

A REVALUATION OF E.M. FORSTER'S FICTION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to re-examine the nature of E.M. Forster's fiction and its place within the canon of modernist writers, examining criticism of Forster's fiction and claims that it is transitional in its relation to modernism, founded on a liberal humanist outlook antithetical to modernist innovation. The thesis contends that this is a misreading of turn of the century Liberalism, taking Forster's friend Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson as an inspiration for Forster's political and stylistic beliefs, articulated in the latter's fiction. Following a survey of New Liberalism, the thesis compares Dickinson's and Forster's politics and dialogism, charting how Forster transformed Dickinson's dialogic method into polyphonic prose. After a survey of other self-reflexive narrative practices in Forster's prose that might also be considered modernist, the thesis turns to Forster's dialogic construction of inter-negating discourses at play for dominance throughout his fiction. It uses a model of social intervention derived from New Liberalism as the model for articulating the coercive attempts of discourses to gain dominance as truth over individual subjects, focusing particularly on emerging discourses of homosexual identity and their dialogic relation in Forster's fiction. The thesis claims that Forster's fiction is dialogic and liberal in its modernism.

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J.H., Christ's Hospital

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ABBREVIATIONS

For ease of reading, Forster's primary texts are referred to in parentheses after quotations are made rather than via footnotes as is the case for all other works cited. All references are, where, possible, from the Penguin Modern Classics editions of the texts. Full details of texts used can be found in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

WAFTT – Where Angels Fear to Tread

TLJ – The Longest Journey

ARWAV – A Room with a View

HE – Howards End

M – Maurice

API – A Passage to India

TCD – Two Cheers for Democracy

AH – Abinger Harvest

AN – Aspects of the Novel

HD – The Hill of Devi

AX- Alexandria

CSS – Collected Short Stories

TLC – The Life to Come and Other Short Stories

THP – The Happy Prince and other unpublished writing

MT – Marianne Thornton

GLD – Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson: A Biography

KCMA – King's College Modern Archive Centre Forster Manuscripts

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ABBREVIATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

FORSTER IN THE MARGINS

I Contesting the Margins

Wendy Moffat, Forster's most recent biographer, is as keen as anyone to point out the author's physical weakness and his place on the margins of society. She is as certain as Nicola Beauman and P.N. Furbank, the novelist's earlier biographers, to link this marginality to Forster's early childhood. From a young age, Moffat writes, Forster was 'schooled [. . .] in the art of detachment' and snubbed by those around him.¹ Furbank equally claims that Forster's 'demureness was his cover to the world' from an early age and his 'awkwardness and helplessness were [. . .] a clue to his heart'.² In statements such as his own observation of being at 'the fag end of Victorian liberalism' (*TCD*, 65) in his 1946 broadcast 'The Challenge of Our Time', Forster seems to affirm this view. He might be said to have nobody to blame but himself for the marginality of his literary reputation, one that he self-consciously asserted to the literary public and part of the carefully constructed persona of an obscure, long-retired writer who represents the values of a prior age. Indeed, to have stopped publishing fiction by the age of forty five and then to live, increasingly as a grand old man of English letters, for a further forty six years appears the act of a man who has consciously stepped away from the centre of literary innovation.

Moffat identifies the causes of this marginality in the title of the prologue to her biography where she asserts that we should "Start with the Fact That He Was

¹ Wendy Moffat, *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2010), p. 35.

² P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, Vol. 1 (Harcourt Brace & Co: San Diego, 1977) p. 44.

Homosexual". From his youth, it is this diffidence and unwillingness to assume centrality within any group that characterises her portrayal of an evasive writer, happy to cede the spotlight to others, a diffidence that she identifies as grounded in Forster's sexual orientation. Superficially, this is hard to contest.

Forster was six years of age when the Labouchere amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed in 1885 and 87 years of age in 1967 when the Wolfenden Report was accepted and homosexuality between men was made legal between consenting adults.³ The vast majority of his life therefore lay under the thrall of a law that proscribed his sexuality. Moreover, the most famous conviction under this new act occurred in 1895 when Oscar Wilde was convicted on the basis, as H. Montgomery Hyde describes, of the prosecution's claims of the 'immoral and obscene nature' of Wilde's writing.⁴ Forster not only found his sexual orientation prohibited at the very moment he was beginning to discover its nature but also the expression of his desires in writing was censored and formed the basis for conviction. To write truly of his desires was to risk sharing the fate of the most famous literary figure of Forster's formative years. If such a context did not encourage a sense of necessary marginality and evasiveness it would be odd.

It is hard to contest the centrality of his homosexuality to Forster's sense of self and it has been a source of growing fascination for critics. Wilfred Healey Stone, in his seminal study, *The Cave and the Mountain*, identifies its presence within the author's fictional work even before Forster's death and the international revelation of

³ Robert Aldrich and Gary Wotherspoon (eds.), *Who's Who in Gay and Lesbian History: From Antiquity to World War II* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 298; 51.

⁴ Harford Montgomery Hyde, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962;1973), p. 99.

this open secret amongst his friends.⁵ Forster's own publication history is, of course, the necessary cause for this personal closeting of his literary output. Philip Gardner observes that the posthumous publication of *Maurice* in 1971 saw 'the effect of confronting Forster's audience with what was for them a 'new' novel, and so of producing as vital, if as mixed a response' as the previous fiction.⁶ The open revelation of Forster's homosexuality and the direct treatment of this central theme within his fiction have, moreover, led to a more widespread revaluation of his literary importance, an impetus that has the writer's sexuality as its starting point.

The much welcomed critical revisionism of works such as Piggford's and Martin's *Queer Forster* and Arthur Martland's *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose* have sought to establish Forster centrally within a post-Wildean queer canon specifically via an exploration of the sub-textual homoerotic tensions at play within ostensibly heterosexual romances.⁷ This thesis seeks to extend that scope in a careful examination of Forster's sexuality, its place within his writing and to question any reading of a text that seeks to view Forster's writing as marginal on the basis of the presentation of its sexuality. Stuart Christie's work on the pastoral as a place of refuge in 2005's *Worldling Forster: The Passage from Pastoral* has added important nuances to our understanding particularly of the nature of the 'natural homosexual' and the role of the pastoral world as a space of homoerotic freedom. This is valuable work and, in the final chapter of this thesis, I hope to be able to build upon this strong

⁵ Wilfred Healey Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E.M. Forster* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 193. Stone provides a discussion of Rickie Elliot's 'latent homosexuality' in *TLJ* and proposes an interesting equation of this stated position with Forster's own sympathies prior to the writer's death in 1970 and the subsequent publication of his overtly homoerotic fiction in the years that followed.

⁶ Philip Gardner (ed.), 'Introduction', *E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage* (London: Taylor & Francis e-library, 1973; 2002), p. 36.

⁷ George Piggford & Robert K. Martin (eds.), *Queer Forster* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Arthur Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose* (Swaffham, Norfolk: Gay Men's Press, 1999).

and fine body of queer scholarship that seeks to place Forster's presentation of same sex relations at the centre of any reading of his fiction.

Well-motivated as this queering of Forster's fiction is, however, I will question its pre-eminent foregrounding of homosexuality in an understanding of the work outside of the context of other historical, social, stylistic and philosophical influences. To place that centrally which has been so carefully closeted is to partially misunderstand the nature of Forster's gift, the very 'detachment' that Forster manifests and which Moffat rightly identifies. I shall suggest that in sexuality as in so much else, the centrality of Forster's importance to the modernist canon exists specifically in its centripetal exploration of the margins and that this is one facet of a larger political and stylistic engagement that has evolved throughout his writing career. There is an absence at the centre of Forster's writing but this is a deliberately created one, an absent centre which, via the dynamic nature of its void, pushes all else to the margins. It is the all-encompassing nature of this central ontological absence that I shall examine and believe to be at the centre of an adequate understanding of Forster's fiction.

If, as David James observes, modernist writing engages with 'ontological crisis', then the very nature of Forster's relation to both modernism and the literary reputations of his peers are interesting and under considerable review.⁸ If Forster was conscious in expressing a sense of his marginal importance within his own lifetime, earlier critics were happy to accede to this rather ironic and modest self-identification. The term 'transitional' has often been employed comfortably in describing Forster's

⁸ Julia Jordan 'Autonomous Automata: opacity and the fugitive character in the modernist novel and After' in David James, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 97.

relationship to modernist literary history. A brief examination of the prevalence of this critical truism is instructive.

Betty Jay's claims in 1998 are characteristic of a long-standing confidence that 'Forster is not, *in the conventional sense*, a modernist but rather a central figure of the transition into modernism' (my emphasis).⁹ J.H. Stape is just as willing to make this assertion in his article 'Comparing Mythologies: Forster's *Maurice* and Pater's *Marius*', stating that both represent the 'transition from Victorianism to Modernism'.¹⁰ Whilst these are earlier appraisals, they find their echo in Pericles Lewis's *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* 2007. Lewis is equally confident in his claims about the historical position of Forster's work as a defining characteristic of this marginality, stating that 'modernist experiments with the form of novels had made his Edwardian works appear old fashioned. *A Passage to India*, though in many respects a traditional English novel, contains one central device [the echo in the Marabar Caves] that links it to the sort of "modern fiction" that Woolf championed'.¹¹ Jay's claim reveals a central issue, that Forster cannot be judged as a modernist 'in the conventional sense' when compared to peers of Woolf's high repute.

Betty Jay and Pericles Lewis can hardly be blamed for the establishment of this critical position. Woolf was keen to assert this distance within her critiques of Forster's fiction. Her readings of her contemporary's work attempt to establish clear water between her work and their novels, establishing at least one facet of their

⁹ Betty Jay (ed.), *A Passage to India: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 47.

¹⁰ J.H. Stape (ed.), *E.M. Forster: Critical Assessments, Vol. 4* (Roverstbridge: Helm Information, 1998), p. 23.

¹¹ Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 69.

comparability in her essay 'The Novels of E.M. Forster': 'Hence it is that there is so often an ambiguity at the heart of Mr. Forster's novels. We feel that something has failed us at the critical moment; and instead of seeing, as we do in THE MASTER BUILDER, one single whole we see two separate parts'.¹² Where Woolf identifies obliquity and incompleteness in Forster's work as a weakness, I wish to suggest that this is where its essential value resides. The absence of a central vision, the 'ambiguity' and ontological crisis that 'something has failed' are as surely a part of Woolf's own works as Forster's for all of their stylistic differences. It is the nature of their exploration of this essential facet of modernism that lies at question. It appears, however, that even Forster's contemporaries were happy to comply with his modesty in wishing to be viewed a marginal figure, with the genealogy of this damning by faint praise being evident from the earliest appraisal of his work.

The appreciation of Forster's fiction is, however, significantly evolving just as a wider understanding of modernism as a literary and intellectual movement has been relatively recent, one which in Michael Levenson's terms, 'attempts to recover some of the intricacy of the period' in considering a wider scope of literary endeavours as modernist.¹³ As Peter Nicholls' influential work states it, this reconsideration of the various trajectories of modernist art seeks to view a collection of modernisms rather than the assertion of a single modernism.¹⁴

¹² Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of E.M. Forster', *Collected Essays*, Project Gutenberg of Australia e-text (<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200771.txt>); accessed 16th March 2011.

¹³ Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. x.

¹⁴ Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 1995) provides an early statement of the broadening of considerations of modernity whilst Ann L. Ardis and Patrick Collier (eds.) *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) give a full account of recent reconsiderations of the scope of modernist writing.

Forster's political beliefs are another factor that has seen older critical appraisals seek to limit his place within the modernist canon. Where Lionel Trilling's early account of Forster's work went hand in hand with his wider appraisal of *The Liberal Imagination* to give a subtle account of Forster's liberalism, this reading is considerably more nuanced than some of its successors' appraisals. Indeed, Forster's supposed liberal humanism has been used by some as a synonym for a Victorian outlook that excludes his work from serious consideration as modernist in any sense. Thankfully, this is a position that modern scholarship has sought to address through a more complex and detailed understanding of the nature of liberalism itself.

Michael Freeden's work on the nature of New Liberalism has been highly influential in illuminating a modern understanding of the evolution of liberal ideology from the *laissez faire* economics and non-interventionism of mid-nineteenth century parliamentary Liberal politics to the emergence of the idealism and social interventionism of new liberalism.¹⁵ Traditional critical appraisals of Forster's political allegiance view him, in George Sampson's words, as 'the finest survival in literature [. . .] of that liberal humanist tradition of the early twentieth century against which some of the acutest intelligences of our time have directed their powers of denigration'.¹⁶ As Sampson notes, liberalism has often been denigrated as a position antithetical to modernism's increasing divergence down one of the two political

¹⁵ See Michael Freeden, *New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought, 1914-1939*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) for a full account of the evolution and political wane of parliamentary liberalism and new liberalism's ideological divergence from it.

¹⁶ George Sampson, *The Cambridge Concise History of English Literature*, Reginald Charles Churchill (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1970) p. 869.

extremes, an extremity identified by Manus I. Midlarsky as having its roots in ‘high modernism in authoritarian form’.¹⁷

By virtue of Forster’s liberalism, it has become all too easy to see his political allegiance as a remnant of a world view whose influence was fading in the modern world, akin to George Dangerfield’s *Strange Death of Liberal England* where he notes that the 1906 elections effectively saw with ‘the election of fifty-three Labour representatives, the death of Liberalism [. . .] it was no longer the Left’.¹⁸ However, Freedman has been followed by recent Forster scholars, most notably David Medalie, David Bradshaw and Brian May in renovating an appraisal of Forster’s politics and their relation to concepts of modernism. It is precisely Dangerfield’s distinction between the strange death of Liberalism as a parliamentary political force and Freedman’s examination of the evolution of liberalism as an ideological entity where the ground for re-examining Forster’s politics lies.¹⁹ Forster is intimately connected with new liberalism’s move towards the left and its allegiance to the institutional reform later actualised by the parliamentary Labour Party. As I shall examine in the first chapter of this thesis, to be identified as a liberal (or, more troublingly, a Liberal) during the period when Forster’s major fiction was published, was to enter into a period of profound debate where one’s allegiance might today be more readily identifiable with forms of political socialism and sit rather less comfortably with a supposed allegiance with mid-nineteenth century utilitarian liberalism. I am greatly

¹⁷ Manus I. Midlarsky, *Origins of Political Extremism: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 9.

¹⁸ George, Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, (London: Serif Press, 1935; 1997), p. 22.

¹⁹ By Liberalism in its capitalised sense, I follow Michael Freedman’s lead in identifying the parliamentary Liberal Party, non-capitalised liberalism referring more widely to the ideological development of this political world view whose morphology is considerably more complex than that represented solely by the beliefs of its parliamentary manifestation.

indebted to the excellent work conducted by Bradshaw, Medalie and May in charting the nature of this evolution and Forster's presence in the midst of the ensuing debates about the nature of liberalism in early twentieth-century Britain.

The scope of this thesis lies not in a challenge to this work, rather a refinement and further elucidation of it. May's *The Modernist as Pragmatist: E.M. Forster and the Fate of Liberalism* is the first work of Forster scholarship to rigorously re-examine the historical position of Forster's liberalism in relation to literary modernism, claiming that it 'is not over the aesthetic nature of modernist art that critics seriously disagree; it is over the ideological tenor' with which modernist art is identified that controversy lies.²⁰ I would not wish to argue with this claim. Rather, I propose to re-examine the nature of the influence and to see less proximity between Forster's liberalism and Richard Rorty's later work than May does. I hope to extend the specificity of Medalie's work in particular through an examination of those most enduring influences on Forster's political and personal life, his ties to Cambridge University and, most particularly, to the Society of Apostles. I agree wholeheartedly with his wise appraisal that Forster's fiction sought to examine 'a future for a reformist philosophy' but was sometimes 'overwhelmed by the conditions of modernity'.²¹

It is at Cambridge, and more specifically through his contact with the Apostles, where I will contend that Forster received a wide array of influences that were to shape his fiction and its response to being overwhelmed by what May terms

²⁰ Brian May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist: A Study of E.M. Forster* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997), p. 6.

²¹ David Medalie, *E.M. Forster's Modernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 7.

the ‘epistemological and aesthetic difficulties’ that are central to modernist art.²² The Society of Apostles became a significant locus for the development of both later Bloomsbury aesthetics and of new liberal thought. As W.C. Lubenow observes, when Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf and other of Forster’s apostolic associates moved to London, ‘they associated themselves with one of the most influential coteries in artistic history’.²³ Forster’s place amongst this ‘coterie’ is contestable and I shall examine in particular the distance that Virginia Woolf sought to place between her works and Forster’s, particularly in their relative relationships to figures of her father’s generation and their Cambridge milieu. One only need to examine *To the Lighthouse*’s portrayal of Mr. Ramsay, where Woolf turns her father, Leslie Stephen into ‘a representative Victorian patriarch’ to view the distance she wishes to place between her own creation and that of her father’s Cambridge world just as, through damning him with faint praise, she was later to do with Forster.²⁴ I wish to place more emphasis on one of Leslie Stephen’s contemporaries in particular, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, in re-examining Forster’s Cambridge influences.

If the Society of the Apostles has received scant attention in recent histories of modernism then Dickinson might be considered obscure even amongst its membership. Both Medalie and May mention Dickinson but in neither of their books do they fully explore the confluence of his various interests and Forster’s.

²² Brian May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist*, p. 6.

²³ William C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820-1914: Liberalism, Imagination, and Friendship in British Intellectual and Professional Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 240.

²⁴ Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 282. Zwerdling is, however, clear in his examination of how studious Woolf had to be in ignoring her father’s virtues in the construction of Mr. Ramsay. Leslie Stephen, was, of course, not a member of the Society of Apostles himself but, as William C. Lubenow (*The Cambridge Apostles*, p. 37) observes, he was not only profoundly connected to members of the society but, moreover, regretted having refused membership.

Their friendship commenced at the time of Forster's election to the Society of Apostles in 1901 when Forster's interests had moved towards politics as he studied for Tripos examinations in history. Dickinson, a fellow of King's College, was also a university lecturer in politics and tutor in history at King's.²⁵ By this period, Dickinson was far better known than he is today as a populariser of Greek and Roman thought, particularly through his 1896 publication *The Greek View of Life* which sought to explain, in particular, Plato's and Socrates's thought.²⁶ From a career in popularising the Socratic dialogue, Dickinson made popular the Society of Apostles' neo-Socratic dialogues in his own political works, 1905's *A Modern Symposium* presenting a dialogue between imagined representatives of the leading political, aesthetic and intellectual world views of the Edwardian period. I wish to suggest that the evolution of similar preoccupations in Forster's work is no coincidence.²⁷

It was at this time, moreover, that Dickinson began to move in the very heart of new liberal politics as one of the editorial board of *The Independent Review*, the new liberal magazine in which its chief ideologues L.T. Hobhouse and J.A. Hobson amongst others published their interventionist manifesto for liberal politics. Moreover, it is the magazine in which Forster published his first fiction.

That Dickinson was also a homosexual who came to an awareness of his sexual orientation during his time in the Apostles is noted in one of only three works to have addressed the intellectual history of the society in any depth, the risibly homophobic work of Richard Deacon who describes homoerotic friendship in the

²⁵ P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 75.

²⁶ Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *The Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson and Other Unpublished Writings*, Dennis Proctor (ed.), (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co, 1973), p. 161.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

society as ‘blatant, even in public’.²⁸ Thankfully, W.C. Lubenow’s appraisal of the society has lent more serious critical attention to this vital early modernist group whose membership included G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, John Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry and Leonard Woolf, to name but a few of Forster’s apostolic contemporaries. This group and their intellectual importance are ripe for further examination. Dickinson’s influence upon Forster is, however, a pre-eminent and enduring one amongst his apostolic acquaintances, so much so that the novelist wrote the don’s posthumous biography in 1934 and where his appraisal of Dickinson’s use of the Socratic method I wish to contend is as true for the author as his subject: ‘The dialogue form [. . .] exactly suited his genius. It allowed him to assemble opinions as, so to speak, to tint them [. . .] His business was the argument, human and humanly held.’ (*GLD*, 108-9). The very nature of this shared emphasis on dialogue and debate lie at the heart of all I wish to propose about Forster’s fiction.

II An Evolution of Parts

Critics such as M. Keith Booker have been clear to assert that *A Passage to India* is pre-eminent amongst Forster’s novels in exploring the ‘unknowability [. . .] and the unavailability of hermeneutic closure in Forster’s modernist text’.²⁹ Booker’s identification of *A Passage to India* as the single modernist text amongst Forster’s work is telling but disputed by critics of my own mind such as David Medalie who agrees that the novel is ‘a work of nascent modernism’ but believes it to be a

²⁸ Richard Deacon, *The Cambridge Apostles: A History of Cambridge University’s Elite Intellectual Secret Society* (London: Robert Royce Ltd, 1985), p. 65.

²⁹ M. Keith Booker, *Colonial Power, Colonial Texts: India in the Modern British Novel* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997) p. 85.

‘continuation of the methods and concerns of *Howards End*’.³⁰ I wish to go further. I will claim throughout the thesis that Forster’s is an evolving body of work centred on a core political, stylistic and personal scheme that I will argue existed from his first fiction. The evolving nature and sophistication of his ideas will be traced but are part of a whole.

I have structured the thesis in order, therefore, to reflect what I understand are the major concerns of Forster’s writing, within each chapter exploring either a developing contextual factor affecting the central pre-occupations of the fiction or how that element of the fiction is developed across the entire body of Forster’s writing. I hope thus to demonstrate both Forster’s consistent interests and their development rather than to engage in an isolated chronological study of Forster’s individual works in their order of publication or composition.

I begin with an examination of the nature of liberalism, liberal humanism and their particular development over the period of Forster’s literary career in Chapter One. I discover how the term liberal humanist has historically functioned as a term of abuse in criticism of Forster’s relation to modernist literature. I explore the evolution of understandings of liberal humanism as antonymous to modernist art and seek to question this construction. I position my own thought more in the direction of recent re-examinations of the development of liberal ideology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century that see liberalism as a heterogeneous ideology with one particular facet, new liberalism, emerging as a form of proto-socialism in its social interventionist agenda. The Cambridge Apostles’ place in the development of this

³⁰ Medalie, *E.M. Forster’s Modernism*, p. 159.

strand of liberalism is important and here I chart the particular place of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson both within the evolution of new liberal ideology and as a central influence on Forster's fiction.

