later when the Anglo-Indian visits the club he remarks: “Any native who

plays polo is all right. What you've got to stamp on is these educated classes. . . .” (193). The irony reinforces that social differences and prejudices remain effectual because opposing zones continue to keep men apart and at odds with one another.

Like Gino's house in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End* in *Howards End*, the temple in the last section of *A Passage to India* remains a magnet to the characters and their final reconciliation. They have gradually moved towards this specific site to find a religion that can accommodate universal communion. In the Hindu state of Mau, where a neutral meeting-ground is established for the characters, tensions are minimised:

The assembly was in a tender . . . it seethed like a beneficent potion . . . a most beautiful and radiant expression came into their faces, a beauty in which there was nothing personal, for it caused them all to resemble one another during the moment of its indwelling, and only when it was withdrawn did they revert to individual clods. (296)

A communal quality pervades this scene and paves a path for the final symbiosis between Mrs. Moore and Godbole. In the Hindu religion Forster finds a spiritual solution to disunity. Hinduism, unlike Islam and Christianity, “is not a congregational religion: it by-passes the community and despite its entanglement with caste it by-passes class” (Beer 161-2), and its ceaseless capacity for universal love is revealed:

All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars; all became joy, all laughter; there had never been disease or doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear (300).

Nothing is excluded as it was in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End*.

Nevertheless, the temple by itself does not fulfil the expectations posed by this novel.

Unlike the first two novels, in *A Passage to India* the notion of transcendence which Forster confronts, is developed beyond buildings and into the life of the spirit itself. Specific buildings no longer have the capacity to accommodate the spirituality which Forster portrays, nor does the dichotomy that is evident in both *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End* maintain relevance as, what was earlier a distinct opposition between urban and rural, gradually merges and one Indian earth is given the limelight. Although similarly, in *A Passage to India*, the climactic communion remains exclusive, for it seems that only Godbole, a Brahman professor, and Mrs. Moore reach a level of mutual understanding. Yet there is a certain finality to *A Passage to India* that was not achieved in the earlier two novels. This special knowledge and supreme form of unity is linked with the caves which emit the potent spirit of India. The reader is brought back to its hollow centre, for as Roger Clubb insists, the caves

symbolize the riddle of life itself, the mystery which lies behind  
the creation or appearance of that non-material essence that we call  
spirit. . . ” (qtd. in Sahni 100).

Mrs. Moore becomes a spirit and it is only then that she can align herself with the mystery of India, for her body returns to a second India — the Indian ocean — and her soul becomes one with the soul of Godbole. When Godbole takes on the God-like role that his name suggests, he remembers Mrs. Moore, and then remembers a wasp which is associated with Mrs. Moore: “He loved the wasp equally, he impelled it likewise, he

was imitating God” (298). Forster offers an spiritual solution to disharmony. As James McConkey explains, the

way of Godbole is the only possible way: love, even though to exist it must maintain a detachment from the physical world and human relationships, offers the single upward path from the land of sterility and echoing evil. (159-60)

As the characters did in the earlier novels, they shift in their relationship to humanity to find unity and peace. Not only are they physically detached from the centre of civilization — Godbole lives in Mau and Mrs. Moore’s body is in the ocean — but they avoid interaction and communication. The tensions continue for, according to the narrator, a “perfectly adjusted organism would be silent” (139). Yet in this speechless state, personal relations must certainly fail.

Forster closes the novel with a realistic anti-synthesis, and therefore, place’s paradoxical role continues. Aziz and Fielding are parted by the Indian earth, and thus a conclusion that points to this land as a home to humanity is undermined.<sup>7</sup> The two characters, without success, attempt to cross the geographical and cultural barriers that separate them. So as *A Passage to India* opens out into a prophetic novel which continues to baffle and evade explanation, it also presents to us a realistic closure where unfortunately separation triumphs. As Malcolm Bradbury points out, there are ambiguous conclusions that one can draw from the novel:

Is it — the case may be simply put — a novel which, after attempting to reconcile the differences between races, religions, social creeds, nature and man, asserts failure? — or is it a novel which reaching beyond



accepted faiths and accepted interpretations of the mysterious, the unseen, asserts a positive vision of unity? (qtd. in Pintchman 62)

Since both occur, it can only be concluded that Forster himself was merely asking the question and by no means, providing us with an answer. But perhaps by whetting our appetite he is inviting us to explore a vast wilderness rather than just sit contented in a well-tended garden. Implying that humanity should continue to search for the ideal place where love and transcendental communion exists.

Forster's search for a temporal home for humanity is shown, in *A Passage to India*, to be unsuccessful. Since Mrs. Moore connects with Godbole only when she is dead, it is possible that in death, when the body has returned to the physical earth, and the soul to the spirit of the earth, do we find our true home. Ironically in death we find that ideal connection, for all of humanity is, if nowhere else, bound by the earth on which we walk and by the common traits we share. Perhaps all the characters who momentarily transcend find the roots of their magnificent reconciliation in death. They see clearly that "transcendence is the acceptance of the *here* and *hereafter*" (Sivaramkrishna 155), and since neither Gino's house, *Howards End* nor the temple can accommodate an inclusive permanent connection between the living, perhaps only in death will we find out where is "there" and when is "yet" (336).

## A Sense of Space: "The Basis of all Earthly Beauty"<sup>1</sup>

In his fiction, Forster expresses his concern for the state of civilization, and the success of human relationships. The personal beliefs Margaret Schlegel holds: to be "humble and kind" and "to love people rather than pity them" (83), are echoed by Forster in his non-fictional work, *Two Cheers for Democracy*:

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.

("Tolerance" 44)

As an advocate for humanistic ideals, Forster sees a solution to the failures of civilization beginning with unselfishness and a "sound state of mind" ("Tolerance" 43). He did realise, however, that the implementation of such universal understanding and generosity was as unlikely as the rejuvenation of the natural world which had been destroyed by growing cities. As Stone explains, "Forster's distaste for the modern world is largely aesthetic" (184) and so the loss of space and an absence of beautiful views are his greatest concern. The moral and social decline of humanity is reflected in the ugly buildings that people inhabit.

While a nostalgia for the idealised personal relationships that existed within less advanced and less populated communities are also hinted at in his novels, Forster finds it necessary, in an "idealist retrospect" vein (Williams 35), to have his characters move away from humanity in order to inhabit that ideal space where an "agricultural golden age" exists (Stone "Forster: The Environmentalist" 172). Hertfordshire and the Italian

countryside are spaces on which Forster pins his hope for the survival of the earth, since these regions, unlike the cities, are less confined and more spacious. The characters that display the humanistic qualities Forster endorses are often associated with the earth and prefer to inhabit a more agrarian based community. The idealisation, created through Forster's own "home sickness" for a place in the past (Bernstein 40), intensifies the romantic tone of his novels that is reflected in the spiritual fusions which occur between the characters. Forster manipulates place in order to provide a location where that supreme moment can succeed. Certainly, in *Howards End* the synthesis that takes place at Howards End is at one with elements of the past. Bernstein confirms, "Modernism's nostalgia is a return not only to a moment, but to the place where that moment occurred" (40). But realistically, Forster is insisting that by caring for and taking interest in our environment we improve our own existence, and that this relationship may lead us to a place we call our spiritual home. Even if there is no spiritual bond, if we respect the earth we also somehow learn what it is to love something that has emotional, rather than temporal, value.

*Where Angels Fear to Tread* deals with the inconsistencies in the earth's geography and civilization's cultures that can separate, liberate and unify the characters. Italy is a place where intense passion and a full participation in life can be achieved, and is momentarily attained by Philip and Caroline; whereas Sawston represents the life of inertia and has an environment that divorces the characters from each other. Mrs. Herriton is frozen within the suburban perimeters and shows no sign of genuine affection. The Italian landscape offers panoramic views that symbolise, for Forster, the

opportunity for personal discovery and an exploration of the soul. Sawston eliminates a substantial presence of nature that consequentially denies the English characters access to the experiences Monteriano makes accessible. Ideally, Forster wanted English culture to accommodate the natural impulses in human nature. In his view, as Alina Szala writes,

civilization could be either narrow, restrictive, opposed to all that is natural in humanity, or it could be tolerant and ready to let nature play an important part in existence without any disastrous consequences for the life of the community. (38)

If civilization was to reconstruct itself and maintain the aesthetics of spatial freedom and the virtue of human integrity, it was essential that nature's presence be recognised. So it is not, as F.R. Leavis claims, that Forster has "a radical dissatisfaction with civilization" (296), but rather, that he wants civilization to adopt his humanistic ideals that enable each individual person to achieve integration. For example, Philip Herriton, by balancing reason with passion, makes a fundamental discovery. He must abandon the distorted perception he has of Italy, and therefore, move closer to an authentic existence.