Dickinson's influence is notable in many facets of Forster's work. Where in Chapter One it is evident in awakening Forster's political understanding, in Chapter Two I examine the older philosopher's influence on Forster's narrative art. I propose that Forster worked in adaptation of Dickinson's means of articulating his philosophical vision. I investigate Dickinson's examination of Socratic dialogue in Chapter Two along with his development of this into the modern dialogues that are an important part of his work. I believe that this dialogic method is a mode of storytelling shared by Dickinson and Forster, developed at the hearth rug of Society of Apostles discussions and informed by its premises. It is one, moreover, that they self-consciously if obliquely attribute within their works. I also examine how Forster translates this dramatic dialogic method into his own narrative prose, conducting a reappraisal of Forster's narrative art. I question the supposed sincerity of the narrator's voice throughout his novels, analysing the implications of his ironic narrative voice in destabilising any moral judgements attributed to the narrator of these works. In the final part of the chapter, I go further, addressing another important facet of Forster's narrative art, what he terms the bouncing narrative, where employment of free indirect discourse allows characters to undermine the authority of the narrator and each other's perceptions, providing a profoundly unstable and dialogic text.

I explore the premise that one of literary modernism's defining characteristics is formal experimentation and re-examination of mimetic modes of representation in Chapter Three. Dickinson's influence is marked on Forster's work yet is not absolute. Continuing the premises of my analysis of Forster's narrative method in Chapter Two, in Chapter Three I conduct a more wide-ranging investigation of an array of elements of stylistic modernism. Forster's examination and deconstruction of the socially produced nature of language is chief amongst these methods. I analyse his consistent and developing fascination with both the social production and enforcement of meaning and the breakdown of processes of signification across his fiction, culminating in the famous echo of the Marabar caves in *A Passage to India*. I argue within Chapter Three that if Forster's work is marked by dissatisfaction with language as a medium of expression he is also self-conscious in his awareness of the place of his own work within literary history and convention. This self-awareness is marked by consistent and developing use of intertextuality, allusion and play with genre types that are further aspects of his destabilisation of mimetic representation. Allied to this, I chart the presence of writers within his fictional works and their meta-fictional function.

Having demonstrated Forster's adaptation of Dickinson's dialogic method (and its place within the wider evolution in Forster's stylistic modernism) in the previous chapters, I explore the function of social apparatuses throughout Chapter Four. In this analysis I especially feature how they are employed by contending ideologies to attempt to assert their world views as truth. I contend that Forster reveals the play between ideologies vying for domination through attempts to enforce their positions upon central characters. I examine the function of a number of these

ideological positions and analyse how Forster shows their contending attempts to dominate the works' protagonists throughout his fictional development, these attempts becoming ever more evident. I suggest that the supposed emancipations of these characters often represent capitulation to the world view of a particular group within a novel whilst the more oblique and unsatisfying closure of many of Forster's works more truly represents his political and philosophical vision of aporia, where the contending positions seeking dominance negate one another.

Following this broad political reading of what I term Forster's dialogic liberalism, I examine a particularly pertinent example of this instance in Chapters Five and Six. In Chapter Five I examine the emergence of a number of contending discourses purporting to understand and explain the nature of male same-sex desire. Placing Forster's work in its historical context, I examine the discourses that sought to define the homosexual man, the term homosexual and its attendant theory having become dominant amongst these contending theories.

Having completed this contextual survey, in Chapter Six I apply the findings of Chapter Four about the function of dialogic liberalism. I contend that Forster's fiction presents a consistent dialogue between contending understandings of same-sex desire, each seeking to assert dominance in understanding and explaining the queer subject. I examine, furthermore, how each discourse attempts to assert its influence through use of social institutions to legitimate its claims.

Unlike Wendy Moffat, I believe that to start with the fact that Forster is a homosexual is incorrect. I end with this important facet of Forster's work, believing it

important but not all-encompassing. It is important but only one facet of a wider literary vision and not the most direct route to an understanding of the method that this thesis claims pervades all facets of Forster's work. Instead, I wish to begin with Forster's 'What I Believe', an essay written in 1939 on the eve of world war and an epochal clash of totalitarian world views. Forster reflects upon his own relation to the ensuing political chaos:

These are the reflections of an individualist and a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him and at first felt ashamed. Then, looking around, he decided there was no special reason for shame, since other people, whatever they felt, were equally insecure. (*TCD*, 83-4)

Forster is clearly aware that political, and perhaps ideological, liberalism is 'crumbling beneath him'. Undoubtedly its political influence had waned, as I examine in the next chapter. Forster desires tolerance, respect of the views of others and friendship between those of opposing views; this dialogism was embodied in and learned during his time with the Cambridge Apostles. His conclusion about the function of society is bleak:

I realize that all society rests upon force. But all great creative actions, all decent human relations, occur during intervals when force has not managed to come to the front. These intervals are what matter. I want them to be as frequent as possible, and I call them 'civilization'. (*TCD*, 78)

Forster views the imposition of their world view by a dominant group within society as central to the issue of force. His fiction examines 'the intervals' between absolute dominance of one group, when dialogue between contending world views has come to the fore. The 'civilization' he identifies comes in the periods where these viewpoints contend, each attempting to enforce the dominance of their position via social institutions. Forster's understanding of a new form of liberalism first developed simultaneously with his development as a writer. In his involvement with the Society of Apostles and, particularly, with Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, he became aware of the process of political force and the power of the institutions to do good and encourage rather than suppress debate.

CHAPTER ONE

FORSTER'S LIBERALISM: THE NATURE OF LIBERAL HUMANISM AND THE LESSONS OF NEW LIBERALISM

I Liberalism's Fag-End.

The relation of modernism to liberalism is a contentious one and, as David Medalie rightly notes, 'Forster's modernism [. . .] directs us towards a broader conceptualisation and understanding of modernism itself'.¹ The very nature of the term 'liberal' has often been 'used as a loose swear word', one whose nature implies a 'lack of rigour' that sees it marked as a 'pejorative term', implying 'weak and sentimental beliefs' that set it at tense relation with modernist innovation.² Raymond Williams, who defines liberalism thus, is keen to assert the orientation of modernist literature 'on the extreme poles of politics'.³ He is not alone in this position. As astute a critic of modernist paradigms as Astradur Eysteinnsson observes that 'modernism can be seen as the negative other of capitalist-bourgeois ideology', a position that he is not wholly convinced by. He, however, notes this position as central to Lukács's and Trilling's understandings of the movement.⁴ Such is the historical prominence of this position that it finds early articulation in that most grudging of Forster's admirers, F.R. Leavis, when he comments, that liberalism has become 'largely and loosely [. . .] a term of derogation'. Leavis personally admires liberal humanism as 'the indispensable transmitter of something that humanity cannot afford to lose' despite

¹ Medalie, *E.M. Forster's Modernism*, p. 1.

² Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), p. 181.

³ Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London & New York: Verso, 1989), p. 58.

⁴ Astradur Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 37; 25.

his claims of the ‘weakness’ of its presence within Forster’s work.⁵ Brian May, one of the most astute of Forster scholars, notes that “‘post-modern bourgeois liberals’ [a term he ascribes to Richard Rorty] – may be surprised to hear that modernism was even more hostile to liberalism than postmodernism now is’.⁶ Thus, when Forster declares himself in ‘The Challenge of Our Time’ to ‘belong to the fag-end of Victorian liberalism’ (*TCD*, 65) his position places him in opposition to many formulations of the very nature of modernist writing, assigning him a marginal place as a figure of the ‘transition into modernism’ rather than one of its most elusive practitioners whose works are only relatively recently beginning to be recognised for their subtlety.⁷

David Medalie, along with Brian May and David Bradshaw, has been a key renovator of an understanding of Forster’s liberalism and its relation to modernism, particularly to a historical positioning of the work in relation to the new liberal movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addressing this area, I wish not to contend with his work, rather to develop its focus further and place it more firmly in the milieu of Cambridge, especially of the ‘Apostolic’ thought of the Society of Apostles and most particularly in Forster’s relationship with Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson whose influence will be particularly explored in both this chapter and the next.

David Medalie’s and Brian May’s work breaks with a considerable body of Forster scholarship that is assured in its association with ‘the toughness and flexibility

⁵ F.R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit* (London: Penguin, 1952;1966) c.f. pp. 276-277.

⁶ May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist*, p. 33.

⁷ Betty Page, *E.M. Forster: A Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke & London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 47.

of the liberal humanist tradition' that John Colmer recognises.⁸ One might imagine such a school of criticism having its roots in Lionel Trilling's 1944 *E.M. Forster: A Study* and, in a sense, this is the case. Trilling claims that Forster represents a line of liberal humanist continuity that follows Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James and 'after James, in a smaller way, comes Forster'.⁹ The allegiance with nineteenth-century writers and, in particular, Forster's position as 'smaller' than James limits his critical place in the genealogy of literary modernism, a status, Trilling suggests, strongly related to the nature of his political beliefs. Trilling's conception of Forster's liberalism, however, is a subtler one than that of many who follow him. Whilst he believes that 'Forster has long been committed, [. . .] always in the liberal direction' and 'speaks of himself as a humanist', Trilling views him as 'deeply at odds with the liberal mind' due to a lack of moral absolutism at play within his work.¹⁰ This lack of moral didacticism is an astute observation, mirrored in Paul B. Armstrong's analysis in 2005 that 'Forster's liberalism projects a differential, heterogeneous ideal of community as a pluralistic, democratic structure defined not by positive allegiance to any particular set of beliefs or norms but negatively, diacritically, by relations that permit variety and criticism'.¹¹ I am not wholly convinced by Forster's absolute belief in 'a pluralistic *democratic* structure' (my emphasis). Indeed, in 'What I Believe', it is with 'two cheers' (*TLJ* 78) that he greets this political system for its inability to reconcile opposing views.

⁸ John Colmer, *E.M. Forster: The Personal Voice* (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 24.

⁹ Lionel Trilling, *E.M. Forster: A Study* (London: Hogarth Press, 1944;1951), p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.14;19.

¹¹ Paul B Armstrong, *Play and the Politics of Reading: The Social Uses of Modernist Form* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 124.

Throughout the decades following Trilling's ground-breaking study an understanding of Forster's renovation of liberal tradition and a fundamental questioning of its premises remained an under-explored area of enquiry. Martial Rose, for example, claims that 'Forster's work drives at a universal truth about the nature of man', asserting an individualist liberal humanism that, as I shall examine, is strongly rooted in an ahistorical relation of Forster's politics to that of an early utilitarian tradition, an equivalence that allows Rose the easy comparison of 'Jane Austen and Forster'.¹²

The nature of this misconception of Forster's political orientation is partially explained by statements in his own criticism and journalism of the late 1920s and beyond, after publication of *A Passage to India* and the production of all of his major literary creations. Forster presents a self-identification that I shall examine in more detail below but which has been repeated throughout much criticism well into this century. H.A. Smith's assertion of 'the form of humanism' Forster practices is as confident as Malcolm Bradbury's of 'his kind of liberal hope'.¹³ Robert K. Martin and George Piggford write equally as certainly of Forster's 'liberal humanist project' and of the 'liberal utopianism' that presents itself throughout his work whilst, in a recent monograph on his work, Forster's notion of 'liberal society' is as fully recognised by Frank Kermode.¹⁴

¹² Martial Rose, *Literature in Perspective: E.M. Forster* (London: Evans Bros. Ltd, 1970), pp. 24-25.

¹³ H.A. Smith, 'Forster's Humanism and the Nineteenth-century', p. 109; Malcolm Bradbury, 'Howards End', p. 130 both in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays* Malcolm Bradbury (ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966).

¹⁴ Martin & Piggford, *Queer Forster*, p. 3 & 13; Frank Kermode, *Concerning E.M. Forster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009), p. 21.

That the dominant body of Forster criticism, then, has been sure to assert Forster's liberalism sheds little light on what this most elusive of terms might mean. I am as keen as Brian May to examine the 'cultural and philosophical genealogy' of the term and, particularly, of Forster's problematic relation to it. However, unlike May, I am less certain that Forster's politics can be aligned with Richard Rorty's later pragmatic liberalism or as certain as David Medalie in a belief that modernity within Forster's novels is truly 'a tidal force of dissolution'.¹⁵

II A Most Elusive Term

Defining the nature of liberalism, and particularly its interaction with and allegiance to humanism, is no easy project. As Christopher Eccleshall notes 'To search for [. . .] a nuclear identity is to embark on a misconceived and ultimately barren experience [. . .] What makes the character of liberalism elusive is the elasticity of the concept [. . .] liberty is a flabby and ambiguous concept which yields neither a settled meaning nor consensus about the conditions in which it is secured'.¹⁶ The exact positioning of this consistently and easily asserted allegiance of Forster's work to liberal humanism is made more complex given that, as Eccleshall further notes, 'from the end of the nineteenth-century [. . .] liberals began to abandon the ideal of a minimal state in which individual property rights are sacrosanct [. . .] they now urged some political control of the economy to eliminate low wages, as well as public provision of social welfare'.¹⁷ The very nature of liberalism was under re-appraisal during the period in which Forster was producing the vast majority of his fiction. T.E. Hulme, one of

¹⁵ Brian May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist*, p. 19; David Medalie, *E.M. Forster's Modernism*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Robert Eccleshall, *British Liberalism: Liberal Thought from the 1640s to 1980s* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1986), p. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

Forster's contemporaries, was at the time questioning 'the fundamental beliefs of humanism' as Raymond Williams observes. The humanism that Williams sees Hulme interrogating was as much under investigation on the 'hearth rug' of the Cambridge Apostles' meetings, with their grounding in the 'liberal spirit' of their nineteenth-century but, as W.C. Lubenow notes, the Apostles were interested in 'producing scepticism' about the humanist notions of the nineteenth-century as much as asserting any continuity with them.¹⁸ Peter Hylton in particular notes the Hegelian direction of this interrogation of humanism at play under the direction of J.M.E. McTaggart, a central figure of the Society of Apostles during Forster's introduction to the society. McTaggart's account of concepts of dialogism is of particular relevance to the neo-Platonist direction of Forster's liberalism, as shall be examined in more detail below and in the next chapter.¹⁹

David Shusterman's analysis of Forster's fiction as showing 'the struggle within the human psyche that corrupts the individual and stultifies his development as a human being' is an interesting starting point when questioning the applicability of liberal humanism as a term to describe the nature of the political engagement at play within Forster's fiction.²⁰ Glen Cavaliero's claim that Forster's 'outlook was derived from that of nineteenth-century individualism' is illustrative in its similarity to Shusterman's view.²¹ This notion of an inherently common 'human psyche' and of the sanctity of 'the individual' that Shusterman identifies are, of course, central to Millite and Benthamite utilitarianism whose 'greatest concern was to defend and

¹⁸ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Penguin, 1958; 1985), p. 191; Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820-1914*, p. 29, 53.

¹⁹ Peter Hylton, *Russell, Idealism and the Emergence of Analytical Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 89-99.

²⁰ David Shusterman, *The Quest for Certitude in E.M. Forster's Fiction* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 39.

²¹ Glen Cavaliero, *A Reading of E.M. Forster* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 1979), p.57.

extend individual liberty', operating under the central premises of Locke and Paine, that all men are created equal and have a shared, common humanity.²² Shusterman's claim that Forster's fiction is centrally concerned with the development of the human being reflects a wider belief that Forster's fiction demonstrates that 'he [. . .] saw civilization as beneficial to man', something Alina Szala claims.²³

John Beer believes that in Forster's presentation of the fatal crossroads of *The Longest Journey* the author employs a symbol of 'the intrusion of modern civilization into old', a disruption not to be welcomed and which essentially roots Forster in allegiance with the 'old'.²⁴ This faith in the 'civilizing' influence of culture upon the individual bears considerable resemblance to the opinions of so resolute a Victorian as Matthew Arnold. Arnold claims that this influence will allow 'a more free play of consciousness, an increased desire for sweetness and light [. . .] the master impulse even now of the life of our nation and of humanity', a civilising influence that will affect 'the transformation of each'.²⁵

This 'master impulse' of Arnold's theory is what drives H.A. Smith in his explanation of that most misunderstood of Forsterian terms, 'connection', between men that he believes underpins the majority of the fiction and that allows 'a clearer, deeper perception of human personality' as a key feature of the work.²⁶

²² Terrence Ball and Richard Dagger, *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal* (New York City: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 65, 74.

²³ Alina Szala, 'North and South: Civilization in Forster's First Novel', *Cahiers d'études et de recherches Victoriens et Édouardiennes*, no 4-5 (1977), p. 29.

²⁴ John Beer, *The Achievement of E.M. Forster* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 95.

²⁵ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1869;1889), pp. 164-5.

²⁶ Smith, 'Forster's Humanism and the Nineteenth-century', p. 107.

The individualism at play here and its connection to a humanistic drive are central facets of a mid-Victorian liberalism that can chart its evolution from utilitarianism. Julia Stapleton believes that proponents of individualism are ‘unnerved by democracy, particularly in the light of its association with collectivism’ and that for thinkers aligned to the concept of individualism, democracy is ‘despised as a byword for collectivism’.²⁷ As she notes, A.V. Dicey is one such liberal individualist in his expression that ‘each man is the best manager of his affairs’.²⁸ Stapleton grounds the centrality of the individual within liberal politics as very much a mid-nineteenth-century phenomenon. It is exactly this ‘older, more individualistic and libertarian liberalism’ that so recent a critic as Paul Peppis confidently asserts that Forster presents throughout his fiction in preference to the ‘statist and imperialist “New Liberalism” of the British Government after 1906’.²⁹ To Peppis’s mind, this allegiance is sufficient to read Forster’s fiction as presenting a desire ‘to construct a freer, more natural, and healthier Englishness and preserve a mystical rural England from modernity’s relentless expansion’ a position he terms ‘Forster’s reformist fantasies’, a retrogressive nature at odds with modernity and, by association, resolutely ‘Victorian’ in orientation.

I disagree with this assertion on a number of levels. Whilst I would in no way question Forster’s disjunction from imperialist Liberal parliamentary politics after 1906, what Michael Freedon notes in J.A. Hobson’s and L.T. Hobhouse’s ‘New Liberalism’ as a desire ‘to reassert the supremacy of communal values’ is a new

²⁷ Julia Stapleton, ‘Introduction’, *Liberalism, Democracy and the State in Britain: Five Essays, 1862-1891* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1997), p. 19.

²⁸ Albert Venn Dicey, ‘The Balance of the Classes’, *Essays on Reform* (London: Macmillan, 1867), p. 83.

²⁹ Paul Peppis, ‘Forster and England’, in David Bradshaw (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 48.

formulation of the relationship of the individual to society that I believe lies far closer to Forster's politics than the liberal humanism that Peppis claims for Forster.³⁰

Moreover, to even assert that such a dichotomous liberalism existed – with the individualists being opposed to interventionists - within the nineteenth-century is itself incorrect. Sidney Webb's comments in 1889 that 'every edition of Mill's book [*Political Economy*] became more and more Socialistic' perhaps highlights the seeds of interventionist politics within earlier utilitarian liberalism.³¹ While new liberalism is an evolution of liberal ideology, its shift from earlier nineteenth century liberalism is less dramatic than Peppis suggests.

Be this as it may, the very nature of Forster's critical positioning in relation to liberal humanism is vital to an understanding of his marginalisation within the modernist canon. That humanism is antithetical to modernism's self-identification is noted by Peter Conrad in his observation that 'Michel Foucault wrote an unregretful obituary for "the man of modern humanism", now officially defunct'³². One of modernism's chief theorists writing of the movement as the death of humanism is telling as a cause for Forster's contiguous perception as a marginal modernist. Michael J. Hoffman and Anne Ter Haar confidently claim that Forster 'represents an earlier generation' than Virginia Woolf in their study of the relative influences of these two novelists upon each other, a further repetition of the nature of Forster's perceived difference from an acknowledged innovator of the modern age.³³ Woolf

³⁰ Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought*, p. 224.

³¹ Sidney Webb, 'The Basis of Socialism: Historic', *Fabian Essays* (London: Fabian Society, 1889), p. 58.

³² Peter Conrad, *Modern Times, Modern Places* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), p. 24.

³³ Michael J Hoffman and Anne Ter Haar, "'Whose books once influenced mine": the relationship between E.M. Forster's 'Howards End' and Virginia Woolf's 'The Waves'", *Twentieth Century Literature*, Spring 1999, p. 4 (electronic edition - http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_1_45/ai_54895474/?tag=content:coll Accessed 17/02/2012.)

famously manufactures this very difference of ‘generations’ in ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ via her assertion that ‘on or about December 1910 human character changed’.³⁴ It is notable that this change in human character, contested by so many later commentators on the evolution of modernism, should limit Forster’s participation in modernist art to one novel written and published in his lifetime and only two novels composed after this date.

The very manufacture of this supposed difference is evident within Woolf’s later essay on ‘The Novels of E.M. Forster’ which is an exercise in faint praise. Woolf stresses the same notion that Forster’s ‘old maids, his clergy, are the most lifelike we have had since Jane Austen laid down the pen’ – a comparison later also to be made by Martial Rose - whilst Woolf also emphasises the didacticism at play in his ‘prim moral sense’ closely allied to notions of liberal humanism within the work.³⁵ Peter Keating comments on the Woolfs’ manufacturing of distance between Virginia Woolf’s writing and that of the Edwardian era, noting her desire to ‘disassociate’ her own writing and that of her Bloomsbury champions from ‘being Victorian’ or even close to the period.³⁶ Keating also notes ‘Woolf’s punctilious dismissal of the Edwardians’ as ‘built into the process of emergent modernism [. . .] The explanation lies partly in the special nature of the modernist response [. . .] not as a traditional development or change [from the inheritance of the Victorian era] but as an unstoppable reaction against the self’.³⁷ It would appear that Forster’s place as ‘transitional’ to the genealogy of modernism may have its genesis amongst the writers

³⁴ Virginia Woolf, *Mr Bennett & Mrs Brown* (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1978), p. 3.

³⁵ Virginia Woolf, ‘The Novels of E.M. Forster’, *Collected Essays* (Project Gutenberg of Australia, ebook 0200771.txt, located at <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200771.txt> Accessed 18th May 2011.)

³⁶ Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875-1914* (London: Fontana Press, 1989), p. 96.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

with whom he mixed. It seems rooted in a belief that his supposed liberal humanism lies in exactly his humanistic faith in the 'self' and its humanistic coherence, a faith that I question in this thesis. It is in the nature of the 'ambiguity at the heart of Mr. Forster's novels' that Woolf identifies in Forster's fiction that much of his interest lies and, furthermore, that 'peculiar kind' of 'vision' and the 'elusive nature' of it are absolutely rooted in an 'interest in institutions' and 'a social curiosity' that Woolf claims his fiction lacks.³⁸ I would further suggest that this interest in social institutions is related to the newly emergent liberalism of the new liberal school that, far from the Victorian liberal humanism so confidently attributed to Forster by a range of critics, was very much a product of the post-Victorian era, for all that it might have begun its evolution within the Victorian age.