Forster's portrayal of place is intertwined with his motto that we must live true to ourselves, enjoy what gives us pleasure, and establish a moral self by which our conduct is guided. The social conventions and rules that are a product of the society which also offers us education, literature, art and refinement, must not impinge on our feelings of passion and instinct. Places are, for Forster, an expression of our different cultures, but they are also necessary to our sense of home and stability. Forster

believed that the home was, to a certain extent, a reflection of the self. To some degree, this is what *Howards End* displays. It is a novel that produces an ideal image of England's destiny and ideal inhabitants. Howards End is a home that reflects the integrity of its nation, and emphasises the need to preserve a country's invaluable traditions, but also the fusion of human values with architectural structures. But in *Howards End*, more so than in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* or *A Passage to India*, Forster tests the fusion that can occur between humans and their homes.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Forster's concern is with the breaking of that cultural veneer which stops his characters from truly experiencing foreign places, and the influence English culture has on the intensification of artifice. Here also is where Italy and England are at odds with one another; there is a battle between the houses belonging to Gino and Mrs. Herriton. In *Howards End* the dichotomy becomes more complex, concentrating as it does, on a country that is divided within itself. Forster willingly recognises the gift given to Margaret Schlegel through education and the culture capital, London. No longer is the socially-controlled area presented as a predominantly limiting region. In this novel each place represents extremes and there is a delicate contention between them. Both the Wilcoxes, with their wealth, and the Schlegels, who value aesthetics and are humanists, contribute to the survival of Howards End.

The familiar oppositions continue in *A Passage to India*. However, spiritual oneness becomes more explicit and the dichotomy loses significance as India engulfs the action and the characters. As Laurence Brander quotes, India is "what she has often been — a symbol of the universe" (164), and the earth continues to separate the

characters, and offer them no comfortable spiritual home. In India, Forster uses a country to support the inexplicable nature of the universe and intensify an already paradoxical portrayal of place. India's duplicity merely increases the confusion of the characters and then substantiates the ambiguous closure to the novel. The visionary and realistic endings confirm that place and paradox thwart Forster's attempts at geographical and human harmony. But the visionary aspects of the text allow the theme of transcendental fusion complete development, and more so than in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End*, the progression that occurs comes to a more definite conclusion: that there is no conclusion. Mrs. Moore's and Godbole's connection is confirmed by the presence of the wasp. However, Fielding and Aziz act as Leonard Bast and Henry Wilcox had in *Howards End*; their fates display the impossibility of utopian symbiosis.

Nevertheless, there is a consistency throughout Forster's novels that invites a conclusion; there is a search for the ideal place where intangible values, animate objects, and embedded forces act as a catalyst to the mutual understanding between the characters. Monteriano, and specifically Gino's house, fulfil this requirement; *Howards End* more than adequately responds to its role; and the temple succeeds in providing a place of symphony. But in some way these harmonious meeting-grounds lose the sense of an ideal destiny as the divisions of society invade their space. Caroline and Philip find greater expression and establish their friendship — as do the Schlegel sisters — but their discoveries do not ensure that their bond will endure.

These three novels capture, not just the paradox of place and its influence on human connection, but also the complexity of human nature and the influence of

heritage, all of which in turn, highlight the inexplicable nature of life itself. Forster hoped that by showing us the advantages of tolerance and understanding and of preserving a simple heritage, that the evils of prejudice, selfishness and ignorance could be conquered. He teaches us to be aware of the animate objects around us, and the intangible powers of the earth. Although Forster never really suggests that humanity, in this state, will find a spiritual home, nor offers a solution on how to connect in the temporal world, he does encourage us to make our homes a reflection of the moral, emotional and social values that connect us to other people and make us respectful of the unique lands on which we tread.