III Humanism and Connection

In questioning claims of Forster's liberal humanism, it is impossible to hide from the biographical fact that the novelist has been lauded as a champion of humanism. The British Humanist Association, for example, proudly states that he 'was a Vice-President of the Ethical Union in the 1950s, and a member of the Advisory Council of the British Humanist Association from its foundation in 1963'.³⁹ Examining the nature of Forster's liberal humanism, David Medalie rightly notes that much of the evidence 'rests, to a great extent, in the essays in which, confronted by the rise and increasing threat of Nazism' he became 'a latter-day prophet' of a reactionary liberal

³⁸ Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of E.M. Forster', *Collected Essays* (Project Gutenberg of Australia, ebook 0200771.txt, located at <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200771.txt> Accessed 18th May 2011.)

³⁹ The British Humanist Association's website prominently features a profile of Forster amongst its celebrated followers: <http://www.humanism.org.uk/humanism/humanist-tradition/20century/forster> , accessed June 3rd 2010.

humanism precisely to counter the dogma of totalitarian regimes that, as I shall demonstrate, he countered in a very different and more elusive fashion within his earlier fiction.⁴⁰

His later non-fiction, produced mainly in the 1930s and thereafter, cemented his reputation as a champion of liberalism that, in later biographical works such as *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (1934), *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951), and *Marianne Thornton* (1956), asserts a humanist continuity with the Victorian age that may be as responsible as Woolf's criticism for his later marginalisation from the modernist canon. By taking into account these liberal connections with an earlier era, however, we can see that Forster had a complex relation with this political world view and with new liberalism, a movement that came to the fore precisely at the time when he wrote his fictional works rather than the non-fiction.

One only need examine the opening sections of *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* to see a formulation of a late nineteenth-century liberalism that was very much concerned with the very institutions that Woolf so clearly claims Forster to have no interest in. The dedication to this work is 'Fratrum Societati' which speaks volumes about a shared Apostolic outlook that – in the case of Dickinson's direct stylistic influence upon Forster's work – I shall address more fully in the following chapter. Dickinson's politics appear, to Forster, to be founded on the social principle of curing 'the diseases of state' and in 'such problems as forms of government, social distinctions, the distribution of wealth' (*GLD*, 84-5). The nature of Dickinson's allegiances at this point typifies those more widely of the turn of the century liberal:

⁴⁰ David Medalie, 'Bloomsbury and other Values' in David Bradshaw (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 48.

‘his political opinions at this time were illogical and harmonious. Was he conservative, liberal or socialist? [. . .] by the end of the century he had moved to the left.’ (*GLD*, 86-7)

This troubling lack of definition that led to the reconsideration of political liberalism is highly apparent in the milieu in which both Dickinson and Forster mixed, particularly in their shared relationship with *The Independent Review*. Dickinson was a member of the editorial board of *The Independent Review* alongside notable New Liberals ‘F.W. Hirst, C.F.G. Masterman, G.M. Trevelyan and [Nathaniel] Wedd’ (*GLD*, 115). Forster sums up the position of the review within his biography of Dickinson, claiming that ‘it was not so much a Liberal review as an appeal to Liberalism from the Left to be its better self – one of those appeals which have continued until the extinction of the Liberal party’ (*GLD*, 115). The concerns of the review are manifestly both socialist in their leanings and clearly in allegiance with the personal, political and literary concerns of both Dickinson and, moreover, of Forster.

J.A.R. Marriott’s 1904 article for the review on ‘University Extension’, lauds the increasing access to Higher Education for the working classes ‘as one of the many manifestations of the new democratic spirit’, whilst another article that follows in 1905 by J.A. Hobson, one of New Liberalism’s architects, states ‘that national efficiency requires (among other things) a very large expenditure of money upon the building and equipment of colleges and other *apparatus* of higher education’ [my

emphasis].⁴¹

At one level, this is clearly interesting for its connections with Dickinson's and Forster's activities. Forster quotes an 1887 letter from Dickinson to A.J. Grant in which he cites the admiration of a friend, 'coming up to live at Toynbee [Hall, S.A. Barnett's extension college in the east London] in October' whilst in the same biography, Forster refers to Dickinson's 'lecturing at the London School of Economics' (*GLD*, 64; 94), one of the new wave of higher educational establishments that Hobson lauds in his article. Wendy Moffat observes very similar activity on Forster's part at exactly the same period, with 'Morgan teaching Latin once a week at the Working Men's College on Great Ormond Street' and also applying 'for a position as a lecturer for a university extension service in regional towns'.⁴² That Forster should participate in the same activities as his close friend and mentor, Dickinson, is no more surprising than the fact that his first fiction should be published in the *Independent Review*, on whose editorial board Dickinson sat.

It is this extension of the collegiate spirit of the Society of Apostles that finds its manifestation within Forster's fiction. *Maurice* sees a slightly later celebration of the same desire for extension of higher education in Maurice Hall's philanthropic actions: 'He gave up Saturday golf in order to play football with the youths of the College Settlement in South London, and his Wednesday evenings in order to teach arithmetic and boxing to them' (*M*, 125-6). It is clear that in this one facet of the new liberal project Forster's fictional heroes are as committed to social equality as the

⁴¹ J.A.R. Marriott, 'University Extension', *The Independent Review*, vol. IV, 1904-5, pp. 45- 57; J.A. Hobson, 'Millionaire Endowments', *The Independent Review*, vol. V, February - April 1905, pp. 90-100.

⁴² Moffat, *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster*, p. 64.

author and his close political and philosophical mentor. Maurice Hall seems to be as much an adherent of the notion that a liberal society should seek to arrest the notion of higher education as ‘a virtual monopoly of the possessing classes’, his actions demonstrating a belief that it should be available to all as ‘an essential of sound citizenship in a civilized state’, a sentiment echoing that of Hobson’s article.⁴³

More striking, however, is the shared political conception of the function of the state and of the new bent of interventionist politics that lie at the heart of new liberal thought. This trend is clearly noted by L.A. Atherley-Jones in his call for the political Liberal Party to answer the ‘voice of industrial England demanding that “the equality of social conditions” [. . .] is the legitimate sequel to “the equality of political rights” [. . .] It is the duty of the Liberal Party to respond to that appeal, none the less real, none the less formidable because it is unformulated and barely articulate’.⁴⁴ This clarion call for a fundamental renovation of liberal ideology away from ‘the old lines of *laissez faire – laissez aller*’ towards a social interventionist method of state actualisation of liberal ideology through social institutions suffuses both the language and thought of the new liberal movement and forms a profound disjunction in some ways with an older classical liberal thought which J. Salwyn Shapiro notes as repudiating ‘the antithesis, stressed by classical liberalism, between the individual and society’ in favour of an interventionist model where society seeks to enact the advancement of the individual via its mechanisms.⁴⁵

⁴³ Hobson, ‘Millionaire Endowments’, p. 90.

⁴⁴ L.A. Atherley Jones, ‘Liberalism and Social Reform’, *New Review* 9:55, Dec 1893, p. 629.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 630; J Salwyn Schapiro, *Liberalism: Its Meaning and History* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand & Co., 1958), p. 47.

Hobson's discussion of the 'apparatus' of higher education as an agent of social change mirrors the pattern of Dickinson's thought, Forster noting the titles of some of Dickinson's lectures at the London School of Economics, including titles such as 'The Machinery of Administration in England', 'The Bases of Political Obligation', 'The Structure of the Modern State' and 'The History of Political Ideas' alongside a Cambridge lecture on 'The Machinery of Administration under Democracy'(cf. *GLD*, 96). Both share a profound understanding of the mechanics of state that is articulated equally within Forster's work and which is expressed exhaustively in the short life of *The Independent Review* as these ideas evolved and came to prominence in the very same volumes where Forster's first fiction appeared.

Forster uses the same term as Hobson in a later essay on 'Liberty in England' published in *Abinger Harvest* where he writes of a desire for the maintenance of culture which he hopes to enact via a wish 'to utilize the existing apparatus [. . .] to extend to all classes and races what has hitherto been confined to a few wealthy and white-coloured people' (*AH*, 81). This insistence on an apparatus-based conception of society, one founded on what Dickinson terms the 'machinery of administration', is central to an understanding of Forsterian liberalism.

We see this mechanistic conception articulated in this kind of language in stories such as 'The Machine Stops', for example. Forster's later concerns – and indeed, as we shall see, they are expressed within even the early fiction – have less to do with the transformative power of the social apparatus than with the potentially coercive influence that social mechanisms have on the individual. Forster's essay 'What I Believe' might be viewed as a paean to the 'fag end of Victorian liberalism'

that he claims to be a part of in 'The Challenge of Our Times' (*TCD*, 65) but this is a highly specific moment in the evolution of liberal ideology that, were one to clumsily assign such glib phrasing as synonymous with a wholly Victorian outlook, could all too easily consign Forster's work to the literary margins. However, to read the conclusion of 'What I Believe' more carefully is revealing. Forster claims that he is 'an individualist and a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him and at first felt ashamed' (*TCD*, 83). It is this moment of 'crumbling' that might have presaged Dangerfield's cataloguing of the strange death of liberal England as a parliamentary force. Forster's recognition that there is 'no special reason for shame' (*TCD*, 84) in the crumbling of *parliamentary* liberalism comes from a hope that new liberalism, and the *Independent Review* might well have affected the ideological shift to liberal ideology that he deemed necessary, to 'appeal to Liberalism from the Left to be its better self', effectively bringing new liberal belief in social reform so fully on to the political agenda as to morph new liberal and Labour policy to the extent that they coalesced. The conclusion of 'What I Believe' sees Forster clearly concerned 'for individualism' and fearing that the social apparatus of the 'dictator-hero can grind down his citizens till they are alike' (*TCD*, 84). This fear centres on anxiety that the social engineering of manipulative social mechanisms can enforce homogeneity and hegemony upon the individual. Forster's fear comes from the belief that those controlling social apparatuses shall 'melt [citizens] into a single man' (*TCD*, 84), a concern that Michael Freedon clearly notes was a central issue in the evolution of new liberalism and its relationship to socialist thought in this period.⁴⁶ Freedon observes that 'the lines between progressive ideologies were often blurred' but that following the debates of Hobson, Hobhouse and others over the relation of individualism to

⁴⁶ Freedon, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform*, p. 40.

social reform, ‘no meaningful contrast is evident between individualism and socialism’.⁴⁷

Forster’s use of the same term, apparatus, as Hobson is part of a shared apparatus based conception of society, one founded on what Dickinson terms the ‘machinery of administration’. This conception is central to an understanding of Forsterian liberalism. A mechanistic conception is articulated in just this language in stories such as ‘The Machine Stops’.

Forster’s pessimistic humanism can be observed in ‘What I Believe’, written in 1939: ‘Naked I came into this world, naked I shall go out of it! And a very good thing too, for it reminds me that I am naked under my shirt, whatever its colour.’ (*TCD*, 84). Forster’s concern over the preservation of an essentially humanistic individuality – his metonymically naked uniqueness – is a historically specific response to the brutally repressive homogeneity of the dictatorial regimes of National Socialist Germany and Communist Russia and might be viewed as a retrograde step towards a liberal humanist individualism that reflects the times of his essay rather than of his fiction, itself more strongly rooted in the ‘crumbling’ of liberal ideology than in the preservation of liberalism’s ‘fag end’. C.B. Cox makes the astute observation that ‘E.M. Forster was so aware of the dangers of the excessive use of the will and the need not to violate the individuality of other people, that he became increasingly afraid of the results of action. He moves towards a policy of non-interference’.⁴⁸ I do not believe that Forster’s fiction advocates absolute passivity but it is true that the coercive and repressive nature of hegemonic control of the individual

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴⁸ C.B. Cox, *The Free Spirit: A Study of Liberal Humanism in the Novels of George Eliot, Henry James, E.M. Forster, Angus Wilson* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 9.

is, indeed, at the heart of Forster's work. This conception does not represent, however, 'the liberal middle-class culture of the late nineteenth-century'; as Cox supposes, grounded as it is in a more specifically Edwardian new liberalism, as David Medalie examines.⁴⁹ Rather, the enduring political pre-occupation of the fiction is a dialectic 'clash between capitalism and communism' as Cox suggests, in which 'the liberal gentleman, with his flexibility of mind, is a ghost-figure, and society has no place for him'.⁵⁰

However, rather than simply a clash between the two dominant and contending ideologies, there is a more complex web of contending discourses at play throughout Forster's fiction, each of which vies to gain dominance over the individual through the imposition of their ideology via a wide array of social mechanisms. If Forster's peculiarly desperate individualism has a humanistic bent then it is of the individual dominated to the extent of their 'ghost-figure' becoming invisible as they are ground down to hegemonic conformity. Thus, at the end of the mechanistically informed dystopia of 'The Machine Stops', the unifying recurrent humanistic symbol of 'the untainted sky' is only momentarily glimpsed before the destruction of a humanity that has only 'learnt its lesson' at the moment that it is too late, when the machine that seeks to enforce ideological conformity crashes upon its subjects (*CSS*, 146). This same sky appears equally to deny the possibility of humanistic connection in the last of Forster's novels, *A Passage to India*. For all of the much vaunted humanistic desire for connection, the sky's final judgement of 'No, not there' (*API*, 316) denies any connection between Aziz and Fielding, the colonist and colonised as citizens, ideologues or lovers, all facets of Forster's preoccupation that will be

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

explored in more detail below. If Forster's humanism exists, it is a desperate one that might seek to 'connect' but fails to do so. Connection between world views is thwarted consistently by the attempted imposition of one over another.

That Forster made 'his own real debut as a writer in the *Independent* [Review] 's pages' connects his work with the emergence of the New Liberal renovation of liberal political ideology, a shift that took this work far from the liberal humanism that some later criticism has sought to identify his fiction with.⁵¹ Of the editors of this short lived articulation of New Liberal belief, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was by far the closest to Forster in temperament and regular acquaintance. Whilst the nature of this influence was profound and political, it was also a stylistic one. In order to truly appreciate the profundity of Dickinson's political influence on Forster, it is first necessary to understand the method of its articulation and the function of dialogism that these two authors share.

IV Dickinson's Dialogism

If Forster's position as a modernist writer is a contentious one this is at least partially due to post-modernist critical formations of modernity that Astradur Eysteinnsson has argued express a dichotomy in modernist writing, when it reaches its full maturity, divided into two politically extreme currents antagonistic to each other.⁵²

Eysteinnsson's observations on the paradigmatic genealogy of modernism understand the movement as an invention of post-modernism which seeks to define its own political ambiguity as different from modernism's tendency to political extremes. If

⁵¹ Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, Vol. 1, p. 108.

⁵² Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*. See Chapter One of Eysteinnsson's text on the critical development of the concept of modernism where he propounds that one such formation of modernism has asserted the primacy of politically extreme modernist writers, positing a model of modernist art developing a politically extreme dichotomy of right and left wing works, a conceptualisation of modernist art articulated in the works of Raymond Williams and Jurgen Habermas.

one were to believe such an account then Forster's own writing, labelled 'liberal' from the early criticism of Lionel Trilling to accounts in the 1990s, appears to have no such place in a modernist canon.⁵³

If Forster does represent not so much the 'liberal humanism' that John Beer assigns to him then his liberalism is an under-appreciated one of Peter Nicholls' many 'modernisms' which could be named 'liberal' or 'dialogic modernism'.⁵⁴ I wish to suggest that the body of Forster's work presents a fictional enactment of his political method, one which, along quasi-Socratic lines, engages divergent lines of thought concerning culture, politics, society and sexuality (to name but a few of the various interests of the fiction) in contention but without resolution so that, as Gregory Vlastos comments of Socrates himself, the reader is 'left to your own devices to decide what to make of his riddling ironies'.⁵⁵ This is not perhaps 'liberal' in the classic utilitarian model discussed above and which so many critics take for Forster's liberalism. It is, rather, a peculiarly evolved facet of new liberalism which S.P. Rosenbaum has charted as emergent amongst Forster's tutors and contemporaries during the 1890s at Cambridge.⁵⁶

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's influence upon the development of this 'liberal modernism' is a matter I shall explore both in this chapter and, particularly as it pertains to Forster's stylistic practice, in the next. Dickinson's quasi-Socratic methods led Forster to a conception of his own works as aporetic, leading him not to value any world view in them *per se* but rather to value the message which springs from the negation of contending view-points. As Dickinson stated of Plato: 'our age [.

⁵³ Trilling, *E.M. Forster and May, The Modernist as Pragmatist*.

⁵⁴ Beer, *The Achievement of E.M. Forster*, p. 7; see Nicholls, *Modernisms* for an account of his central thesis, that modernism was not marked a single unitary movement but instead a collection of disparate modernisms that shared some characteristics.

⁵⁵ Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 44.

⁵⁶ Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1880-1920*, discusses the conceptual foundations of the society and its political evolution of liberalism to some extent in his introduction.

. .] is one in which all foundations are breaking down [. . .] He [Socrates] was trying at once to uproot and to unsettle'.⁵⁷ I contend that the same is equally true of Dickinson himself, and, via his tutelage, of Forster as well.

One way in which Forster came to a construction of a 'dialogic' notion of his prose is via a distinct arrangement of contending voices within his texts, similar to that noted by Mikhail Bakhtin: 'The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual languages artistically organised'.⁵⁸ Forster appears not to have valued truth as a notion to be easily captured and conveyed within the fictional work; it was, rather, to be gleaned by its absence via the undermining of a number of 'truths' or philosophical world views as contingent. Accounts of his activities amongst the Cambridge Society of Apostles from 1901 onwards seem to indicate an early lesson learnt from Dickinson and like-minded friends, as S.P. Rosenbaum recounts: 'More important than the particular points of view that were argued about in the Apostles was their belief that that one learned from opposing opinions. Intellectually it was more blessed to receive than to give, to understand the ideas of others rather than to make one's own prevail'.⁵⁹ As such one may perhaps concentrate more fully on Forster's opening claim in his essay 'What I Believe' that 'I do not believe in belief [. . .] I hate the idea of causes' (*TCD*, 93). This, although stated in 1949, does point to the deeply held Forsterian notion of philosophical self-consciousness and the recognition of contingency which Brian May has made such a key point in his criticism of Forster.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *Plato and his Dialogues* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931), pp. 14-15.

⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Carol Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 262.

⁵⁹ S.P. Rosenbaum, *Victorian Bloomsbury: The Early Literary History of the Bloomsbury Group* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press, 1987), p.75.

⁶⁰ May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist* discusses the nature of contingency and, particularly, Forster's relation to Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* in his introduction, pp. 1-17.

It is interesting to note that this point of view – distinctly anti-humanist in emphasis – was discussed in detail at the very point at which Forster was embarking on his career as a novelist. The minutes of the Society of Apostles, itself by its very nature a dialogic society, saw a discussion on April 17th 1901 entitled ‘Are We All One After All?’ The records of the society’s proceedings clearly note Forster’s refutation of the notion of this construction of humanism.⁶¹ Moreover, one need only note that whilst Dickinson was a long-standing member of the Society until his death, it was also the place where numerous other long-standing adherents to new liberal politics emerged. John Maynard Keynes’s membership of the society is well noted while Forster’s contemporary Arthur Hobhouse was proposed by Keynes on February 11th 1905. Hobhouse later went on to a career in Liberal politics founded on exactly the same platform of reforming state institutions as discussed above.⁶²

What has not been noted in any Forster criticism to date other than in the previous section to this chapter is the inherently apparatus-based conceptualisation of Forster’s notion of the mechanics of society. In *Abinger Harvest* (1936) Forster makes use of the term ‘apparatus’ in reference to the media when arguing against censorship of the press and radio. He asserts that when claims are made about the cultural legitimacy of art forms, the organs of the media are only open to those judged by society as legitimate commentators:

public comment is negative if nobody hears it and so I want publicity for all sorts of comment- and that in England as elsewhere is being lost, chiefly owing to governmental control of broadcasting. And I want maintenance of

⁶¹ The minutes of the Society of Apostles (or Cambridge Conversazione Society as it has also been known) can be found in King’s College’s Modern Archives underclassmark KCAS/39/1 (Apostles Minutes Books).

⁶² Outlined again in the minutes of the Society of Apostles; for details of A.L. Hobhouse’s political career c.f. *The Times* obituary of 21st January 1965.

culture. How should I bring this about? By an attempt in my own country to utilize the existing apparatus and to extend to all classes and races what has hitherto been confined to a few wealthy and white-coloured people.

(*AH*, 81).

What is interesting here is not so much Forster's complaint - the passage was written in 1936 whilst censorship was sweeping Nazi Germany. Rather, it is Forster's conceptualisation of the means by which censorship is effected, the apparatuses of state, in this case the media. Forster reveals an understanding of a dominant world view's attempts to enforce that view as a truth, an act he believes to be tyrannical as the world view is not willing to expose itself to other contending views and recognise its own contingency.

Dickinson's dominant influence amongst the Apostles as a director of Forster's thought can be clearly seen when we begin to compare this aspect of *Abinger Harvest* with one of Dickinson's modern dialogues, *After Two Thousand Years*, a fantastic encounter between Plato and Philalethes, a 'modern young man', with whom he also discourses about the nature of the press:

PH: I have not spoken yet of the strangest of all our mechanisms.

PL: What is that?

PH: One that directs and controls the minds of men [. . .] by it, every day and many times a day, all news, true or false, is disseminated among our citizens. Not only are they told what has, or has not, happened; they are instructed also what to think or feel, when to laugh or cry, whom to hate or

love [. . .] Rich men buy the machine.

PL: And by it rule you?

PH: Yes. And that is one reason why revolution is less frequent among us than it was among you. (*ATTY*, 25)

Here we again encounter the notion both of a clear mistrust of the press as an arbiter of truth and of a mechanised conception of society. Throughout the course of this chapter and in Chapter Four I propose that such intersections of interest demonstrate a profound influence upon the nature of Forster's liberalism and his political *Weltanschauung*. Both *Abinger Harvest* and *After Two Thousand Years* provide later articulations (written in 1936 and 1930 respectively) of a shared political belief that came to its first flowering during the period in which Forster produced his fiction.

It seems necessary here to highlight that, in asserting Forster's understanding of the apparatus of a dominant world view as a means of claiming its primacy, I do not propose that his thought was Marxist in the Althusserian sense: evidently, his work pre-dates Althusser's neo-Marxist thought, thus making this a historical impossibility. However, Forster does comment upon his forebears' socialist leanings, particularly those of Dickinson and Edward Carpenter who, P.N. Furbank notes, are two of his strongest influences, influences I contend helped shape his understanding of the effects of the social mechanisms at work throughout his fictional work.⁶³ As noted above, Dickinson not only shared this conception of the function of the state but also, in his early statements about it in *The Greek View of Life* (originally published in 1896), his model of 'the whole apparatus of labour and exchange' (*GVL*, 99), he contrasts the world of Ancient Greece with that of modern European societies, stating that 'to conceive society merely as a machine for the production and distribution of wealth, would have been impossible to an ancient Greek' (*GVL*, 99), thereby implying

⁶³ Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, Vol. 1, p. 59.

that this is far from the case within modern industrialised societies. Dickinson thus demonstrates, in a work originally published in 1896, the very apparatus-based conception of society I shall contend that Forster's fictional work displays throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The point remains that Forster's understanding of society, explicit as it may be, is directly stated in his critical work, the vast majority of which was produced after the main body of his fictional output. However, examples from even his early short fiction demonstrate the assertion of an apparatus based conception of society as well. Whilst the majority of this textual proof is provided in Chapter Four, below, a brief textual exemplification here is illustrative.

'The Machine Stops' is what John Colmer terms Forster's 'anti-Wellsian fantasy'.⁶⁴ It perhaps most clearly articulates the latter's understanding of social mechanisms acting repressively to disguise their own contingency, so much so that the second chapter of the story is named 'The Healing Apparatus'. Here, the machine's coercive influence is evident when it asserts the conformity of the dissident, Kuno, so strongly that in Forster's science-fictional allegory, if he fails to conform to its world view he is 'threatened with homelessness' via rejection from the machine, an ejection from the allegorical life support system in which 'homelessness means death' (CSS, 123). The story takes place in a fictional world where the advances in technology have become so swift and all-consuming that humanity has left the surface of the earth to exist in a hermetically sealed world governed by those known only as 'the Machine' who control all aspects of humanity's world view, sustaining human life physically, emotionally and intellectually via the 'apparatus' of the machine. They heal (i.e. kill) those who do not submit their will to that of the machine. The dialogic contention of voices within the story exists between the mother Vashti, faithful to the world view of the machine, and Kuno, her dissident child.

⁶⁴ Colmer, *E.M. Forster: The Personal Voice*, p. 39.

Vashti feels only able to exist through an unblinking faith in the machine which sustains her existence.

Glen Cavaliero links this to a reactionary stance against modernisation and a yearning to return to a pre-industrial pastoral utopia which Forster ostensibly articulates throughout the story. When Vashti claims that ‘we have advanced thanks to the Machine!’ Cavaliero sees a stance of anti-modernisation on Forster’s part. Forster does indeed ironise Vashti’s position throughout much of the story. However, to argue that the story is motivated primarily by the creation of a paean to the simple pastoral life is at least partially to miss the point. The hero of the story, such as he is, sees the Machine not so much as an evil entity in itself but rather as an apparatus which admits no challenge to its world view and mechanisms of enforcing them. Kuno notes that:

We created the machine, to do our will but we cannot make it do our will now
[. . .] it has paralysed our bodies and our wills, and now it compels us to
worship it [. . .] we only exist as the corpuscles that course through its arteries,
and if it could work without us it would let us die.
(*CSS*, 131)

Forster presents a conception of a world view by which the day to day mechanisms of living control the thought processes of the individual, where one’s very existence is managed physically and ontologically. When Kuno questions the rules of the machine Vashti is unable to understand the question: ‘The phrase conveyed no meaning to her and he had to repeat it’ (*CSS*, 124). Forster presents Vashti as a character so enmeshed within the world view of the machine, so physically and intellectually sustained by its apparatuses that she cannot conceive of a life outside of it nor understand any utterance made in contradiction of it. Yet, whilst Forster damns such a mechanistic control of the individual by society, the point he makes is not, as Colmer

would have us believe, that 'He sees that man no longer lives in direct contrast with the earth, that he no longer experiences life through the senses [. . .] but takes his knowledge second hand from lectures, newspapers, screens, and is therefore gradually becoming subservient to the machinery and technology of which he was once master'.⁶⁵ Far from a reaction against technology, a violent and anti-modernist stance against 'the triumph of the mechanical over the natural' which Peter Nicholls views the modernism of the Italian Futurists as celebrating, Forster instead represents another strand of modernism.⁶⁶ In Kuno's desire to escape 'the Machine' to 'go outside' (CSS, 123) the confines of its repression, Forster's plea is not for pastoral utopia but for a choice and dialogue between world views. As a direct result of Kuno's escape to the surface of Earth, the world view which the machine enforces deems it necessary to precipitate 'the abolition of respirators' (CSS, 135), ostensibly needed to return to the surface of the earth thus denying others the choice that Kuno has made. Forster symbolically makes the point that they are not in fact needed, presenting the belief that the ability to choose world views is natural. Yet Kuno's escape results in 'the Machine' stopping and with it the end of the very pastoral world of 'Wessex when Aelfrid overthrew the Danes' (CSS, 146) which Kuno escapes to. Forster's message is not that which Colmer asserts, anti-mechanistic and romantically pastoral *per se*. It is, rather, the allegorical destruction of both the mechanistic and the pastoral world views which is seen as preferable to the enforcement of the machine's single world view upon all.

Forster's essential message is one entirely in sympathy with the articulations of New Liberalism to be found in *The Independent Review* and, particularly, in Dickinson's work, namely that whilst social institutions can be a tool of liberation if allied to a socialistically leaning liberalism, when employed in the service of a single, dominating ideology, they are repressive. It is this figure, as I shall explore in Chapter

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Nicholls, *Modernisms*, p. 86.

Four particularly, that was an enduring theme throughout Forster's fictional career and that lies at the heart of his politics.

In essence the clash of the two world views is directly comparable to that of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's neo-Socratic dialogues which so influenced Forster's work. These lead not to a Hegelian sublation of this clash of ideas into a new truth but rather to an ironic, aporetic end where the pastoral and the mechanistic are placed in tense opposition and where, in Dickinson's words, aporia is created by pricking 'bubbles. He [Socrates] found everywhere among the men who professed to teach, confusion, pretension, and, at bottom, ignorance. His method was to expose all of this by involving them in contradictions'.⁶⁷ Forster attempts exactly this: the assertion of a technological world view via rigid apparatuses which allow no other view, no dialogue between perspectives, is destroyed by the revelation of another perspective within 'The Machine Stops' not as a means of privileging the other pastoral perspective as an 'earth-mother' in Lionel Trilling's words, from which all truth springs.⁶⁸ Rather, the pastoral is similarly destroyed by being placed in dialectic relation to 'the machine' yet this does not allow sublation into some higher message or truth. In a text like 'The Machine Stops' sublation gives way to a more modest inter-negation of all discourses within the fabric of the fictional world. Such texts produce aporias in the sense that, as Dickinson put it, 'it is not necessary to come to a conclusion at all'.⁶⁹

The case of 'The Machine Stops' is a compelling one. It clearly shows Dickinson's and Forster's shared views about the dangers of the imposition of political influence from the dominant social group via the institutions of state. I wish to contend in Chapter Four that 'The Machine Stops' is just one early example of a

⁶⁷ Dickinson, *Plato and his Dialogues*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Trilling, *E.M. Forster*, p. 48.

⁶⁹ Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, 'Dialogue as a Literary Form', *Transactions of the Royal Literary Society of Literature*, vol. XI, ed. Sir Henry Humber-Terry (London & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), p.16.

wider political pre-occupation. It was published in *The Independent Review* alongside Dickinson's works in 1908, some mark of a shared conception of politics forged in shared membership of the Society of Apostles. Before moving on to this consideration of Forster's politics, however, it is first necessary to examine the evolution of his prose style and Dickinson's profound influence upon it, one of the central concerns of Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IRONIC NARRATOR AND THE BOUNCING NARRATIVE

I Re-Casting the Dialogue

To truly understand Forster's distinct liberal modernity and, particularly, Dickinson's place in its evolution, his political beliefs cannot be divorced from an understanding of the formal function of his fiction.

S.P. Rosenbaum, an astute analyst of Forster's Apostolic influences, claims that in his novels 'form was even less important than in drama or poetry'.¹ I wish to suggest that not only was Forster profoundly formally aware throughout the evolution of his body of work but also drama as a dialogic form is essential to an understanding of his writing. Furthermore, an understanding of the interaction of the formal and political elements of his fiction is a key to an understanding of Forster's politics and to a re-appraisal of his place within the modernist canon.

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's work, obscure in comparison with Forster's own today, was retrogressive even in his own time. It was often written in the dramatic form of a philosophical dialogue that harks back to Plato's dialogic method for its formal antecedents. In a much neglected essay written by Dickinson at the end of his life on 'Dialogue as a Literary Form' the aging academic outlines a belief in dialogic forms as a means of articulating contending truths:

¹ S.P. Rosenbaum, *Aspects of Bloomsbury: Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 88.

We have an immense mass of knowledge about nature which can be handed on didactically to students; and for conveying this the dialogue is not the proper form [. . .] there remains a large field of human thinking and feeling that [. . . includes] everything that involves ideas of goodness and badness [. . .] it is all this region that is suitable to the dialogue form.²

Dickinson charts the evolution of the dialogue as a vehicle for articulating the complexities of philosophical debate, rightly identifying Platonic dialogue as the greatest example of the form. However, it is in Plato's dialogues that he observes a particular weakness that his own work seeks to avoid: 'Plato was trying to point out confusions and contradictions in popular views, but also to demonstrate his own philosophy'.³ It is the desire to not express himself 'didactically' that he sees as the very strength of the dialogue form but its particular weakness is 'that it tries to impose the judgement of the author behind a screen of splendid rhetoric, or even of great poetry'.⁴

The most profound difference between Forster's work and Dickinson's is its form of articulation. Both were the creators of fictional clashes between characters throughout the bodies of their works. In Forster's fictional prose, however, the 'author behind a screen' is always present as narrator or behind the persona of the narrator. There is, indeed, at least one attempt on Forster's part to directly mirror Dickinson's method in his later criticism. Forster's 1942 essay 'The Duty of Society to the Artist'

² Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, 'Dialogue as a Literary Form', *Transactions of the Royal Literary Society of Literature*, Vol. XI. ed. Sir Henry Himber-Terry (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 1-4.

³ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

sees him ‘imagine an interview between an artist [. . .] and the appropriate state official whom I will call Mr. Bumble’ (*TCD*, 104). This attempt fulfils exactly the same philosophical function as Dickinson’s earlier dialogues in the meeting of contending viewpoints and shows, via the minimal incursions of a narrative voice mediating the thoughts of the two interlocutors, how Forster sought to re-create the function of drama in narrative prose. It is interesting to note that critics claim a particular didacticism on Forster’s part in the incursion of his viewpoint into the narrator’s. Forster is criticised for his inability to hide behind a narratorial ‘screen’. Douglas Hewitt sees it as an especial weakness of his fiction that ‘Forster is so concerned for his message [. . .] that he is prepared to break right out of the comic mode and address us directly in the most stern language known to him’.⁵ Equally, in another fascinating example of a desire to identify the liberal humanism of Forster’s fiction, W.W. Robson describes the author’s supposed moral didacticism as ‘firmly in the English tradition of novelists who teach us lessons [. . .] For all his tolerance, Forster fundamentally divides his characters into the saved and the damned [. . .] A Forster novel is a day of judgement’.⁶

I disagree with these positions and believe they highlight a significant area of misunderstanding in some modern critical readings. Forster’s work differs formally from Dickinson’s dialogues via the presence of a centrally controlling third-person voice. However, the function of this voice and its relation to both Forster’s authorial intention and any supposed philosophical ‘judgement’ is debatable. Thus, the nature of the narrative voice throughout Forster’s fiction forms the first part of this chapter.

⁵ Douglas Hewitt, *English Fiction of the Early Modern Period 1890-1940* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), p. 70.

⁶ W.W. Robson, *Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.93; 95.

The relation between author, narrator, character and reader forms an even more complex nexus of contending attempts at authority and dominance all carefully placed in dialogic relation to each other. Given my conclusion, outlined at the end of the previous chapter, of the imposition of world views via social institutions, the contending attempts at asserting authority via the narrator and his or her characters is of central importance. I wish to suggest in the second part of this chapter that in Forster's fiction a 'character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's world usually is [. . .] nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author's voice'.⁷ As Mikhail Bakhtin notes, the heteroglossia present within Dostoevsky's fiction is, I believe, equally present within Forster's work, albeit differently articulated. It is this dialogic function and the political relation of the world views of characters and narrator that I believe lie at the heart of a distinctly modernist liberalism at play throughout Forster's fiction.

II A Distant Narrator?

Whilst it is highly reductive of the complexities of Victorian narrative fiction to simply assert the dominance of a 'third-person narrator, detached, ironic, rendered cynical by what he knows about', nonetheless, it is true, as Catherine Belsey observes, that this was the dominant mode of narration within the 'classic realist' text of the mid to late nineteenth-century.⁸ Pericles Lewis notes that much modernist fiction sought to interrogate this convention via a 'rethinking of the logic of realist narrative

⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The Heteroglot Novel', *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov*, (ed. & trans.) Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 89.

⁸ Catherine Belsey, from *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980), cited in *The Victorian Novel*, ed. Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 130. Belsey's analysis of *Bleak House*, for example, however, claims that Dickens, like George Eliot (who she also explores in this chapter) sought to question and undermine the limits of third-person narrative forms throughout his work, particular via

forms'.⁹ The undermining of the third-person narrative voice lies at the heart of all Forster's novels and the majority of his shorter fiction. The heteroglossia of the voices contending to invade the narrator's voice that I shall explore in the second part of this chapter are only capable of doing so, of course, if the presence of this third-person narrative voice is first asserted and then subtly undermined. However, Daniel R. Schwarz, so astute in many of his judgements about the modernist novel, misreads Forster's narrative method when he claims that 'the speaker [of this third-person narrative voice] is a thinly disguised version of the writer's actual self who is actively seeking moral and aesthetic values'.¹⁰ I would question this view and believe the third-person narrative voice, whilst perhaps seeking to assert 'moral and aesthetic values' is markedly not Forster's own voice. This voice is, moreover, so systematically undermined by Forster's narrative practice as to be rendered merely one amongst the numerous contending voices of Forster's heteroglossia. Jo M. Turk claims that the reader of Forster's novels 'seldom [has . . .] to work at forming his own opinions'.¹¹ Stuart Sillars is, in my view, better attuned to Forster's method when he suggests that *Howards End*, for example, engages with and seeks to undermine its relationship with nineteenth-century narrative practice. I am so persuaded by Sillars's excellent reading of the novel that I will only briefly deal with it in this chapter to further exemplify the nature of Sillars's findings.¹² I believe that what he finds in

the temporal absence of omniscience of a detached third-person narrator's experience of events, similar to the reader and juxtaposed in his knowledge to that of Esther Summerson, the novel's other narrator. Thus to assert the simple truism of third-person omniscience being an unquestioned convention of nineteenth-century realist fiction is, of course, incorrect.

⁹ Pericles Lewis, 'The Conscience of the Race: The Nation as Church of the Modern Age', *Joyce Through the Ages: A Non-Linear View*, ed. Michael Patrick Gillespie (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1999), p. 94.

¹⁰ Daniel R. Schwarz, *The Transformation of the English Novel, 1890-1930* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 14.

¹¹ Jo M. Turk, 'The Evolution of E.M. Forster's Narrator', *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 5, 1973, p. 430.

¹² Stuart Sillars in *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing, 1910-1920* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999) dedicates a chapter of his book to the study of structure and dissolution in *Howards End*. I largely agree with Sillars's analysis but it is limited to the work of only one of Forster's novels. Given

Howards End is equally the case for much of the pre-1910 fiction and, furthermore, is so marked a facet of those works written after *Howards End* as to cause a reappraisal of Forster's fiction and its experimentation. Sillars's central thesis is that in *Howards End*, Forster is able to 'both continue and reject the mechanisms of the late-Victorian psychological-realist novel; and, paradoxically, his success at combining the two levels has led to the failure of many readers to grasp the novel's fundamental oppositions'.¹³ Whilst I am persuaded by the direction of Sillars's thought, I believe that this dual nature to Forster's prose begins with Forster's first fiction and develops over his career, the subject of both this chapter and the next. Indeed, in charting the genealogy of modernist narrative experimentation I suggest that a text like Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), whilst more overtly experimental in its 'total reversal of conventional narrative', shares many of the concerns of Forster's fiction.¹⁴

Evidently, Forster's third-person narrator is certain in their claims, an authority present from the first published novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. One need only examine the claims of 'truth' and narrative certainty at play within the text and its treatment of Italy, in a passage arising directly out of *The Lucy Novels*, Forster's first attempt at writing a novel:

There one may enjoy that exquisite luxury, socialism – that true socialism which is based not on equality of income or character, but on equality of manners. (*WAFTT*, 95)

the temporal scope of his book, Sillars's analysis would exclude all of Forster's fiction except *Howards End* and *Maurice* the latter of which Sillars does not discuss. I have, therefore, placed less emphasis on *Howards End* in this chapter in deference to Sillars's excellent analysis of the novel.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 32.

¹⁴ Lee Anna Maynard, *Beautiful Boredom: Idleness and Feminine Self-Realization in the Victorian Novel* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2009), p. 149.

This an example of an omniscient statement from the narrator with not only the assertion of that which is ‘true’ in the ‘true socialism’ but with the direct statement that this ‘socialism’ is marked not by anything so distasteful as ‘income’ or ‘character’ but rather by that most English of characteristics, ‘manners’. Jo. M Turk claims that this narratorial statement is Forster’s own opinion. I have already charted some facets of Dickinson’s influence on Forster as a self-avowed ‘kind of academic Socialist’ whose appeal to Liberalism from the left was a key facet of his interventionist contribution to New Liberal ideology.¹⁵ Similarly, Edward Carpenter, who Tony Brown is keen to identify as a key influence on Forster’s work, was a long-term proponent of a particular form of homoerotic socialism that Sheila Rowbotham describes in her recent biography of Carpenter.¹⁶ Given the lasting and well charted nature of these influences, this critique of socialism as an ‘exquisite luxury’ would seem unlikely to be Forster’s. Rather, it is that of a prim English narratorial persona that he adopts. He does so, I suggest, to undermine the tradition of omniscient narrator that the 1905 reader would have been familiar with. This is hardly a new tactic; those who comment on Forster’s similarity to Jane Austen, such as Martial Rose, might well recognise the similarly ‘brightly ironic voice’ that his ostensibly omniscient narrator employs.¹⁷ The apparent certainty of this omniscient narrative voice is also evident in assertions about characters, such as in this judgement of Lillia Herriton:

¹⁵ Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *The Autobiography of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (ed.) Dennis Proctor (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co, 1973), p. 144.

¹⁶ cf. Tony Brown’s ‘Edward Carpenter, Forster and the Evolution of *A Room with a View*’, *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, vol. 30, no. 3, (1987) for a fine example of the charting of Carpenter’s influence on Forster’s fiction; Sheila Rowbotham expertly charts the evolution of Carpenter’s socialism in *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), p. 86.

¹⁷ Rose, *Literature in Perspective: E.M. Forster*, pp. 24-25; Emily Auerbach, *Searching for Jane Austen* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 167.

[. . .] people naturally found difficulty in getting on with a lady who could not learn their language (*WAFTT*, 55)

It is this subtle interplay between narrative conventionality (such as in this character judgement, and its ironic overstatement - especially in the subtle use of the word 'naturally' - in the example above) that lies at the heart of Forster's manipulation of the third-person narrative voice.

Alongside this high formality of tone, marked from Forster's earliest published novel, a further undermining of this narrative position is also present in the concurrent existence of a highly conversational, personal narrative voice. On the arrival of Caroline Abbott, the early description of Monteriano is so conversational in its assertion of familiarity between reader and narrator as to greatly undermine the mock pomposity of the omniscient voice encountered above. In the narrator's description of the Caffè Garibaldi when viewing Gino Carella, the narrator states that he 'had addressed letters – who writes at home? – from the Caffè Garibaldi' (*WAFTT*, 87). This inability to know the characters and their motivations subtly raises questions concerning the authority of the narrator and, importantly, of their tenuous relation to the author. Moreover, the highly conversational description of the Caffè is telling:

There were no letters and of course they sat down at the Caffè Garibaldi, by the Collegiate Church – quite a good caffè that for so small a city. (*WAFTT*, 56)

The questioning ‘who writes from home?’ and the statement ‘quite a good *caffè* that for so small a city’ inject a conversational tone that is clearly at odds with and that undermines the mock formality of the ostensibly distant omniscient narrator. Furthermore, the reliability of the narrator’s grasp of the facts, previously so confidently asserted, is undermined in this first published novel via the description of the Collegiate Church of Santa Deodata:

But for the inside Giotto was summoned to decorate the walls of the nave. Giotto came – that is to say that he did not come, German research having decisively proved – but at all events the nave is covered in frescoes.
(*WAFIT*, 94)

The function of the third-person omniscient narrator, once asserted, has, to an extent, to be trusted. However, Forster wilfully problematises the reliability of narrative fact so as to draw attention to the fictive nature of the entire text and the mechanics of its fictionality. The struggle to assert narrative fact is recognised as a facet of experimental modernism in the work of Forster’s contemporaries, for example Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* which has been read as a ““realist” reworking of modern reality’.¹⁸ It is precisely the interplay between ‘fact and fiction’ so interestingly examined by Hayden White that Forster is concerned with. In this early questioning of ‘how to represent reality realistically’ via a dubious narrative assertion of supposed fictional fact whilst simultaneously bringing into question this authority, Forster might not, as White claims of modernism, be ‘simply abandoning the ground on

¹⁸ Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 24.

which realism is construed in terms of an opposition between fact and fiction'.¹⁹

However, in undermining the certainty of his narrator's statements and subtly making the reader aware of the differences between his personal sympathies and those of the narrative voice, he makes us aware that this ground 'between fact and fiction' is unstable.²⁰

This undermining of the third-person narrator's claims to narrative certainty is continued apace with a new tactic made clear from the opening of Forster's next novel, *The Longest Journey*. As in *A Room with a View*, the novel commences with dialogue, with only assertions of apparent omniscient statements of fact suffixed to Ansell's and his interlocutors' comments to allow the reader to assume the comforting presence of the familiar third-person voice such as 'said Ansell, lighting a match and holding it out over the carpet' (*TLJ*, 3). Indeed, the novel continues its first page with few discourse markers of attribution on the utterances of the various characters as their opening discussion centres on the contested presence or otherwise of a cow. Forster apes an undergraduate discussion of analytical philosophy here, which W.C. Lubenow sees as 'The pre-occupation with the Real [that] allowed the pursuit of transcendental truth with the confidence that detailed and even technical studies could produce certain knowledge'.²¹ This pre-occupation, he argues, characterises the Society of Apostles, where Forster discussed philosophy on the customary hearth rug or 'carpet' of his own and others' rooms in Cambridge.²² The nature of the discussion is pertinent – one might assume, on the basis of the sparse comments appended to the

¹⁹ Hayden White, *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 66-7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820-1914*, p. 41.