## NOTES

## Chapter One: Forster's Earthly Localities

<sup>1</sup> Stone discusses the role of Henry Thornton, Forster's great-grandfather, when he claims: "[Henry] is a form out of that 'essential past,' remembered as well as dreamed, which can sustain the wanderer in the modern wasteland. That Forster should see himself as that wanderer seems strange, but the record, in fiction and out, reveals a man badly crippled by a lack of self-esteem, a man who felt himself to be weak, ugly, and lost. To such a person the memory of that potent ancestor could seem like the rising of another self" (*Cave* 22). Ancestral ties were central to Forster's sense of stability in a place and this is discussed later in *Howards End*.

<sup>2</sup> E. F. Schumaker's *Small is Beautiful* is discussed in relation to Forster's admiration for smallness: Wilfred Stone discusses: "Schumaker argues not only that smaller is better but slower is better as well. . . . Today we suffer from an almost universal idolatry of giantism . . . and thanks to that, combined with the sin of greed, we have been delivered . . . over into the power of the machine" (qtd. in Stone "Forster: The Environmentalist" 181-2). Forster and Schumaker reveal a similar distaste for the machine and express concern for the damaging effects it had on modern society.

<sup>3</sup> Gino in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is an exception to this argument. His house is large; however, it is not ostentatious like Ducie Street in *Howards End*. Also, as is discussed in chapter two, Gino's house allows for a spectrum of experiences and accommodates the meeting of the characters.

<sup>4</sup> Compare how the Schlegels' furniture fits perfectly into *Howards End*. This indicates that the furniture of a house and its compatibility with the design reflected, for Forster, the homeliness of a place.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Dodd discusses the notion of Englishness and masculinity in his work *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Williams observes that "art and culture are ordinary" (qtd. in Murfin 345). Williams opposes Arnold's view that culture is superior and a form of harmonious perfection; therefore to some extent, the two critics set up their own opposition.

<sup>7</sup> Stone writes: "The First World War — the war that 'spoilt everything,' in Forster's phrase — was the perfect expression of that hostility to the organic life implicit in the industrial juggernaut". Stone



also quotes Schumaker, whose beliefs reflect Forster's: "War . . . is the natural product of such a system, for it is obvious that the exploitation 'at an ever-increasing rate' of the world's limited supply of nonrenewable fuels 'is an act of violence against nature which must almost inevitably lead to violence between men.'" Schumaker also writes: "Ever bigger machines . . . exerting ever greater violence against the environment. . . ." (Stone "Forster: The Environmentalist" 181-2). Douglas Hewitt also discusses the effects of World War One on Modernist writers. He describes the war as "one catastrophic happening from which few escaped" (5).

## Chapter Two: Culture, Geography and the Paradox of Connection

<sup>1</sup> Forster's distaste for the speed of progress and the hurried quality of modern life is expressed more fully in *Howards End*. Forster associates the rural life with a slow pace that is synchronized with the natural rhythms of the earth; the city, in contrast, "is always a presence greater than the sum of its parts, a force independent of human agency and moving to its own sinister rhythms" (Stone "Forster: The Environmentalist" 177).

<sup>2</sup> In *A Room with a View*, the view from Lucy's Florentine window is a metaphor for the expansive space she has allowing her to explore both the landscape and her own inner emotions, whereas in England she has been denied such a space. The opposition between England and Italy in *A Room with a View* is similar to that in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, although Windy Corner does not present the same limitations for Lucy that the Herriton house does in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* for the Herritons.

<sup>3</sup> Glen Cavaliero claims that Italy is the place with a physical presence in the novel, whereas Sawston is merely a state of mind. He uses the example of Caroline's speech beginning "I hated the idleness, the stupidity . . . I had got an idea that every one here spent their lives in making little sacrifices for objects they didn't care for. . . . That's what I thought at Monteriano" (87). She is in Sawston, which does have a physical presence in the novel, although perhaps less so than Monteriano. Contrary to Cavaliero's claim, Caroline is confirming that Monteriano highlights the vices of Sawston culture rather than validating its existence as nothing more than a state of mind.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Herriton's isolated existence within her house echoes the life of Vashti in "The Machine Stops." Vashti is devoted to the establishment which is run by the machine and is machine-like in her

actions; Mrs. Herriton is devoted to upholding the values of duty and respectability to the point of frustrating her own natural impulses and passions. Both women hate bodily contact, wasting time, are associated with a machine, and are reluctant to show affection to other characters (Stone "Forster: The Environmentalist" 185).