²² The similarity between the opening of *TLJ* and Forster's own experiences is noted by Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 77.

character's utterances, that the reader's mediator of the 'real' within the novel would be the third-person narrator. However, the first major information provided by the narrator is tellingly ambivalent:

It was philosophy. They were discussing the existence of objects. Do they exist only when there is someone to look at them? Or have they a real existence of their own? It is all very interesting but at the same time difficult. Hence the cow. She made things easier. (*TLJ*, 3)

The conversational tone and absent-minded dismissiveness of 'it is all very interesting' might well later be recognised as Rickie Elliot's but at this moment is tellingly not so easily identifiable. It might be the patronising observation of an ironic narrator looking down upon his own characters in their undergraduate pretension or, indeed, the amused detachment of a confused character. The experience of the Apostles, however, seems distant from Forster's experience, undermining claims of the equivalence of Forster's beliefs with the narrator's perspectives and making questionable claims of Forster's didacticism. Moreover, if a character has invaded the narrative voice prior to any established utterance by the narrator, this is a more radical undermining of narrative authority.

The ludic, self-revelatory irony of the narrative voice is even more present as *The Longest Journey* progresses when, in the opening sentences of Chapter 11, we are introduced to Cadover:

Cadover was not a large house. But it is the largest house with which this story has dealings, and must always be thought of with a certain respect. (*TLJ*, 96)

The self-conscious identification of ‘this story’ and its ‘dealings’ makes the paternalism of the order that Cadover must ‘always be thought of with a certain respect’ all the more playful. In the midst of puncturing the reader’s suspension of disbelief, Forster is keen to assert narrative authority. The mock seriousness of the narrator’s tone is made all the more contingent by its close juxtaposition with further jocundity – we learn within the same paragraph that ‘The lawn ended in a ha-ha (“Ha! ha! who shall regard it?”)’ – and then by the straightforward denial of the omniscience and authority so recently asserted, during the first description of the symbolically central Cadover Rings:

A bank of grass enclosed a ring of turnips, which enclosed a second bank of grass, which enclosed more turnips, and in the middle of the pattern grew one small tree. British? Roman? Saxon? Danish? The competent reader will decide. (*TLJ*, 97)

The very fact that ‘the competent reader’ is left to decide upon the provenance of the tree at the centre of the rings not only reveals the textual nature of the narrative but is a self-conscious ploy on Forster’s part to undermine the narrative authority of his narrator and to place distance between him and the author, leaving the reader to question the boundaries between narrator, reader and the establishment of narrative fact. The purpose of this section is, of course, comic. In this sense it is also deliberately tonally incongruous, being so close to Rickie Elliot’s moment of

epiphany. It is also pertinent. The competent observer of the scene within the diegesis could decide the provenance of the rings but not a *reader* of the text. Forster thus deliberately makes us aware of the act of reading and the function of mimesis. One might also interpret this narrative utterance as a particularly revealing trope of the uncertainty of the central figure within these rings: the absence of certainty at the centre seems to have a particular pertinence to Forster's wider-reaching exploration of the absence of ontological certainty.

This interpretative dilemma is problematised further with yet more ironic denial of authorial responsibility for the creation of the fictional work: 'Perhaps the Comic Muse, to whom so much is now attributed, had caused the estate to be left to Mr. Failing' (*TLJ*, 97). By this point, the play of assertion and denial of narrative certainty is enough to make the reader thoroughly aware of the fact that any attribution of responsibility for Mr. Failing's inheritance – indeed, for Mr. Failing – lies firmly in Forster's hands rather than those of the Comic Muse. Such undermining of the reader's faith concerning narrative authority makes the later assertions of supposed fact – such as, for example, the assertion that 'the fibres of England unite in Wiltshire' (*TLJ*, 126) – seem all the more questionably didactic since the fictive nature of the text is increasingly an ever-present concern of the attentive reader.

A Room with a View expands the means of undermining pre-existent narrative practice through its use of chapter headings. Whilst often predictive of future narrative events within the chapter, the character headings have their precedent in the style of the eighteenth century novels as John Skinner notes in his study of Fielding's *Amelia*, as shown in Chapter Seventeen's 'Lying to Cecil' where Lucy Honeychurch

is shown to do exactly this.²³ However, whilst employing a traditional structural device, Forster is also sure to undermine it. Chapter Four, for example, is entitled ‘Fourth Chapter’, and this again draws the reader’s attention to its status as writing and alerts us to the literary contrivance of authorial control by virtue of its inconsistent application. Indeed, this revelation of authorial presence behind the façade of realism goes further in Chapter Seventeen where the pivotal rejection of Cecil Vyse by Lucy Honeychurch occurs. A heated exchange takes place between the couple:

‘What do you mean by a new voice?’ she asked, seized with uncontrollable anger.

‘I mean that a new person seems to be speaking through you,’ said he.

(*ARWAV*, 185)

At one level, as I shall examine in Chapter Four, Vyse here detects the presence of George Emerson as this ‘new voice’, which turns Lucy’s affections from Vyse and towards a new suitor. I will also go on to suggest that this is not the most pervasive influence on Lucy and perhaps one might more accurately read the presence of this ‘new voice’ as Mr. Emerson’s rather than his son’s. Moreover, the narratorial playfulness has been sufficient at this point to suggest another reading that Forster’s later fiction at least partially bears out. The reader’s suspension of disbelief is compromised sufficiently that Vyse’s statement of the presence of a ‘new voice’ underlying that of Lucy Honeychurch might well be that of the author whose presence Forster is careful to alert the reader to throughout the novel.

²³ John Skinner, *An Introduction to Eighteenth Century Fiction: Raising the Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 123.

A Room with a View, whilst published in 1908, was – as noted above – the product of much earlier genesis, during the period directly after Forster’s graduation from Cambridge. It was during the period after *The Longest Journey*’s publication and during revision of *A Room with a View* that Forster returned also to his earlier shorter fiction, again revealing his developing narrative concerns.²⁴ From as early as ‘the first story I ever wrote’ (1947 introduction to *CSS*, 5), ‘The Story of a Panic’, Forster was problematising the reliability of the narrator, the first-person narrator of the story asserting that:

‘I am a plain man with no pretensions of literary style [. . .] I do flatter myself that I can tell a story without exaggerating, and I have therefore decided to give an unbiased account of [. . .] extraordinary events’ (*CSS*, 9)

That this earliest composed short story should wish to question ‘literary style’ and systematically seek to question the possibility of an ‘unbiased account’ strikes at the heart of a continuing concern of the shorter fiction.

‘The Curate’s Friend’ is just as self-reflexive in its final assertion by another first-person narrator that ‘I have been forced to use the unworthy medium of a narrative to delude you by declaring that this is a short story’ (*CSS*, 94). Forster’s work might be recognised as heading in the same direction as that of Woolf, Conrad and Eliot in that, as Tony E. Jackson notes, it shows ‘the act of discovering the nature

²⁴ cf. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p 74.

and meaning of realism' in the revelation of its problems, something that Jackson notes is 'the constituting of modernism'.²⁵

'The Point of It' further questions the reliability of the third-person narrator via a device that would be even more tellingly deployed in *A Passage to India* many years later. The text reveals, at the end of Part II, the presence of 'An unknown voice [who] said, "Shocking, Mr. Adam, shocking [. . .]"' (CSS, 156). The 'unknown voice' appears unknown to the narrator, questioning the relation of the narrator – ordinarily supposed to be the voice of the author – to the characters of the fictional world, clearly undermining the authority of the former and deconstructing their proximity to the intention of the author in a fashion self-consciously contrived to problematise conventional narrative practice.

A Room with a View's revelation of the historical conventions of narrative is clearly further extended within *Howards End* via self-conscious ironising of the emerging mass-market romance as a distinct literary genre and the ironic reversal of the places of fact and fiction through the narrator's voice. This undermining of the third-person narrator's voice is once more only achieved after its authority is asserted in a highly conversational fashion such as in Chapter XI:

To follow it [a discussion] is unnecessary. It is rather a moment when the commentator should step forward. Ought the Wilcoxes to have offered their home to Margaret? I think not. The appeal was too flimsy. (HE, 107)

²⁵ Tony E. Jackson, *The Subject of Modernism: Narrative Alterations in the Fiction of Eliot, Conrad, Woolf and Joyce* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 14.

The narrator's authoritative assertion 'I think not' is, however, even at the moment of its assertion, undermined by the self-conscious revelation of the construction of the plot and the belief that 'It is rather a moment when the commentator should step forward' – the fact that the narrator reveals to the reader what a narrator 'should' do reveals the very action of narrating, again undermining the realism of the fictive world quite deliberately. This concern is further revealed in the narrator's proselytising on the relation of fiction to reality:

Actual life is full of false clues and signposts that lead nowhere. With infinite effort we nerve ourselves for a crisis that never comes. (*HE*, 115)

The mention of 'Actual life' here is enough to make the reader again question the relation of this 'life' to the mimetic with the narrator stating the apparently plain facts about the 'actual life' of the text but making the reader highly aware that they are far from actual life. This is made all the more self-conscious a comparison on Forster's part when later in the paragraph life is seen as 'a romance'. Fiction effectively becomes 'actual life' and reality 'a romance', ironically reversing the relation between the two and making the reader highly aware of the fictive nature of the text. Indeed, this undermining is so complete that Forster's ironic narrator stops whilst the plot is in full flow to conduct a discourse on the nature of the modern novel:

The earth as an artistic cult has had its day, and the literature of the near future will probably ignore the country and seek inspiration from the town. One can understand the reaction. Of Pan and the elemental forces the public has heard a little too much – they seem Victorian while London is Georgian. (*HE*, 116)

The writer of 'The Story of a Panic' and *The Longest Journey* is not repudiating his own Panic instincts within this statement but rather – in a tendency elucidated more fully below and in the next chapter – is self-consciously ironising his own fiction via an internal critique of it that the knowing reader recognises. Forster's work here is highly self-referential and once more this points to the ironic direction of his narrative voice. In 'The Story of a Panic' Forster writes his own story of 'Pan and the elemental forces', and moreover, in another turn of self-reference, Rickie Elliot, the unsuccessful writer of his last novel, *The Longest Journey*, is another writer of Panic literature within a novel that could hardly be said to 'ignore the country' and yet is resolutely modern in its concerns. The relation of his Panic work to the 'Victorian' is telling in its knowing play with prior literary tradition, a self-deprecating but playful swipe at the author's own work. Furthermore, this narrative intervention and its meditation that 'London is Georgian' is a knowing nod on the part of the narrator in the direction of modernity, the novel written in 1910 self-consciously asserting its place as part of a new order being part of the new Georgian reign of George V. However, the rest of the narrative action, particularly the ending of the novel, does not seem to bear out this narrative claim. The image of fruition of the 'crop of hay' (*HE*, 332) to come at the end of *Howards End* despite the impending 'gloom', hints at least at some continuance of the influence of the pastoral. This critique of the changing locus of the modern novel is, furthermore, underlined not only by Forster's own novels – which seem to contradict this authorial statement – but by his reading. His booklist shows that he had recently read not only Conrad's London based *The Secret*

Agent but Hardy's *The Woodlanders* and *Return of the Native*.²⁶ If modernism is 'an art of disintegration' whose 'scene and cause [. . .] is the city', as Michael Long observes, then Leonard Bast would appear to be one other figure of the 'sub-tragic men' he identifies as representative of a depiction of the urban poor.²⁷ However, it seems likely that Forster ironically questions the dichotomy between supposedly modern urban novels and Victorian pastoral ones. In revealing this contradiction, he again raises the reader's awareness of the distance between the narrator's and his own stated opinions. The consideration of the fate of modern literature within a work of modern literature is a meta-fictional stance. Indeed, the choice of plotting and the construction of narrative are nowhere more clearly expressed than at the end of Chapter XIV during a description of an argument between Jacky and Leonard Bast:

Explanations were difficult at this stage, and Leonard was too silly – or, it is tempting to write, too sound a chap to attempt them [. . .] But do not be surprised if Leonard is shy whenever he meets you [. . .] (*HE*, 130-131)

The apparently omniscient narrator draws attention to the fact that it is 'tempting to write' another version of Leonard Bast, revealing the constructed nature of the fictive world, again, placed in stark relief by the later utterance that we should 'not be

²⁶ Forster's booklist for 10/12/07 shows the pattern of his reading at this period, encompassing considerable writing by modern authors, not only Conrad's *The Secret Agent* but *Youth* and *Heart of Darkness*, the latter judged by Forster to be 'supreme' c.f. The King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive EMF/13/12 – Booklist from April 1898- October 1909. Forster read *The Secret Agent* in December of 1907 after a publication date of 12th September 1907 (cf. p. xxxvii of *The Secret Agent* (*Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad*, ed. Bruce Harkness, & S.W. Reid (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990)). This perhaps demonstrates a knowledge of modern portrayals of the London of Comrade Ossipon and his fellow plotters that, whilst balanced by a reading of Hardy and a more pastorally oriented novel, demonstrates that this meditation on the state of the modern novel is an entirely knowing one.

²⁷ Michael Long, 'Eliot, Pound, Joyce: Unreal City?' in Edwards Timms and David Kelly (eds), *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 144.

surprised if Leonard is shy when he meets you'. The latter claim is ironic at two levels. Firstly, the notion that we should 'not be surprised' at Bast's actions ironically pre-supposes a shared understanding that the narrator does not have full control over Bast's actions, an especially contradictory stance when viewed from the perspective of Forster's last revelation, that the narrator wishes that he could 'write' him differently. Furthermore, the notion that the reader 'meets' Bast places reader and fictional character – again, entirely intentionally – on a shared plane of existence, supposedly independent of the world of the fiction and independent of the narrator's control. The narrator – an entity quite separate from Forster - either occupies the self-consciously contradictory status of both creator of Bast and powerless observer of him or claims to be merely the recorder of the 'real' Bast who occupies a similar reality to that of the reader, the narrator merely the chronicler of the real lives of characters we know to be palpably fictional. This tactic is similar to that noted by Brian McHale in Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* where the mixing of diegesis and extra-diegesis is a common facet of the post-modern text just as Patricia Waugh notes a similar device employed throughout John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.²⁸ Forster's undermining of the traditions of realistic narration are complex and as self-conscious, as Galya Diment notes, as Molly Bloom's cries to 'Jamesy' in *Ulysses*, albeit more subtly articulated in their shared undermining of the traditional relationships of reader, character, narrator and author, based as they are on a deconstruction of suspension of disbelief.²⁹

²⁸ C.f. Brian McHale, *Constructing Postmodernism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992) pp. 154-7 for a discussion of *At Swim Two Birds*; Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London & New York: Routledge, 1984;1996), p. 33 conducts a similar investigation of the relation of character to narrator in Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; in Monica Fludernik's *An Introduction to Narratology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 100 she gives a concise account of the relation of diegesis to extra-diegesis and the experimental play between the two.

²⁹ Galya Diment, *The Autobiographical Novel of Co-Consciousness: Goncharov, Woolf and Joyce* (Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 41.

The meta-fictional direction of *Howards End* precipitated a crisis in Forster's writing that was catalysed by the constraints of his self-censorship of overtly homoerotic fiction. As he wrote in his diary of the period:

‘Desire for a book [. . .] no love making, at least not of the orthodox kind, or perhaps not even of the unorthodox. It would be tempting to make an intelligent man feel towards an intelligent man of the lower classes what I feel but I see the situation too clearly to use it’

(Forster's *Locked Journal*, *KCMA*, 15)

In the event, however, Forster did use it and, freed from the boundaries imposed by publication and censorship, he was able to be yet more experimental in his narrative. Upon the beginning of composition, he noted at the end of 1913 that ‘Maurice born on Sept 13th [. . .] But will he ever be happy. [sic] He has become an independent existence – Greenwood feels the same.’³⁰ This notion, clearly related to Forster's published questioning of the dependence of fictional characters and their relation both to reality and to their creation, are further articulated in Forster's ‘Terminal Note’ to the posthumously published edition to his work:

I was determined that in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows and in this sense Maurice and Alec still roam the Greenwood. (*M*, 218)

³⁰ ‘The Locked Journal’ (*KCMA*, ref. EMF/12/8).

Although this is akin to the Shakespearean notion of a love embodied within the immortality of the literary work, the self-consciousness of *Maurice*'s narrative voice and the undermining of the conventions of realism are modernist in their direction. The recognition of Maurice Hall as a literary character is yet more overt than in *Howards End*. At the end of Chapter 4 of the novel, he is identified as resisting the literary role assigned to him by the narrative: 'hero though he was, he longed to be a little boy again' (*M*, 30). Several pages later, Chapman emerges from the fabric of the narrative to declare ' "This is just like a book [. . .] Eh, Hall?" ' (*M*, 34)

Following *A Room with a View*'s structural play with chapter headings, in *Maurice* conventional chapter lengths are self-consciously dramatically shortened during the central events of Chapters 22 and 23, where Maurice and Clive begin their affair, alongside a switch to an epistolary section. These tactics are all designed to further alert the reader to the fictionality of the text. Chapter 8 is even more self-revealingly fictive in its use of sub-heading to reveal another facet of Maurice Hall's developing distance from women, identifying before this part of the chapter as the 'Episode of Gladys Olcott'. The device is used nowhere else within this narrative or Forster's fiction and once again it is employed specifically to raise an awareness of the constructed nature of fiction.

Similarly, the re-casting of the kiss between Clive Durham and Maurice Hall at Cambridge is, despite the ostensible omniscience of the narrator, seen first in Chapter 11 and then in Chapter 12 from first Hall's and then Durham's perspectives, which are separated by the division between Parts 1 and 2 of the novel even though both deal with precisely the same narrative time. At one level this emphasises the

schism that the kiss creates between the two characters' world views, marking a brief physical dalliance with homosexuality for Durham and the affirmation of his dimly recognised identity for Hall. It is also a device designed to alert the reader once more to the fact that all such epiphanies are fabricated and, for all of the verisimilitude of the Cambridge locale, not to be confused with fact.

Indeed, this is so much so that the ending of the novel is so contingent that, whilst Forster struggled until 1959 with the nature of its closure, the finally published version is couched in deeply meta-fictional terms:

It was the closing of a book that would never be read again, and better close such a book than leave it lying about to get dirtied. The volume of their past must be restored to its shelf, and here was the place amidst the darkness. (*M*, 213)

The deployment of such a metaphor during the closure of the narrative is surely a self-conscious decision on the part of an author who was aware that he was writing for posthumous publication and hoping to articulate in fiction the possibility of happy resolution of an open same-sex partnership that could not occur in reality at this time. It is all the more striking given the writer's already stated desire to create in fiction that which cannot be actualised in life. The book is in a sense written in order to provide Forster with a means to create the 'closing of a book' on his life, with the sad realisation that it was unlikely he would be able to attain an open homosexual relationship in his own lifetime. Thus, as he admits in his 'Locked Journal', he wished to give Maurice Hall an 'independent existence' and that the 'Greenwood feels the

same'.³¹ This is precisely the stance that Gabriel Josipovici describes as fundamental to modernist art, the tendency to 'admit the reader into the imaginative world of the book and then bring him up sharply against the realisation that it is only a book and not the world', one of a number of tactics for revealing the constructed nature of the text that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.³²

Forster did, however, produce another novel after the commencement of his affair with Syed Ross Masood and subsequent travels to India. As Tariq Rahman notes, the partial resolution of Forster's concerns about the practical possibility of a homosexual relationship in his relationship with Masood form the basis for his production of the character of Dr. Aziz.³³

A Passage to India begins with perhaps more overt and parodic a display of omniscience than elsewhere within Forster's fiction. The opening lines state authoritatively that 'the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary' and that its inhabitants are 'like some low but indestructible form of life' (*API*, 3). The irony of the latter statement might be immediate in the light of our current knowledge about Forster's relationship with Masood but it has led to the accusations of Orientalism stated by both Brenda Silver and Sara Suleri in their critiques of the novel, an accusation based, I would contend, on a misunderstanding of Forster's narrative voice.³⁴ The extremity of Forster's ironically distant pseudo-omniscience, begun in

³¹ 'The Locked Journal' (*KCMA*, ref. EMF/12/8) entry for December 31st 1913.

³² Gabriel Josipovici, *The Lessons of Modernism and Other Essays* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977), p. 113.

³³ Tariq Rahman, *Maurice and The Longest Journey: A Study of E.M. Forster's Deviation from the Representation of Male Homosexuality in Literature* in J.H. Stape (ed.), *E.M. Forster: Critical Assessments vol. 4, The Modern Response* (Robertsbridge: Helm Information, 1998), p. 78.

³⁴ C.f. Brenda Silver, 'Periphrasis, Power, and Rape in Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (eds.), *A Passage to India*', *Rape and Representation* (Columbia University Press, 1991), pp.115-37; Sara

Chapter One, is extended at the beginning of Part II of the novel where the distance extends to a zoom-in from a survey of geological time, where ‘even they [the Himalayas] are altering’ (*API*, 109) during the course of the narrative. Furthermore, the scope of mock omniscient knowledge goes even beyond the physical and temporal to the metaphysical when, in the penultimate chapter, the narrator’s knowledge is so complete that he declares: ‘Hope existed despite fulfilment as it will be in heaven’ (*API*, 271). Quite apart from Forster’s well-known atheism, the assumption of a narrator’s celestial knowledge is surely ironic and self-consciously over-stated.³⁵ Suleri’s and Silver’s claims about Forster’s Orientalism are founded mainly on a supposed confluence of the narrator’s orientalist view of the punkah wallah of Chapter XXIV as possessing the ‘strength and beauty that sometimes come to flower in Indians of low birth’ (*API*, 192) with Forster’s equally well-noted preference for working-class Indian men.³⁶ There is no doubt that Silver’s and Suleri’s criticism is founded if one were to accept a correspondence of Forster’s voice with that of his narrator and certainly biographical information does lend this view some credence. However, I would question this correspondence and believe that Forster consistently attempts to undermine the omniscience of his narrative persona, whilst ironically over-stating it. This disjunction between authorial intention and narrative statement is central to my questioning of Silver’s and Suleri’s reading of Forster’s narration in the court scene. His undermining of the parodic omniscience of the narrator’s opinion goes beyond what I believe are ostentatious displays of seeming racist certainty. It extends to a survey of time and space that encompasses the formation of mountain ranges, an omniscience that goes well beyond the narrative time of the novel’s action.