<sup>5</sup> In support of my argument, George Thomson writes that Harriet's stretching of the string and guiding the seeds are "appropriate for a person strict, narrow, and lacking pliancy", while her mother's scratching is "suggestive of the injurious decisiveness of her interfering nature" (116).

<sup>6</sup> As Peter Widdowson states, "the pre-war past is for. . . Forster very much the swansong of liberal-humanist civilization. . . . Forster's regard for the past relates, of course, to his love of 'rural England'. . . . Liberal culture is most fully expressed in the civilization of rural England, but this, as we know is threatened by the forces of 'London', representing depersonalized largeness" (*E. M. Forster's* 45). Although this quotation was made in reference to *Howards End*, Forster idealises the Italian countryside, like Herfordshire in *Howards End*, revealing the associations he made between liberalism and the rural, rather than urban, regions.

<sup>7</sup> Philip mentions the phrase "social position" (33, 40, 41) repeatedly, displaying his concern for Gino's class.

<sup>8</sup> Claude Summers offers another reading: "These towers are phallic, and they suggest the masculine sexuality that dominates Monteriano. As the frequent scene of violence throughout the centuries, they also are witness to the brutal passions latent in the apparently peaceful community, passions not unconnected with male sexuality. But the towers also imply a comprehensiveness that is as alien to Sawston as sex and physical violence" (32). This comprehensiveness in Monteriano supports my view that Sawston denies the characters expression of, and exposure to, the emotions that they eventually express. For other readings of the towers see S. P. Rosenbaum (189) and James McConkey (102).

<sup>9</sup> In Dante's *The New Life* and *The Divine Comedy*, Beatrice is to Dante, "both a bestower of blessings and a reflection of divine goodness" (Henderson 326). Parallels between *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and Dante's works can be made. Two of which are: Philip idealises Caroline in the same way Dante does Beatrice and both men are unable to attain the person they love. J. S. Martin also offers relevant similarities and differences between Beatrice and Dante and Caroline and Philip (24).

### Chapter Three: *Howards End*: England's "Ideal Destiny"

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is taken from Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Howards End* seems to prove that Forster shares Arnold's hope that culture can, as Alistair Duckworth explains, "oppose the forces of selfishness and materialism and bring society to an awareness of its ideal destiny" (301). The same article points out that Wilfred Stone believes *Howards End* to be "the most explicit test of Arnold's notion of culture in our literature" (Duckworth "Critical" 301).

<sup>3</sup> Jon Heggland offers a similar view. He concludes that Leonard, "reduced to the qualities and appearances of 'suburbia', represents an intolerable infection of *Howards End* that threatens the house's, and the novel's 'sacred sense of space'" (413). This "anti-suburbanism" (415) reveals Forster's prejudice and contributes to the paradox in the novel, for exclusion is central to the success of the characters' connection.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Stape sees the Basts' "cramped basement flat" as "a symbol of the unconscious, the basement shelters those parts of the self that lie beneath the public persona and are subversive of it" (339). This is an interesting interpretation, but I have avoided a psychoanalytical approach to the novel.

<sup>5</sup> Heggland analyses the Basts' dinner. He believes that the "dinner moves the discourse of mass cultural artificiality from the exterior of the building to the interior of the flat, and finally to the bodies of the Basts themselves. . . . The Basts' diet, consisting of processed squares and tinned meat, confirms the unhealthy quality of their domestic life" (411-2). The artificial quality of their food testifies to the impoverished state of the Basts' existence.

<sup>6</sup> Rae Harris Stoll also offers the explanation that in "mass urban populations . . . personal freedom [is] determined by the value of one's commodities. Mutual relations between people are mediated by things. . . . The inevitable result of this process is increasing depersonalization in the lives and social relationships of individuals" (23-4). Therefore, materialism can be connected to the deterioration of personal relations in the city. The Wilcox family, who live in the city, and who fail to connect with other characters, exemplify the effects of depersonalization.