Suleri, ‘Forster’s Imperial Erotic’ in Jeremy Tambling (ed.), *E. M. Forster* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1995), pp. 151-70.

³⁵ Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, pp. 162-3 gives a cogent account of the evolution of Forster’s atheism, making it unlikely that his conception of ‘heaven’ matched that of the narrator.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 192-3 examines Forster’s particular attraction to working class and lower caste Indian men.

Ruth Ronen comments, in reference to Alain Robbe-Grillet's manipulation of the temporal relation of diegetic to extra-diegetic realms, that the narrator who 'constructs temporal relationships in the narrative world' in a conventional narrative 'does not reveal these relations'.³⁷ Such extreme omniscience as commenting on the formation of mountain ranges is, in my view, a self-conscious attempt by Forster to make us question the omniscience of a narrative voice separate from his own by over-stating its knowledge. If not quite a post-modern revelation of the constructedness of the relationship between diegetic and extra-diegetic realms and the manufacturing of narrative temporal relationships, it is a move in this direction.

Forster, moreover, constructs this parodically hyper-omniscient voice in order to undermine it with the seeming independence of the characters from their narrator's knowledge or influence. There are further displays from Forster that the narrative voice is clearly *not* his and this aligns his practice with what Gabriel Josipovici claims is typical of the work of unquestionable practitioners of modernism such as Proust, Kafka and Joyce, an attempt to reveal that the words produced are 'artifacts and not to be confused with life itself'.³⁸ Both of these instances occur within sentences of major episodes of *Orientalism*, I believe, entirely deliberately.

The first occurs in Chapter III, moments after the meeting of Mrs. Moore and Dr. Aziz as Adela declares her Orientalist desire for 'capturing the moon in the Ganges' and wondering whether Indians see 'the other side of the moon' (*API*, 18) when they are addressed by another inhabitant of the colonial club:

³⁷ Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 217.

³⁸ Gabriel Josipovici, *The World and the Book: A Study of Modern Fiction* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1971), p. 191.

‘Come, India’s not as bad as all that,’ said a pleasant voice. ‘Other side of the earth, if you like, but we stick to the same old moon.’ Neither of them knew the speaker, nor did they ever see him again. He passed with his friendly word through red-brick pillars into the darkness. (*API*, 18)

The presence of the speaker and the narrator’s seeming lack of knowledge about his identity appears to place the character beyond the narrator’s control and the remark that they were never to ‘see him again’ enforces either the notion that the narrator reports a reality his earlier fiction seeks to systematically undermine or, more radically, there is an admission of the character’s autonomy to hold humanist notions symbolised in the shared ‘same old moon’ that seem much more noticeably akin to Forster’s own than racism. Indeed, the character might, in a highly meta-fictional stance, be interpreted as Forster appearing in his own novel but in a no more privileged position than any of his characters. The character’s autonomy from the narrator profoundly undermines an omniscience that at other points extends to knowledge of geological time.

This is not the sole mysterious voice of the novel. Moments after the description of the punkah wallah in Chapter XXIV which has, quite rightly, given rise to so much critical analysis, Mr. McBryde presents his prosecution, which is steeped in the degenerative discourses that I discuss in detail in Chapter Six. However, his claims that ‘the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer’ are interrupted when he is addressed by another mysterious voice:

‘Even when the lady is so uglier than the gentleman?’

The comment fell from nowhere, from the ceiling perhaps. It was the first interruption, and the magistrate felt bound to censure it. ‘Turn that man out,’ he said. One of the native policemen took hold of a man who had said nothing and turned him roughly out. (*API*, 194)

There is a significant clash here between narrative omniscience and ignorance. Whilst certain that the man blamed had ‘said nothing’, the narrator is open to the puzzled conjecture that it emanated ‘from the ceiling perhaps’. The voice is so entirely independent of the narrator’s control and so completely unexplained by the rest of the narrative as to again make the reader question the omniscient statements that surround it.

The disembodied, unknowable voices of Forster’s last novel repeat a tactic employed much earlier in Forster’s fictional development with the similarly disembodied voice of ‘The Point of It’. Both are facets of a consistent construction and undermining of the omniscient narrative voice that is central to an understanding of Forster’s narrative fiction and which occurs throughout it. My own analysis leaves open to question David Shusterman’s view that Forster ‘conceives the novelist as a disinterested puppeteer skilfully manipulating the creatures of his imagination’.³⁹ Such meta-fictional intent is, as Patricia Waugh states, used in order ‘instead of *reinforcing* our sense of a continuous reality, [. . .] to split it open, to expose the levels of illusion’.⁴⁰ Waugh makes this comment not about Forster’s work but about John Fowles’s *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, but Forster’s characters at this moment, at

³⁹ Shusterman, *The Quest for Certitude in E.M. Forster’s Fiction*, p. 62.

⁴⁰ Waugh, *Metafiction*, p. 33.

the height of his meta-fictional conjuring, undermine the conventions of the omniscient narrator and pave the way for Fowles' more protracted and systematic post-modern questioning. Just as Joyce's *Ulysses* hints at the post-modern within its modernism, this line of stylistic experimentation can be followed back to Forster's earliest fiction.

III Narrative Trespassing

Forster's employment of an omniscient narrative voice is a subtle construction of a narratorial persona whose claims of uncontested knowledge the author seeks to undermine throughout the course of his fiction. Jo M. Turk's claims that 'the reader of *A Room with a View* is lightly entertained, seldom having to work at forming his own interpretations', is an opinion I cannot agree with. Rather, I follow David Medalie in believing that the function of Forster's narrative art is more complex than Turk's view allows.⁴¹ This complexity, moreover, goes beyond the deconstruction of narrative authority revealed in the last section of this chapter and encompasses even more profound undermining of narrative omniscience.

The deconstruction of any attempts by Forster's narrator to express themselves 'didactically' or to 'impose the judgement of the author' is radically in line with Dickinson's maxim that the author should not dictate his own point of view in his meditation on 'Dialogue as a Literary Form'.⁴² The undermining of the narrative voice is a means of ironising 'the judgement of the author behind a screen of splendid

⁴¹ Jo M. Turk, 'The Evolution of E.M. Forster's Narrator', p. 440.

⁴² Dickinson, 'Dialogue as a Literary Form', p. 1;18.

rhetoric, or even of great poetry'.⁴³ The narrator's voice is, however, even more systematically undermined by the presence of other contending voices, vying for didactic dominance.

The emergence of contending dialogic discourses can be traced back to Forster's discussions whilst he was a member of the Society of Apostles and, in literary terms, most directly from Dickinson's modern political dialogues. In *Plato and his Dialogues*, Dickinson establishes his own understanding of the Platonic dialogue and, more particularly, of Socratic method within it:

He [Socrates] adopted the pose of a man who knew nothing and was always asking for information; that is the famous 'socratic irony'. In fact, his subject was to prick bubbles. He found everywhere, among the men who profess to teach, confusion, pretension and, at the bottom, ignorance. His method was to expose all of this by involving them in contradictions and then to depart professing his own ignorance was as deep as it was before.⁴⁴

Within Forster's fiction, the seemingly absent 'man who knew nothing' is perhaps both author and, moreover, the reader of the text, who the author seeks to 'involve in contradictions', leaving them with a sense of uncertainty by which he or she departs 'professing his own ignorance'.

Dickinson's means of articulating this method was a long-standing commitment to dialogic forms of expression. In his biography of Dickinson, Forster

⁴³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁴ Dickinson, Goldsworthy Lowes, *Plato and his Dialogues* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 35.

charts the evolution of his mentor's exploration of the form from 1887's 'Jacob's Ladder', a dramatically dialogic poem. However, the fruition of Dickinson's interest in the dialogic form came in the construction of his own modern dialogues. 1895's *A Modern Symposium* sees a drawing room discussion by various fictionalised contending voices of the emergent modern world. These include the figures of: the embattled Victorian Tory, Lord Cantilupe; the ironised Liberal Remenham; the socialist Allison; McCarthy, the anarchist; Wilson, the evolutionist and believer in degeneracy; Aubrey Coryat, the aesthete; and Vivian, the Ruskin-esque Victorian artist. Whilst each of these contending figures attempts to assert the primacy of their vision, their assertions are inter-negating so each becomes aware of the contingency of their own discourse and the reader is left with a sense of the contingency of each position and finds him or herself 'professing that his own ignorance was as deep as it had been before'. Brian May's understanding of Dickinson's philosophical method is astute in his identification that the dialogues set out to assert 'excessive and deliberate idealism' and absolutism on the part of the various interlocutors.⁴⁵ Via their dialogic presentation, May claims that Dickinson seeks 'to entertain the ideas [of the various participants in the dialogue] as fully as possible whilst at the same time guaranteeing that the ideal will not become the absolute'.⁴⁶

Dickinson's influence on Forster is marked. For an allegiance to this Apostolic idea, one need only look to Forster's Apostolic response to the question 'Do We Know?', discussed on February 21st 1914; Forster tellingly abstained, a clear refutation of the absolutism of any kind of knowledge that denies even a definite

⁴⁵ Brian May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist*, p. 26.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

answer.⁴⁷ King's College Cambridge's Modern Archive Centre, moreover, holds Forster's own annotated copy of *A Modern Symposium*, a 1937 reprinted edition of the text mentioned in no extant Forster scholarship but which perhaps demonstrates the enduring influence that Dickinson had over Forster long after. The annotation of the *dramatis personae* alone is revealing. Forster identifies the various subjects of the dialogue as having their models in real and contending figures of late Victorian intellectual and political life. Cantilupe is identified as Lord Salisbury, Remenham as Gladstone, Mendoza as Disraeli, Allison as Sidney Webb and McCarthy as Edward Carpenter to name only the political figures Forster identified in the work.⁴⁸ Equally, within the body of the text, there is an extensive set of notes appending comments on the First Reform Act and the Public Health acts, which demonstrates a clear understanding of the history of the legislation for socially interventionist politics discussed in the last chapter as 'forms of government, social distinctions, the distribution of wealth' (*GLD*, p. 85) that became a key facet of New Liberalism and which, as we have seen, Forster was well aware of.⁴⁹ Moreover, the interrogation of competing late Victorian ideas is at least one that Forster clearly understood as existing throughout Dickinson's work. In Chapter Four, I shall examine how, more than simply an influence, Dickinson's model of ideological contention and inter-negation is woven into the very fabric of Forster's fiction. However, before it is possible to do this, Forster's engagement with his differing mode of articulating these contending voices bears scrutiny.

⁴⁷ Minutes of the Society of Apostles, class mark KCAS/39/1, King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive Centre.

⁴⁸ Whilst not listed in the catalogue of the Forster archive in the King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive Centre, the archive holds in reserve copies of the texts found in Forster's personal library at the time of his death, now part of the college library's reserved collection. My thanks in particular go to Dr. Patricia McGuire, the college archivist, for making me aware of the presence of the text.

⁴⁹ C.f. pp. 20-21 of Forster's copy of *A Modern Symposium*, King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive and Library.

Forster recognised the difference between the novelist and the dramatist in his biography of Dickinson:

The dialogue form which he turned to [. . .] exactly suited his genius. It allowed him to assemble opinions and, so to speak, to tint them. The personages through whom he converses are never coloured vividly [. . .] they are quieter and paler than their equivalents in the world of fiction. He had not the novelist's eccentricity, which permits a sudden swerve from the main course. Whether such eccentricity makes a book more 'like life' is arguable: he with his generous admiration for method differing from his own, often praised it. (*GLD*, 108-9)

The differences between the 'novelist's eccentricity' and this rather more 'frigid' (*GLD*, 109) philosophical dialogue are indeed 'arguable' and the questions of realism and the politics of novelistic representation appear to have been a pressing concern to the novelist. Moreover, that they were 'arguable and that Dickinson often generously admired 'method differing from his own', the novelist's, strongly suggests that the matter had been one for debate between Forster and his fellow Apostle.

In a 1944 radio broadcast on 'The Art of Fiction' Forster commented on the inclusion of contending discourses and their relation to the narrative voice:

I believe that a novelist can shift his viewpoint if it comes off, and it came off with Dickens and Tolstoy. Indeed this power to expand and contract

perception (of which the shifting viewpoint is a symptom), this right to intermittent knowledge - I find it one of the great advantages of the novel form. (Appendix D, AN, 186)

The charting of the prior use of this technique by ‘Dickens and Tolstoy’ is key. Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston identifies a similar technique being employed in Zola’s *Germinal* when she notes that by ‘switching from descriptive discourse to free indirect speech’ the novelist creates ‘a hybrid mode of narration’.⁵⁰ I would not wish to stress that this function of free indirect discourse is a sole concern of the modernist movement, something that would be historically inaccurate. Robert Alter is an incisive analyst of modernist writers’ use of the literature of the past, particularly in the discovery of earlier self-reflexive literary works, observing that ‘though *Tristram Shandy* may have been eagerly rediscovered by the modernists (Virginia Woolf again bears witness in an essay on Sterne), they had not altogether forgotten *The Possessed* or *War and Peace*’.⁵¹ Forster’s conception of this literary inheritance is best expressed in *Aspects of the Novel* with his trope of the writers of the English literary canon ‘seated together in [. . .] a sort of British Museum reading room – all writing their novels simultaneously’ (AN, 27). It is in this work where his own conception of the novelist’s management of contending voices is best expressed when he states that the greatest power of the narrative artist is: ‘the power to bounce the reader [. . .] the novelist must bounce us; that is imperative’ (AN, 82). Monica Fludernik identifies this ‘shifting viewpoint’ as ‘the supposed “double voice” of free indirect discourse’ which she defines as a ‘lack of delimitation between the narrator’s and the characters’ language’

⁵⁰ Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston, *To Kill a Text: The Dialogic Function of Hugo, Dickens and Zola* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), p. 201.

⁵¹ Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), p. 144.

which ‘may serve a wide variety of idiosyncratic effects’.⁵² The particularly modernist direction of this term is characterised by Pericles Lewis in his claims that it is a central device in the ‘attempt to register the uncertainty and even haziness of the subjective experience of events [that] remained a central concern of modernist fiction’.⁵³ Roy Pascal is also keen to identify a particular modernist employment of this narrative strategy as the ‘modern trend’ in the conclusion to his work on its function in the nineteenth-century narrative, stating that in the modernist novel its function is more radical where ‘the narrator’s experience does not transcend that of the ‘hero’ [. . .] who has no more or deeper, often indeed less, knowledge than other characters’ and is an ‘inner contradiction’.⁵⁴ Dickinson saw the conditions of this modern age in apocalyptic terms: ‘The whole world is rocking under our feet [. . .] I speak here not chiefly of political shocks, but of what underlies them, the overturn of ideas. Everything is now being questioned’.⁵⁵ It is through the particularly shifting and contradictory function of Forster’s free indirect discourse that he sought to question numerous ideological positions throughout his work and to produce what Pascal more generally identifies as the ‘inner contradiction’ of work of the period. In Forster’s case, this is to ensure that the reader’s right to any form of knowledge is indeed only ever ‘intermittent’.

Forster’s short fiction provides some telling early examples of this narrative tactic. In ‘The Celestial Omnibus’ we see a clear conflict between differing perspectives vying for dominance of the narrative voice’s assertions of authority. The

⁵² Monica Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), p. 12.

⁵³ Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, p. 61.

⁵⁴ Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Discourse and its Functioning in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), p. 140.

⁵⁵ Dickinson, *Plato and his Dialogues*, p. 14.

unnamed 'boy' of the narrative is placed into dialogic relations with his tutor, Septimus Bons. The tutor's anagrammatic snobbishness about the worth of literature is compared to the boy's discovery of an ideal literary 'heaven' where Bons's proprietary claiming of a single meaning for texts is deferred in favour of a homoerotic world of possible meanings and the synchronic existence of a wide range of authors. This is similar to Forster's later trope of the British Museum reading room. To assert the immediacy of the boy's discovery of this fantastic world we are 'bounced' into his perspective about the 'cutting' on the side of his suburban dwelling '28 Buckingham Road' (CSS, 41) where this 'heaven' resides:

It was this cutting that had first stirred desires in the boy, desires for something just a little different, he knew not what, desires that would return whenever things were sunlit as they were this evening, running up and down inside him, up and down, up and down, till he could feel quite unusual all over [. . .] he slipped across the road towards the sign post and began to run up the blank alley (CSS, 42).

Whilst the pronouns maintain the mechanics of third-person narration here we seem to slip directly into the boy's contingent perspective of his newly realised identity which leads him down the 'blank passage' of his desires. The transformation into the boy's perspective is clearly marked by the repetition of 'up and down' in order to mark his wonder at the discovery of his entrance to a literary and homoerotic heaven in the blank alley at the end of the cutting. This diversion into the boy's perspective is a marker of the strength of his conversion, the queer feeling of being 'quite unusual all over' allowing the reader immediate access to his discovery of a potential new

world of literary feeling. His father being angered by the boy's account of this new world, Mr. Bons is sent for to attempt to instil his own process of aestheticising his desires by sublimation upon the boy but he, momentarily, is attracted by this contending discourse and Forster 'bounces' into Bons' perspective: 'We have all romanced a little in our time haven't we?' The narrative voice slides into Bons's musings here. However, the experience of "heaven" and Forster's skilful use of fantasy combine so, as the reader suspends their disbelief as to the fantastic nature of the boy's conception of homosexual identity, we realise that, however real or not it may be to our minds, it has become real for the boy. The reality is, of course, all the more instilled by virtue of the boy being able to assert his opinions through the supposed voice of authority, that of the narrator, allowing the boy to speak 'didactically' in Dickinson's terms.

If the workings of free indirect discourse are present within the shorter fiction, they are also a long-standing concern of Forster's novels. An early example occurs in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, marking a particularly striking structural tactic employed in the use of free indirect discourse. At moments of structural importance in the narrative action of the diegesis, where one might expect the omniscient control of the narrator to come to the fore, Forster instead allows various characters access to his voice. So it is in the pivotal early scene when Philip Herriton visits Monteriano for the first time with the intention of dissuading Lillia from marriage to Gino Carella only to learn that the marriage has already occurred. The situation is clearly envisaged as a clash of viewpoints upon which much of the ensuing narrative action depends. Herriton's voice is the first to intrude, asserting 'the remembrance of his intellectual supremacy' (*WAFIT*, 42) over Carella and his sister-in-law, an assumed 'supremacy'

that will be disproved by the end of the chapter but, expressed through the narrator's voice, might be mistaken for fact. In his ensuing discussion with his sister-in-law, his supremacy is moreover questioned by a contending incursion into the narrator's perspective with Lillia's expression that she 'adroitly picked out the only undesirable member of the Herriton clan' (*WAFTT*, 43). The adroitness of her counter-argument seemingly contradicts the supposed intellectual supremacy of her brother-in-law while equally employing the narrator's voice to articulate it, undermining an omniscience which Forster is sure to ironically over-state in his distant claim that 'Lillia turned on her gallant defender' (*WAFTT*, 44). This distant moral judgement, preferring the 'gallant defender', however ironically this preference is expressed, is contradicted by the incursion of the character's differing perspectives before it. Marlowe A. Miller suggests that this device is employed in order 'to provoke [. . .] discomfort and distrust to remind the reader that [. . .] in a world where so much is in chaos [. . .] there are no single answers'.⁵⁶ This leads us to distrust the assertions of a didactic narrator, a tactic Miller believes the author employs not to 'settle our anxiety', but rather as it 'provokes it'.⁵⁷ Herriton's perspective again invades the narrator's voice, claiming through it the 'supreme insolence' of Lillia Herriton. This claim is once more contradicted when Gino Carella joins the clamour of contending perspectives asserted through the narrator, when he claims that Lillia Herriton is a 'glorious creature' who he 'let go' (*WAFTT*, 45;46) before taking Phillip Herriton by the shoulders and throwing him on to the bed, a gesture that foreshadows their later homoerotic struggle at the novel's close. Tellingly, the end of the episode comes with the direct reported discourse rather than any narratorial intervention. This leaves the reader all the more confused by the contending perspectives expressed through the

⁵⁶ Marlowe A. Miller, *Masterpieces of British Modernism* (Wesport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), p. 57.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

narrative voice and, in Barthes' terms, produces a 'reversible' text where the reader has to construct their own account of the significance of the episode from the contending characters' accounts of it.⁵⁸

The use of free indirect speech is, equally, an illuminating aspect of Forster's construction of a modernist self-reflexive narrative throughout *A Room with a View*. This narrative perhaps extends the scope of the experimentation in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* by moving from contending perspectives on narrative events to encompass those relating to seemingly stable objects, questioning the stability of the diegetic world. The seeming omniscience of the narrator's voice is rapidly asserted at the opening of the first chapter in order to encourage the reader's developing comfort with it and their suspension of disbelief. This allows them to unproblematically immerse themselves in the reliable fictive reality of the Pension Bertolini and the narrator's ability to mediate it for them:

[. . .] a perfect torrent of information burst on them [Charlotte Bartlett and Lucy Honeychurch]. People told them what to see, when to see it, how to stop the electric trams, how to get rid of beggars, how much to give for a vellum blotter, how much the place would grow upon them. The Pension Bertolini had decided, almost enthusiastically, that they would do. (*ARWAV*, 41)

This direct narration of narrative 'fact', essential given the choice of a third-person narration, is asserted in the narrator's interventions, such as 'almost enthusiastically',

⁵⁸ C.f. Graham Allen, *Roland Barthes* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 89 for a discussion of Barthes' distinction between the readerly (*lisible*) and writerly (*scriptible*) texts as different orders of literary experience.

Forster asserting the presence of an urbane and detached observer of action external to his own concerns. However, even before the occurrence of Miss Bartlett's acceptance into the society of the Bertolini, the course of Forster's narrative subversion in the 'shift of viewpoint' has already commenced. During the initial interaction between Charlotte Bartlett and Mr. Emerson the narrative gives one such 'bounce' directly, without any prefatory attribution of her indirect discourse: 'Miss Bartlett, though skilled in the delicacies of conversation, was powerless in the face of the presence of brutality. It was impossible to snub anyone so gross' (ARWAV, 25). Forster directly shifts the ostensibly omniscient narration into the perspective of Charlotte Bartlett who becomes, from her own perspective at least, 'skilled in the delicacies of conversation', very much in line with the image of herself as 'a woman of the world' (ARWAV, 33) albeit that her negotiations over the exchange of rooms moments later are far from delicate. Indeed, in another, later 'bounce' from Lucy Honeychurch into the narrator's voice at the beginning of Chapter Fourteen, this 'woman of the world' is described in just the same authoritative tone as 'past foolishness' (ARWAV, 151). Forster's superficially omniscient comments are in fact the self-conscious revelation of her limited perspective, a sophisticated narrative technique by which he is able to construct a dialogic relationship between ostensibly omniscient modes of narration and his own self-reflexive narrative practice in the articulation of his central theme, the revelation of unconsciously contingent world views.