<sup>7</sup> Irene Cieraad points out that the "tight village community . . . becomes the nineteenth-century ideal of social harmony — a nostalgic ideal . . . the peasant's bond with his land becomes the nationalist

symbol of historical 'rootedness'. . . . Each idyllic scene . . . bespeaks a sober businesslike realization of the importance of agriculture in a period of industrialization and urbanization" (23). Forster seems to promote such a theory. He demotes the city and portrays it as disadvantageous to the characters' attempts at social harmony and Forster is willing to emphasize such a nostalgic ideal in his novel.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to endnotes 2 and 8 in Chapter One where Schumaker and Forster condemn the conflict between machinery and the environment. Henry Wilcox's beliefs, such as the earth should be bull-dozed to make way for modern housing, reveal his role as a symbol of capitalist greed. Henry endorses the acts which, as Schumaker states, "make it impossible to keep man in touch with living nature." Henry therefore supports "all the most dangerous modern tendencies of violence, alienation, and environmental destruction" (qtd. in Stone "Forster: The Environmentalist" 182). Helen Schlegel remarks on Henry's exploitation of the land: "You grab the dollars. God does the rest" (193).

<sup>9</sup> J. H. Stape claims that this "scene introduces thematic material. . . . The night realm of instinct and sexuality is contrasted with the day world of social containment in which marriage and domesticity control emotion. Paul and Helen's 'muddle'. . . lies in Paul's inability to give social form to basic instincts; in seeing himself bound to a career and money-making before he can marry, he identifies wholly with social constructions of masculinity. Repressed or deferred desire leads to the violence of his kiss, whereas internalized cultural models engender conflict, for, whatever its greater freedom, the Edwardian period maintained much Victorian public reticence about emotion and erotic expression." It is also interesting that in the manuscript version of *Howards End* the love scene was more physical, but Forster deemphasized this in order to "heighten the theme of comradeship" and "to further the repression of the physical" (330). Since they are detached from their instinctual nature, the Wilcoxes have an antagonistic relationship with the land and are guilty of consciously repressing their emotions.

<sup>10</sup> Forster does not imply that the countryside promotes only irrational behaviour and that its inhabitants show no ability to reason. It is rather, as Irene Cieraad explains, that: "In the Enlightenment opposition between the rational and irrational, the city counts as the locus of reason and science whereas the countryside is seen as a benighted area of ignorance and superstition" (21). The characters show less adherence to the conventions of the city and become more susceptible to the spirit of the English

countryside as they move towards Howards End; therefore Forster's portrayal loosely follows an argument such as Cieraad's.

<sup>11</sup> In the manuscript version of the novel, the flats opposite the Schlegels' house — one of which is Ducie Street — are given more emphasis. Their pastiche quality and conflicting relationship with nature is depicted. They are “. . . flats with concierges and lifts, and gilded weathercocks that cut the sky. Wickham Place . . . faced these buildings, and had lamented greatly when they arose. They were so vulgar and so Babylonian that they robbed so much air and so much sun. . . . These too would be swept away in time, and another frowning cliff would arise upon their site, stupendous, minatory, inane, cutting off still more of the vanishing sky” (4). Forster creates a tone of nostalgic loss when he addresses the notion of modern dwellings.

<sup>12</sup> In the manuscript version the dining room at Wickham Place is described as “small and drab, and close to the level of the street. . . . The wall paper [sic] was plain, the furniture inexpensive . . .” (3). This contrasts to the expensive and overfurnished interior of Ducie Street.

<sup>13</sup> G.S. Amur's essay, entitled: “Hellenic Heroines and Sexless Angels: Images of Women in Forster's Novels” elaborates on the role of Mrs. Wilcox in the novel. This article can be found in Shahane's *Approaches to E. M. Forster*.

<sup>14</sup> Cieraad explains: “All those lofty connotations which, from the late eighteenth century onwards, are vested in country life, become part of the image of rural folk and folk culture generally. The disparaging notions of countrydwellers (heathenish, primitive or benighted) are now outshone by a positive appreciation: a sense of tradition, harmony, piety, industriousness, a united, pure and artless ‘folk.’ The counterpart of that image is vested in the bourgeois elite's idea that city life is depraved, impious, and un-natural — something which applies to the decadent upper classes and to the uprooted mass of the proletariat, the pauperized slum dwellers” (23). Forster does tend to support such a theory in his portrayal of Hilton, an image of social harmony, and London, a city which promotes a rootless society.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Delany argues that “Forster's pastoralism seeks to be a true alternative to modernity” rather than just an ideal. Forster thinks that the Wilcoxes can “enjoy their traditional English comforts by doing their dirty work overseas and out of sight. . . . His problem is to uphold the civic and cultural

virtues intrinsic to the rentier way of life, yet avoid complicity with commerce or technology" (74). This, on the other hand, appears to be a problem Forster is unable to solve.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret's association with the vine that covers Howards End is symbolic of her compatibility with the house. Mrs. Wilcox fought to save the vine: "The vine — she had got her way about the vine. It still encumbered the south wall with its unproductive branches" (102). The vine, like Margaret, may be unproductive; nonetheless, they both benefit the house by protecting it from weathering and ensuring that it survives.

#### Chapter Four: *A Passage to India*: Contrast and Compromise

<sup>1</sup> Louise Dauner gives an account of the numerous interpretations made by critics about the Marabar Caves (259).

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Moore continues along the line of Gino and Mrs. Wilcox as a "noble peasant." But unlike Gino, who is more physical than spiritual, Mrs. Moore successfully combines the two components. Unlike both Mrs. Wilcox and Gino, Mrs. Moore is not rooted to a particular place, but she has those traits which Forster associated with the "noble peasant." She has that "gentleness and the absence of wanton cruelty" which were "synonymous in [Forster's] mind with the working class 'noble peasant'" (Olsen 390). Mrs. Moore displays intuitive wisdom, and the Indian landscape intensifies this quality. This is part of the reason why she internalises her disruptive experience in the Marabar Caves and, like Mrs. Wilcox, rarely verbalises events.

<sup>3</sup> This echoes the parallel J. H. Stape made between the night realm of instinct and the day world of social containment when Paul Wilcox embraces Helen Schlegel.

<sup>4</sup> Brenda Silver offers the explanation of Adela's experience in "psychological terms." As Adela is a "prig", has no love or passion for Ronny, and sees Aziz as a "handsome little Oriental", then we might believe that Adela wanted to be raped (87). I agree, as Silver states, that Adela experiences doubts about her love for Ronny; however I do not view this as confirmation that Adela desired an attack. Loren Eiseley also offers a psychoanalytical interpretation. He observes that "the profound shock of the leap from animal to human status is echoing still in the depths of our unconscious minds" (qtd. in *Stone Cave* 311).

<sup>5</sup> John Beer reinforces my argument when he concludes that “according to Forster all [people] lose their sense of reality to a greater or lesser extent when they fail to connect head and heart” (148).

<sup>6</sup> Lionel Trilling states that the mess in Gino’s room had been “the source of life and hope . . . a promise of life” (157).

<sup>7</sup> In a section of *A Passage to India* Forster wrote: “Most of life is so dull. . . . Inside its cocoon of work or social obligation, the human spirit slumbers for most of the part, registering the distinction between pleasure and pain, but not nearly as alert as we pretend” (139). The character Aziz communicates an enthusiasm for life that the Anglo-Indians lack, so he is, although not to the same extent, a symbol of the “life” that is embodied in Gino and Gino’s baby in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

<sup>8</sup> In *Abinger Harvest* Forster quotes Dante: “Possession is one with loss” (36). This confirms Forster’s own views towards ownership. Although it can create a sense of stability, as it does for the Schlegels with their furniture and *Howards End*, it can also devalue an object or place since the act of owning or possessing something shows an element of territorial greed. But in *Howards End*, as John Edward Hardy explains, Margaret’s ownership of *Howards End* is also “the reward of her willingness to give it up, her indifference to it merely as possession, as property, expressed when she throws the keys to the house on the ground before Henry” (117). Aziz is also initially unwilling to share his mosque with Mrs. Moore.

### Conclusion: A Sense of Space: “The Basis of all Earthly Beauty”

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is taken from *Howards End* (204).

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