This interplay and 'bouncing' between seemingly omniscient narrative forms is a highly evident feature of Forster's narrative self-reflexivity throughout *A Room with a View*. Forster, however, develops the technique through a number of short narrative episodes in which various characters invade the narrator's voice, expressing

directly contradictory statements about seemingly stable objects. Forster draws the reader's attention subtly to these to cause confusion, once more destabilising their experience of the realism of the fictional world. One only needs to examine Chapter Eight's various descriptions of the drawing room at Windy Corner to see this narrative dialogism in action once more. The first account of the drawing room echoes the satire of the romance genre which I will explore in the next chapter, one of a contending play of genre types also in dialogue throughout Forster's fiction:

They were heavy curtains, reaching almost to the ground and the light that fell through them was subdued and varied. A poet - none was present - might have quoted 'Life, like a dome of many coloured glass', or might have compared the curtains to sluice gates, lowered against the intolerable tides of heaven. Without was poured a sea of radiance; within the glory, though visible, was tempered to the capacities of man. (*ARWAV*, 101)

The overtly romantic description of the drawing room and its surrounds is neatly summarised in the Shelley quotation from 'Adonais' and the satirically overstated figurative language which accompanies it. The full quotation from 'Adonais' is:

The one remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,

Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Die, if thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek.⁵⁹

This intertextual reference and its relation to the trampled ‘fragments’ is, I believe, an example of an overtly playful remotivation of the rather bleak nature of the source text for a hyperbolic and parodic romantic purpose. I discuss the nature of Forster’s intertextual practice in more detail in the next chapter but touch on it here to lend credence to the notion that this employment of an overstated romantic narrator might be interpreted as a form of ‘genre bounce’ where the regular narratorial persona is supplanted by another voice, akin to Eleanor Lavish’s pseudonym, Joseph Emory Prank of ‘Under a Loggia’ whose voice is heard later in *A Room with a View*.

One could go as far as seeing a ‘bounce’ within this section of narrative, with Forster’s narrator bouncing into the voice of the imagined poet in the last sentence of this quotation. The juxtaposition of ‘sluice gates’, a mundane and worldly comparison for curtains, and the ‘tides of heaven’ for sunlight marks the highly hyperbolic treatment of the drawing room description. Again, this parodic treatment of the romance genre is asserted by Forster as a self-reflexive narrative device to aid in his subversion of romantic closure at the end of the novel. However, the narratorially self-conscious treatment of the drawing room does not stop there. A further ‘bouncing’ occurs upon Cecil Vyse’s entry into the drawing room, directly contrasting the narrator’s description of it:

Then he lit another cigarette, which did not seem as divine as the first

⁵⁹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, ‘Adonais’, *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Canto 52 (Project Gutenberg e-text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4800/pg4800.txt>, accessed 20th April 2011).

and considered what might be done to make the Windy Corner drawing-room more distinctive. With the outlook it should have been a successful room but the trail of Tottenham Court Road was upon it (ARWAV, 108)

The 'bounce' into omniscient narration from Cecil's perspective is seen by the narrator's adoption of Vyse's diction. The description of a second cigarette 'which did not seem quite as divine as the first' mirrors Vyse's pose as an aesthete and is highly reminiscent of Lord Henry Wotton's claims in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that 'A cigarette is the perfect type of perfect pleasure, It is exquisite and it leaves one unsatisfied'.⁶⁰ The 'omniscient' narratorial statement which follows this hint of a shift in narrative viewpoint directly contradicts the earlier view of the room through which the 'tides of heaven' were 'filtered': 'the trail of Tottenham Court Road was upon it'. This contrast of the heavenly and the earthly adds another level to the evasive and often contradictory statements through which Forster is able to construct a heteroglossic self-conscious revelation of narrative contingency.

To compound this revelation further a third comment upon the drawing-room occurs; that of a detached, apparently omniscient narrator, free from the parodic romantic voice asserted at the start of the chapter, one who directly contrasts Cecil's perceptions which had been assimilated into the same narrator's voice only lines above: 'Cecil had considered the bone and the Maple's furniture separately; he did not realise that, taken together, they kindled the room into the life that he desired'

⁶⁰ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Ed. Peter Ackroyd, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1891:1985), p. 89.

(ARWAV, 109). The withdrawal from Vyse's perspective again causes a contradictory view of the drawing room as the unrecognised locus for Vyse's own contentment, one viewed by this narrative voice from afar in an apparently omniscient tone: 'he did not realise' neatly sums up the narrator's apparent control over narrative events. Thus, the drawing-room at Windy Corner, under the superficial narration of a single third-person narrative voice morphs from the 'filter' of the 'tides of heaven', an inspiration to poets, to an example of poor decorative tastes, affected by the 'trail of Tottenham Court Road', and then to being the unrecognised place of 'the life that [Cecil Vyse . . .] desired'. This heteroglossic clamouring of different and subtly dialogic perspectives again undermines the narrator's supposed omniscience. Forster perhaps reveals his own narrative technique in his appreciation of others, André Gide and Charles Dickens on this occasion:

Sometimes the author is omniscient: he explains everything, he stands back, "il juge ses personnages"; at other times his omniscience is partial; yet again he is dramatic and causes the story to be told through the diary of one of the other characters. (AN, 83)

He is quick to damn Gide with faint praise [*Les Faux-Monnayeurs* is amongst the most interesting of recent works, not the most vital' (AN, 82)] due to his highly self-conscious narrative technique, a self-reflexivity that Robert Alter skilfully explores in his assessment of the novel along with *Les Caves du Vatican*, highlighting a more profound self-reflexivity than I would claim Forster practices.⁶¹ Indeed, Forster's shifts of viewpoint are more subtle, less experimental yet there is much similarity to

⁶¹ C.f. Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*, pp. 159-179 for an account of the self-reflexive practice of Forster's acquaintance, Gide.

be found between the narrative techniques of the two writers: ‘the story [. . .] told through the diary of one of the other characters’ in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* can be compared to the epistolary occurrences of Chapter Eleven of *A Room with a View* in the exchange of letters between Charlotte Bartlett and Lucy Honeychurch, a further element of formal self-reflexivity discussed in the next chapter.

Forster is more self-consciously revealing of his sources in his presentation of a key moment of dialogism in *Howards End* where in Chapter XV the Schlegel sisters attend a ‘dinner party [that] was really an informal discussion club; there was a paper after it, read amid coffee cups and laughter in the drawing room’ (*HE*, 132). This dinner party ‘which was all ladies’ (*HE*, 132) appears to be a transposition of the hearth rug discussions of the Society of Apostles, equally represented in *The Longest Journey*, moving them to London amidst the bluestocking intelligentsia of that city. However, in both cases, the dialogic spirit of the discussions is a self-conscious recognition of Forster’s source material. The discussion paper at hand in this case:

had been ‘How ought I to dispose of my money?’ the reader professing to be a millionaire on the point of death, inclined to bequeath her fortune for the foundation of local art galleries. (*HE*, 132)

The nature of these discussions is profoundly similar in tenor to the Apostles’ own discussions, ranging from the overtly philosophical such as January 31 1903’s ‘Is annihilation retrospective?’ to the more initially frivolous like November 19 1904’s

‘Does absence make the heart grow fonder?’⁶² The contending voices of the various interlocutors all gain admission to the narrative voice expressing their various viewpoints dialogically:

What right had ‘Mr. Bast’ to profit? The National Gallery was good enough for the likes of him [. . .] Something had to be done for ‘Mr. Bast’: his conditions must be improved without impairing his independence; he must have a free library [. . .] his rent must be paid in such a way that he did not know it was being paid; it must be made worth his while to join the Territorials [. . .] he must be assigned a Twin Star. (*HE*, 132-3)

The nature of these discussions is strikingly similar to New Liberal debates concerning the notion that the poor should be ‘protected by government and social intervention’ as discussed in the previous chapter. It is, moreover, so similar to the workings of Dickinson’s Apostolic dialogues that Forster’s previous novel, *The Longest Journey* had been dedicated ‘Fratribus’, to the ‘brothers’ of that society whose ‘sisters’ the novelist mirrors here.⁶³

In Chapters 11 and 12 of *Maurice* Forster further develops his technique of allowing characters to invade the narrator’s voice and contradict each other through the medium of a supposedly omniscient voice. The notable splitting of Maurice Hall’s and Clive Durham’s contending perspectives on the development of their relationship are dealt with in more detail in the next chapter but it is worth observing that in the

⁶² Minutes of the Society of Apostles, *KCMA*, King’s College’s Modern Archives under class mark KCAS/39/1 (Apostles Minutes Books).

⁶³ Cornelia Navari, *Internationalism and the State in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 231.

approach to the kiss that brings their relationship into the physical realm each expresses the seeming reticence and conventionality of the other via the narrative voice. In Chapter 11 the narrator acts predominantly as a conduit for Hall's perspective. Clive Durham is described as so respectable that he holds another discussions society, of which Hall is also a member, as he 'wished to take his share of the hospitality. This was like him; he hated to be under an obligation to anyone' (*M*, 61). Though he is narrated as wishing to avoid Hall's company, since he is apparently repelled by the latter's attention, the narrative states that he does not wish to be so disreputable as to dodge his social obligations even if it meant meeting with Hall. This is contrasted by the directly contradictory statement in the next Chapter, largely mediating Durham's experiences of the event, that 'Hall was a healthy normal Englishman, who had never a glimmer of what was up' (*M*, 70). Both characters thus express their ignorance of the other's motives via the same medium.

Perhaps the apotheosis of this dialogic method comes in *A Passage to India* where the mix of contending discourses is at its most wide-ranging. Forster was clearly aware of this undermining of the narrative point of view and issues relating to the destabilising of mono-perspectival approaches to narration. His 1919 review of Clayton Hamilton's *Materials and Methods of Fiction* and Ernest A. Baker's *The History of the English Novel* is instructive in its irony:

Never again [. . .] will he get muddled over the Point of View. For it may be:

Class I – External

(i) Point of View of leading actor

(ii) Of subsidiary actor

(iii) Of different actors

(iv) Epistolary

Class II – Internal

(i) Omniscient

(ii) Limited

(iii) Rigidly restricted

But I retire from the roar and the clanking [of the supposed ‘machine’ of fiction this mechanistic structural approach heralds]. The poor dear novel! The poor, poor little thing! (‘The Fiction Factory’, *THP*, 193-4)

It is this mechanistic employment of a single narrative perspective that Forster wishes to undermine in the final novel published in his life-time. Part I of *A Passage to India*’s Chapter V sees a ‘bridge party’ in which all of the interlocutors in the novel’s ensuing drama participate except, notably, Professor Narayan Godbole, the Hindu who, it later transpires, is most comfortable with the negation of individual viewpoints and the void that follows. Within this early party, however, all of these viewpoints but Godbole’s receive their airing, each in turn invading and undermining the presence of the narrator’s omniscience. This ‘intermittent knowledge’ is asserted at the start of the party with a sweeping, but tellingly unknowing meditation on cosmology: ‘Beyond the sky must not there be something that overarches all skies, more impartial even than they?’ (*API*, 32) However, this is an impartiality and distant knowledge that Forster is sure not to allow the narrator. Ronny Heaslop is the first to invade the narrative voice with his assertion that ‘a viola was almost certainly a

demerit, and certainly not the sort of instrument one mentioned in public' (*API*, 32). The ironic shame of viola ownership is expressed during the narration of a description of the 'ignorance of the arts' in the English colonial community that begins omnisciently before the beginnings of incursions from a variety of perspectives. After a brief report of the direct discourse of Mrs. Lesley regarding a poor notice for the Colonial Club's performance of *Cousin Kate*, Forster then 'bounces' the character into the narrator's voice to express that 'The play was praised, to be sure, and so were the stage management' (*API*, 32). The employment of 'to be sure' is a discourse marker that indicates the conversationality of Mrs. Lesley whose reported speech we have heard in the previous section and is followed shortly afterwards by a further incursion of another of the Colonial Club members, 'the McBrydes' with whom Miss Derek, the target of the 'poor notice' has been staying. Within the same paragraph, this further 'bounce' expresses that Miss Derek is 'as hard as nails' a colloquial simile at odds with the mock formality and cosmic conjecture of the omniscient narrative persona quoted above. Moreover, the tart irony of the final statement of this paragraph is tellingly that of Mrs. McBryde: 'A nice impression of local hospitality she would carry away with her.' (*API*, 33). A similar colonial diction is present in the incursion of Mrs. Turton who also momentarily bounces in to inform us that she has 'learned the lingo but only to speak to her servants' (*API*, 34) and in the next page informs us of 'what nonsense it [the bridge party] all was from the start.' (*API*, 35).

However, it is not solely the colonial perspective that invades the narrative voice; Adela Quested's voice is similarly present in her perception of the collection of Indian women led by Mrs. Bhattacharya who 'shot out of the summer-house like exquisitely coloured swallows' (*API*, 36). This Orientalist perspective seems at odds

with that of the narrator of Chapter One who initially describes the Indian inhabitants of Chandrapore as ‘like some low but indestructible form of life’ (*API*, 3) and appears more like the naïve romanticism of the new arrival in India who, in Chapter Three, announces her desire for a vista where she hopes to catch ‘the moon in the Ganges’ (*API*, 18). This perspective seems more likely that of a young woman reproducing a British artistic orientalism of India such as ‘fantasized and fantastic prospects of the Indian east’ that Hermione de Almeida and George Gilpin believe originated in the British painter Tilly Kettle’s eighteenth-century depictions of the sub-continent for a British audience.⁶⁴ Furthermore, just after this Orientalist perspective, the Collector, Mr. Turton, surveys the bridge party and expresses his view of the motivation of the Indians for attending the party: ‘When they had not cheated, it was bhang, woman or worse and even the undesirables wanted to get something out of him’ (*API*, 36). His appraisal of his own actions, mediated again through the narrator’s voice as acting at the ‘proper moment’ and, by implication, producing a ‘proper’ and correct appraisal of the party, is counteracted in the same paragraph by the voice of Mahmoud Ali whose motivation is expressed as curiosity at seeing the inside of this ‘shrine’ of Englishness rather than wanting to ‘get something out’ of the English: ‘shrines are fascinating, especially when rarely open’ (*API*, 36).

I would agree with Peter Morey’s contention that ‘Forster recognized the dialogical nature of the colonial relationship [i.e. the desire of the English to seek an Indian dialogic complicity in the process of English hegemony] and looks for ways to release the dialogue from pre-determined channels in his novel. He finds a congenial option

⁶⁴ Hermione De Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2005), p.73.

[. . .] polyphony, the many voices circulating in the novel's structure'.⁶⁵ Indeed, Penelope Pether charts Dickinson's influence over the composition of Forster's novel, particularly, the basis 'of Mrs. Moore's character', especially, in the aftermath of Marabar, and her acceptance of the negation of contending voices.⁶⁶ Angela Hague identifies a similar influence at play in her analysis of the internal dialogue of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, noting 'a 1931 letter to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson about the novel' in which she discusses the presence of the contending voices at play throughout it.⁶⁷ That Dickinson's influence should be acknowledged by the author of 'a high modernist text, the culmination of [. . .] Woolf's experiment in lyric prose' is telling evidence of the wider influence of the philosopher on the evolution of modernist prose.⁶⁸ I believe that it is clear, moreover, that Dickinson's dialogic influence is present not just within *A Passage to India* but throughout the entirety of Forster's fiction.

As I shall discuss in Chapters Four to Six, this influence is one that engages with a dialogic method that embraces not only Forster's understanding of liberalism and the function of his narrative. Its influence can also be seen in the underpinning philosophical schema at play throughout his work, where the maxim might be to 'only connect' but which enacts the inherent problems in connections between discourses and instead charts their attempts to dominate each other. However, if Dickinson's influence upon the evolution of Forster's narrative voice is one evident facet of the

⁶⁵ Peter Morey, *Fictions of India: Narrative and Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 56.

⁶⁶ Penelope Pether, 'E.M. Forster's 'A Passage to India: A Passage to Patria?', *Sydney Studies in English*, vol. 17 (1991), p. 104.

⁶⁷ Angela Hague, *Fiction, Intuition and Creativity: Studies in Brontë, James, Woolf and Lessing*, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 263.

⁶⁸ Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 188.

novelist's modernism then the problems of connection are equally evident in a number of other stylistic pre-occupations that in the next chapter I wish to explore as key examples of how Forster's fiction was very much a part of what Tyrus Miller terms 'modernist fiction's disintegration of realist narrative'.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Tyrus Miller, 'Politics' in eds. David Bradshaw and Kevin J.H. Dettmar, *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 31.

CHAPTER THREE

ONTOLOGICAL CRISIS AND THE INTERROGATION OF MIMETIC REPRESENTATION

I **Modernism: a Matter of Form?**

Forster's dialogism is the central stylistic means of articulating a liberal method that permeates his fictional writing, underpinned by our appreciating the function of free indirect discourse and 'the bouncing narrative' (AN, p. 188). However, this element of his style is only one facet of a considerably more complex stylistic modernism and in this chapter I wish to examine the wider reaching formal concerns that I believe should lead us to more confidently establish Forster's place within the canon of modernist prose stylists.

The very nature of Forster's stylistic innovation has been a somewhat under-appreciated element of his work. Robert Langbaum claims that 'with time Forster's last novel, published in 1924, increasingly detaches itself from the rest of his work as incommensurably major'.¹ As I shall suggest throughout the course of this chapter, considerable stylistic developments occur between the 1901 drafts of *The Lucy Novels* and *A Passage to India* that perhaps illustrate the crowning stylistic experiment of the latter. I would propose, however, that the commonly held belief, articulated by Herbert N. Schneidau, that only *A Passage to India* seeks to address 'the presiding spirits of a [literary] world that has passed him by' is debatable.² David Medalie goes

¹ Robert Langbaum, *The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 127.

² Herbert N. Schneidau, *Waking Giants: The Presence of the Past in Modernism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 65.

further than many in his recent study of Forster's modernism but only Stuart Sillars's work on *Howards End*, in his more general survey of *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing, 1910-1920*, comes close to a true appreciation of the depth of Forster's stylistic innovation though we should note that the chronological period that Sillars chooses to examine again excludes a considerable amount of Forster's fiction.³

Astradur Eysteinnsson sees the identification of modernism as a formalist movement, a 'rage for order' that he terms 'a kind of aesthetic heroism', as only one amongst many possible understandings of modern literature. Nonetheless, it is true that formal innovation is often the benchmark by which many critics assert the status of a given work of fiction in relation to that most elusive of terms, modernism.⁴

Douglas Hewitt's assertion that modernist works are those which 'broke sharply with the conventions, both of technique and subject matter, of the past' and which are 'marked by disjunctions, fragmentariness, the denial of logic and the breaking of previously assumed patterns of response' is illustrative of a more general trend amongst commentators of modernism.⁵ Thankfully, Hewitt's claim that 'English fiction at this time [1890-1940] seems to be rather peripheral' has been increasingly challenged in the last two decades by a plethora of studies asserting that English modernism might be rather more complex and stylistically innovative than Hewitt supposes.⁶ However, few before Sillars have been keen to assert that Forster's fiction is able to 'both continue and reject the mechanisms of the late-Victorian psychological-realist novel' in a fashion that is distinctly modernist in its engagement

³ C.f. Sillars, *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing*, and Medalie, *E.M. Forster's Modernism* for the two most recent detailed appraisals of the function of Forster's style. Medalie's is the only recent study to range across the entirety of Forster's fiction whilst Sillars limits his highly insightful analysis to an appreciation of *Howards End*.

⁴ Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 9.

⁵ Hewitt, *English Fiction of the Early Modern Period 1890-1940*, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

with and undermining of the premises of nineteenth-century fiction.⁷ This lack of appreciation for Forster's stylistic innovation and its supposed inability to address what Gabriele Schwab terms 'the politics and aesthetics of representation' is all the more striking in contrast to the critical appraisal of some of his contemporaries.⁸ Joyce's engagement with what Daniel R. Schwarz terms 'different kinds of art [. . .] innovation in form and technique' is so complete that his work is viewed as having effected 'a change in the human character'.⁹ Equally, Woolf is viewed as a key figure in what Bradbury and McFarlane term 'the modern stylistic revolution'.¹⁰ Whilst I would not wish to go so far as to claim that *The Longest Journey* is stylistically comparable to *Ulysses* or *The Waves* – although, as I note in the last chapter, Woolf and Forster share influences in their understanding of dialogism - nonetheless, this chapter will suggest that an underlying shared engagement exists between Forster's fiction and that of Woolf and Joyce in that, as Gabriel Josipovici states, 'they all insisted on the *limitations* of art [. . .] they all stressed in their art itself, that what they were creating were artefacts and not to be confused with life'.¹¹ Forster's means of doing so, though certainly less overt than in the later works of Joyce or Woolf, have their roots well before 'December 1910' and exist in nascent form from the very beginning of his fictional development.

⁷ Sillars, *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing*, p. 32.

⁸ Gabriele Schwab, *Subjects without Selves: Transitional Texts in Modern Fiction*, (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 2.

⁹ Schwarz, *The Transformation of the English Novel, 1890-1930*, p. 18; Conrad, *Modern Times, Modern Places*, p. 15.

¹⁰ Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (eds.), *Modernism 1890-1930* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 25.

¹¹ Josipovici, *The World and the Book: A Study of Modern Fiction*, p. 191.

II Interrogating the ‘enormous note’.

Astradur Eysteinnsson believes that one of the defining characteristics of the modernist work of art is ‘the crisis of language and representation and the crisis of the subject’.¹² Peter Nicholls shares this conception of modernist art as having as one of its central pre-occupations the desire ‘to cast an intensive light on the arbitrary relation of signifier [. . .] to signified concept’.¹³ If, as Derrida claims, ‘all destructive discourses [...] must inhabit the structures that they demolish’ then I shall follow Medalie and May in claiming that Forster’s fictional works could certainly be labelled modernist in the sense that they seek to interrogate and reveal the process of signification for the reader as they are in the process of consuming language.¹⁴

Furthermore, I hope to engage with critical claims about the transitional nature of this modernism, as Malcolm Bradbury views it, in his statement that ‘Forster is not, in the conventional sense, a modernist, but rather a central figure of the transition into modernism [. . .] He stands at the beginning of the age of the new, speaking through it and against it’.¹⁵ Bradbury’s comments pertain to *A Passage to India*, a text many critics have appraised as being the only one amongst Forster’s fictional works to aspire to the term modernist.¹⁶

¹² Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 47.

¹³ Nicholls, *Modernisms*, p. 39.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) p. 194.

¹⁵ Malcolm Bradbury, ‘Two Passages to India: Forster as Victorian and Modern’, in Oliver Stallybrass (ed.), *Aspects of E.M. Forster* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), p. 125.

¹⁶ Take, for example, Gail Fincham’s claim in ‘Arches and Echoes: Framing Devices in *A Passage to India*’, *Pretexts*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Winter, 1990), p. 52 that ‘the novel may be read as figuring a modern insight – the move from an eidetic phenomenology (the belief that consciousness can intuit universal truth, that humankind is somehow prior to historical and social forces) to a hermeneutic acutely aware of the materiality of language as culturally constructed and institutionally produced’.

The debate about Forster's position amongst the main canon of modernist writers has been a long one. Lionel Trilling's famous 1944 work *E.M. Forster: A Study* was, as discussed in Chapter One, the first to assign Forster the position of a humanist. His comments are interesting as they pertain to the writer's humanism and its relation to a supposed attitude to language:

The very relaxation of his style, its colloquial unpretentiousness, is a mark of his acceptance of the human fact as we know it now. He is content with the human possibility and content with its limitations [. . .] not by becoming better, he says, but by ordering and distributing his native goodness can man live as befits him.¹⁷

Trilling's appraisal has become almost a given in criticism of the author's works. Frederick C. Crews is confident in his assertion that 'It is a commonly accepted and easily verifiable fact that E.M. Forster is a sceptical humanist both by temperament and by philosophical conviction'.¹⁸ Crews' work was published in 1959 but it represents a critical position that has been broadly unquestioned until, particularly, Brian May's and David Medalie's more thoroughgoing examinations of Forster. I hope that in the previous chapters and those that follow, I prove that perhaps more onus should be placed on Forster's scepticism than on his humanism, a term used all too lightly and inexactly when applied to his work. John Carroll claims that Victorian

¹⁷ Trilling, *E.M. Forster: A Study*, pp. 21-2. However, Trilling does, importantly, preface this assertion of Forster's humanism with some interesting and critically under-appreciated assertions about the contingent nature of Forster's liberalism, stating that whilst he 'has long been committed' (p. 14) to the project of 'progress, collectivism and humanitarianism' (p. 13) none the less, his liberal position is itself an ironised one with liberals often suspecting that 'Forster is not quite playing their game; they feel that he is challenging *them* as well as what they dislike' (p. 14)

¹⁸ Frederick C. Crews, 'The Longest Journey and the Perils of Humanism', *English Literary History*, vol. 26, (1959), p. 575.

liberal humanism is centred upon the notion of rationalism and civilization being central to progress: ‘The axiom on which the humanist rock was to be forged was put as well by Pico as by anyone: “We can become what we will.”’¹⁹ Commonly, such a position is supposed to be antithetical to modernism, which seeks to interrogate and undermine these apparent certainties. Peter Conrad provides a cogent example of this understanding of modernism in his theory that:

In humanist fables, language was the divine gift which singled man out [. . .] He alone can speak [. . .] the privilege signified man’s capacity for reason [. . .] Even when the religious pedigree faltered, language retained a civilizing mission: its elaborate, beautifully regulated artifice allowed men to domesticate the wilderness of rampant, anonymous objects. This pretension the early twentieth century set out to destroy.’²⁰

If one were to follow this formulation of what Eysteinnsson calls this ‘intolerably vague’ term then the suggestion that Forster is a humanist makes it difficult to see that he may belong to the modernist canon of writers.²¹

However, recent critical re-examination of modernism has seen a broadening of our understanding of the term. Peter Nicholls’s *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* traces the roots of modernist art back to Baudelaire and 1840s Paris whilst, along with other feminist critics, Lyn Pykett has attempted to broaden our understanding of the modernist canon to include homosexual and New Women writers of the late

¹⁹ John Carroll, *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture*, (London: Fontana, 1993), p. 3.

²⁰ Conrad, *Modern Times, Modern Places*, p. 111.

²¹ Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 1.

nineteenth century.²² This reappraisal of modernism has in turn led to some Forster critics becoming less reticent in applying the term to Forster. Brian May claims that Forster's characters could be described as modernist in 'their constructedness, their conditionality, their absence of any secure psychic or spiritual foundation in the self or God. That Forster more particularly belongs to the tradition of modernist apocalypticism, a tradition that includes T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, and others has been recognized just as rarely'.²³ I would like to object to the partial exclusion of Forster from the modernist canon on two counts. Firstly, because I believe it is an error to label Forster a liberal humanist; secondly, because I believe it can be shown that Forster's work uses a number of modernist techniques and, by doing so, destabilises earlier ideas about language.

N.J. Rengger's claims that humanism's central project is 'the emphasis on human ability to will what he or she might become'.²⁴ This is clearly only one facet of humanism but it seems hard to equate this facet with the examination presented above of Forster's conceptualisation of the workings of societal apparatuses upon the individual as a means to make them conform to the dominant world view.

Furthermore, if we look to Gabriel Josopovici's claims about the transition from liberal humanism to modernism then again, my reading of Forster questions his place solely as a liberal humanist rather than a modernist. Josopovici claims that 'the liberal

²² C.f. Chapter 1, 'The Ironies of the Modern' of Nicholls, *Modernisms* and Chapters 1 and 2 of Lyn Pykett's *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995).

²³ May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist*, p. 59. However, whilst I praise May's attempts to position Forster centrally within the canon of the 'grand old men' of modernism, I find the means by which he attempts to do so somewhat questionable. May's analysis centres on a parallel between Forster's irony and that of the 'liberal ironist' philosopher Richard Rorty, an analysis which to my mind does not properly acknowledge the sourcing of Forster's irony sufficiently within the liberal context of Lowes Dickinson and the Cambridge that he worked in.

²⁴ N.J.Rengger, *Retreat from the Modern: Humanism, Postmodernism and the Flight from Modernist Culture* (London: Bowerdean, 1996), p. 14.

humanist tradition has always tended to overvalue the cultural importance of books – that is, the value of books to society rather than to the individual [. . .] when we are prepared to rethink our notion of culture and books, then we will have learnt one of the fundamental lessons of modernism’.²⁵ Forster’s presentation of the function of culture within his works appears to demonstrate a rethinking of the nature of culture away from a valuing of books as a socially civilising force towards a notion of the text as a site of societal pressure and conflict, a notion that the text and language itself are imbued with value systems which masquerade as reality. J. Christie, a contemporary of Forster, wrote in *The Contemporary Review* in 1905 that humanism is a ‘devotion to the welfare and progress of humanity, that the aspirations which have hitherto been directed to the supernaturalist heaven, can find their only true fulfilment in that earthly paradise to which the secular progress of the world is tending’.²⁶ However, Forster’s portrayal of men of education and culture, examined in the next chapter, hardly indicates that he showed any such faith in what Christie terms ‘The Religion of Humanism’. Rather, in the figures presented throughout his fiction we see Forster ironising such assumptions about the ostensibly transparent claims for civilization and ‘the welfare and progress of humanity’. These assumptions, Forster’s novels suggest, are restrictive in their view of progress and seek to constrain any other progressive discourse that does not conform to the constraints of this single world view. Part of the reappraisal of Forster’s writing must come from an understanding that Forster’s statement that his works are those of ‘an individualist and a liberal’ are also those of a man who, in the very same essay, stated that ‘I realize that all society rests upon force’ and that he has ‘found liberalism crumbling beneath him’ (‘What I Believe’,

²⁵ Josipovici, *The Lessons of Modernism and Other Essays*, p. 116.

²⁶ R.Christie, ‘Humanism as a Religion’, *Contemporary Review*, vol. LXXXVIII, (November 1905) p. 683.

TCD, p. 78: 83). Forster is indeed an individualist, a man who believes in the forces of society working upon the individual in order to attempt to make them conform to a world view; but his individualism need not be interpreted as a humanism which sees this force as an inherently civilising and progressive one. In this sense he is not like N.J. Rengger who claims that 'Modernists have sought to 'save' the basis of humanism'.²⁷ Rather, Forster's individualism lies in a desire for recognition of the forces at work upon the individual, one not allied to the notion that the individual will thus be able to escape to some utopian world of humanist individual freedom, but to the idea that, whilst holding a world view, one may do so contingently, with recognition of the constructedness of its creation of a reality. Hence, Forster offers his opening phrases of an essay which has been so often used to categorise him: 'I do not believe in Belief. But in this Age of Faith [. . .] there are so many militant creeds that, in self-defence, one has to formulate a creed of one's own' ('What I Believe', *TCD*, 75).

If we view Forster's liberal humanism as at least self-conscious then Christopher Butler's claims about the nature of the modernist 'revolution of the word' are enlightening when examining Forster's place within the modernist canon. Butler claims that modernist artists can be characterized by 'a reaction against the social sanctions for the certainties of the nineteenth-century, in favour of the claim to autonomous forms of discourse for art [. . .] towards a willingness to find out what would happen if basic logical (syntactic), perspectival and representational (object-related) or implicative (tonal) conventions were not just modified but discarded'.²⁸ It

²⁷ Rengger, *Retreat from the Modern* (London: Bowerdean, 1996), p. 27.

²⁸ Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe 1900-1916*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 12.

is not my intention to claim that Forster's fiction enacts a complete discarding of the very notions of linguistic expression: it is immediately apparent that his questioning of the nature of linguistic expression bears little comparison to that of Gertrude Stein or Marinetti, for example. However, I wholeheartedly agree with Judith Scherer Herz's claims that 'Forster makes the process of choosing and testing language an enormous act of consequence [. . .] Forster is able to explore the language of his own fiction, making that language itself a crucial part of the novel's subject'.²⁹ While she makes these claims about his last novel, I believe that her statement is as true of Forster's early fiction as of *A Passage to India*. Modernism need not mean that language is reappraised in its entirety, as Butler has suggested; following Raymond Williams, I would suggest (more cautiously) that whilst modernism may have presented a belief that 'language was perceived quite differently. It was no longer, in the old sense, customary and naturalized'.³⁰ Nonetheless to present all modernist writings as utterly rejecting the referential function of language is reductively to yoke the writings of the period to a preconceived theory of the nature of modernist art.

I would contend that Forster's attitude to language can be seen as to some extent comparable to Nietzsche's claims about the language of modern writers. Nietzsche writes that 'the word becomes sovereign and leaps out of the sentence, the sentence reaches out and obscures the page, the page gains life at the expense of the whole – the whole is no longer the whole [. . .] The whole no longer possesses life at

²⁹ Judith Scherer Herz, 'Listening to Language' in John Beer (ed.), *A Passage to India: Essays in Interpretation*, (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1985), p. 59.

³⁰ Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, pp. 45-6. Williams goes on to warn the reader that 'the main stress is put on a common rejection of the representational character of language [. . .] there is not only an astonishing reduction of the diversity of actually antecedent writing practices and theories of language but a quite falsely implied identification of modernist and avant-garde writing [. . .] as based upon attitudes to language which can be theoretically generalised, or at least made analogous to what [. . .] are themselves offered as modernist and avant-garde linguistic and critical positions and methodologies' (66).

all: it is put together, calculated, artificial, an artefact'.³¹ Indeed, Nietzsche is self-consciously employed intertextually within Forster's fiction, as I will explore later in the chapter. In sympathy with Nietzsche, Forster's texts consistently examine the nature of the individual word, drawing the reader's attention to its problems of referentiality. Given that as eminent a critic as John Carey is confident in claiming that in understanding the elitism of the revolution of language 'we must start with Nietzsche' then the allegiance I hope to go on to demonstrate between Forster's attitudes to language and Nietzsche's presentation of the language of the modern artists makes Forster's place as a modernist a little more certain.³²

However, I wish to go further in defining the particular type of modernity Forster inhabits through the attitude to language he presented within his fiction. Peter Nicholls believes that 'the sense of the "fleeting" and the "contingent" is perhaps the definitive mark of the early grasp of the modern' and it is fair to assume that in Forster's case, (given that the majority of his fictional work was published prior to 1910) he could be assumed to represent an 'early grasp of the modern'.³³ The contingency which runs throughout so much of his work via his attitude to language has a particularly social aspect. Rather than simply presenting language as an aesthetic attitude that distances the work of art as an autonomous unit, Forster's fiction reveals internally what Raymond Williams later argued, namely that 'A general stress on the social character of language can be readily accepted, and it would seem that, in practice, language does operate as a form of social organization

³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Wagner Case*, (1885) in *A Nietzsche Reader*, (ed. & trans.) R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 143.

³² John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice amongst the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), p. 72.

³³ Nicholls, *Modernisms*, p. 6.

and that what it represents is an activity rather than a mere deposit'.³⁴ Forster's presentation of language in his work 'refers more precisely to the process whereby interests of a certain kind become masked, rationalized, naturalized, universalised, legitimated in the name of certain forms of political power' and attempts to unmask this form of power being exerted.³⁵ Forster's attitude to language is perhaps akin to that of semioticians, as outlined by Terence Hawkes, for whom every 'speech-act includes the transmission of messages through the 'language' of [. . .] social context [. . .] over and above, under and beneath, even at cross-purposes with what the words actually *say*'.³⁶

Forster, I believe, is the kind of modernist identified by Allon White. He provides one example of the 'relation of the artistic idiolects to the dominant bourgeois expectations, responses and judgements which became so complicated'.³⁷ As such, when appraising the nature of language within Forster's fiction we should pay heed to Bakhtin's comments upon the problems of approaching the language of fiction that 'the study of verbal art can and must overcome the divorce between an abstract 'formal approach and an equally abstract "ideological" approach'.³⁸

³⁴ Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 267.

³⁵ Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London & New York: Verso, 1991), p. 202.

³⁶ Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (London: Methuen & Co., 1977:1985), p. 125.

³⁷ Allon White, *The Uses of Obscurity: The Fiction of Early Modernism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 31.

³⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel' in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 259.

III Language and Contending Realities

‘The Machine Stops’ demonstrates how Forster’s conception of language is not a stable and passive vehicle but one which, in Patricia Waugh’s words ‘becomes a useful model for learning about the construction of “reality” itself’.³⁹ Vashti, the protagonist’s mother, learns of her son’s rebellion against the mechanistic machine which governs the thought and physical world of its constituent members and fails at the point of confrontation with this new world view to even comprehend the utterances presented by Kuno to her. When Kuno meets his mother after discovering a means of escaping the physical confines of the machine he says to his mother “‘I have found a way out of my own’” (CSS, 124). Her response is an enlightening one which helps us to understand how Forster conceptualises language as mediating and constructing our notions of reality. Vashti’s immediate response is one of total incomprehension: ‘The phrase conveyed no meaning to her, and he had to repeat it’ (CSS, 124). Upon repetition, her immediate judgement of the utterance is in terms of the values of the machine: “‘A way of your own?’” she whispered. “‘But that would be wrong?’”. The subsequent questioning of why such an utterance should be wrong causes another extreme reaction (‘She was shocked beyond measure’) and then on to a repeating of the tenets of the machine’s world view: “‘I am most advanced. I don’t think you irreligious, for there is no such thing as religion left. All fear and the superstition that once existed have been destroyed by the machine’” (CSS, 124). Furthermore, Forster demonstrates that Kuno’s change of world view to a humanist belief in the rational power of man without the machine necessitates a reconstitution

³⁹ Waugh, *Metafiction*, p. 3.

of his linguistic code. Forster presents Kuno's linguistic reconstruction upon a rediscovery of his physicality outside of the constraints of the machine, meaning he is forced into a change in his system of signification:

“I began walking up and down the platform of the railway outside my room. Up and down, until I was tired, and so did recapture the meaning of ‘Near’ and ‘Far’. ‘Near’ is the place I can get to on my feet ... ‘Far’ is a place to which I cannot get on my feet [. . .] Man’s feet are the measure for distance, his hands are the measure ownership, his body is the measure for all that is loveable and desirable and strong [. . .]” (CSS, 125)

We see in Kuno's construction of a humanist world view, the notion that he understands the world via the assertion of his human will. This necessitates a differing construction of language and, furthermore, his construction of the humanist world view occurs through the process of his linguistic articulation of it. He believes in the latter part of its construction that he is stating ‘facts’ that his new language merely reflects.

‘The Celestial Omnibus’ enacts another problem of signification in its opening page with the interpretation of a physical ‘sign’ which ‘the boy sees: the adults cannot understand’.⁴⁰ The unnamed ‘boy’ of the story sees a sign that ‘pointed up a blank alley and [. . .] it had pointed on it, in faded characters, the words, ‘To Heaven’” (CSS,

⁴⁰ Beer, *The Achievement of E.M. Forster*, p. 50.

41) which he asks his parents to interpret for him. They do so according to their own code of behaviour, suggesting that it was put there ‘by some naughty young men, and that the police ought to remove it’. When the boy enquires further about the meaning of the sign his mother tells him more about its apparent authors, that “[. . .] your father told me that one of them wrote verses, and was expelled from the university and came to grief in other ways [. . .]” (CSS, 41). The conclusion that the boy is forced to draw from such a definition of the sign is a simple one: “So it doesn’t mean anything at all?” (CSS, 41).

Again, we see a degree of linguistic play occurring in this, one of Forster’s earlier short stories, written in 1908.⁴¹ The definition of the sign lies not in some innate, stable meaning; rather, the sign is defined by the social understanding of it by a particular world view, which in Terence Hawkes’ opinion, cited above, cuts ‘over and above, under and beneath, even at cross-purposes with what the words actually say’.⁴² In this sense, the mother’s utterances interpret the meaning of the sign not so much on the basis of what the sign means as what it socially implies to the values of her world view. It is the product of ‘naughty young men’ who have been ‘expelled from the university and came to grief in other ways’. As such it does not fit into her own world view’s code of propriety of and is thus denied any meaning in her code of signification, a system that Alan Wilde terms ‘the world of the number with its numbers, measurements and limitations’.⁴³

⁴¹ C.f. Alan Wilde, *Art and Order: A Study of E.M. Forster* (London: Peter Owen, 1965) Chapter 3 for a full chronology of the dating of the short stories.

⁴² Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, p. 125.

⁴³ Alan Wilde, *Art and Order: A Study of E.M. Forster*, p. 65.

The final short story I wish to examine is 'The Other Side of the Hedge', an allegory where a man treads along a teleological road forward towards greater progress in a 'race of life' and stops upon discovering a hole in the hedge which guards this road from a form of Arcadian utopia. The hole in the hedge allows the 'anonymous narrator' to pass 'from one state to the other' and is met by an entirely different world view from that of the world in which he previously existed.⁴⁴ Equipped as he is for a race of life towards perfection of the human race through reason and advancement (when he initially stops upon the road 'Miss Eliza Dimbleby, the great educationist, swept past, exhorting me to persevere' (CSS, 34)) when he encounters a man running for the joy of it, he interprets this sign as a participant in another race within the Arcadian world and asks "[. . .] Where are the others?" (CSS, 37). The reply and the reaction it gains from the protagonist are again revealing of the extent to which Forster views language as imbued with the features of differing world views:

'There are no others.' I was bewildered at the waste in production, and murmured to myself, 'What does it all mean?'

He said: 'It means nothing but itself' – and he repeated the words as if I were a child. (CSS, 37)

The problems of comprehension here are once more based upon the differing value-systems of the interlocutors: the presence of a single man running without opposition

⁴⁴ J.H. Stape, 'Myth, Allusion, Symbol in E.M. Forster's 'The Other Side of the Hedge'', *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 14, no. 4, (1977), p. 376.

signifies to the protagonist of the tale a 'waste in production' so wholly has he been immersed in the world view of social progress and economic competition. However, the other interlocutor, his apparent rescuer, is similarly imbued with a world view which has naturalized his view of language to the extent that he views his own utterance as meaning 'nothing but itself', entirely passive in its reflection of the ostensible reality that to run for joy is the sole purpose of running. Thus, each once more provides a prime example of what Bakhtin terms 'the *plurality of equal consciousnesses and their worlds*, which are combined here into the unity of a given event' to present equally valid but apparently uncontingent interpretations of a linguistic utterance.⁴⁵

Where Angels Fear to Tread provides a linguistic example of a struggle within what Douglass Hewitt sees as 'essentially relationships of power [. . .] the distinction is not simply between the individual personalities but between groups defined by nation or social class'.⁴⁶ Mrs Herriton, a woman defined by P.J.M. Scott as representing 'the middle-class-oriented stuffiness, its "petty unselfishness" and muddle-headed values' along with her daughter, Harriet, receives news of her daughter-in-law's proposed marriage to Italian Gino Carella.⁴⁷ The entry of the letter into the world of Sawston and its apparently stable order has an interesting linguistic effect upon Harriet, who Glen Cavaliero claims has the 'acrid indissoluble character' and 'is acted upon by her upbringing'.⁴⁸ Harriet finds the values of her upbringing

⁴⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* in Raman Selden (ed.), *The Theory of Criticism: From Plato to the Present, A Reader* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1988), p. 293.

⁴⁶ Hewitt, *English Fiction of the Early Modern Period*, p. 66. Whilst I partially agree with Hewitt's appraisal of the texts in this respect, I contend below that these struggles exist not simply between nations and social classes but within a considerably more differentiated set of world views, many of which are held by characters within the same nationality and social class.

⁴⁷ P.J.M. Scott, *E.M. Forster: Our Permanent Contemporary* (London: Vision Press, 1984), p. 44.

⁴⁸ Cavaliero, *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, p. 66.

challenged by those of Italy which Cavaliero claims ‘has its codes as Lilia is soon to realise’.⁴⁹ Forster presents the confrontation of these two ‘codes’ of perceiving the world and their linguistic articulation. Lilia’s letter to the Herritons is preceded in the text by Forster symbolising the ordered and ostensibly logical world view occupied by Harriet and Mrs Herriton in the sowing of vegetables in straight lines: ‘Harriet stretched a string to guide the row straight, and Mrs. Herriton scratched a furrow with a pointed stick ... at the end of the row she was conscious that she had never sown better.’ (*WAFTT*, 27) However, the arrival of Lilia’s letter challenges the order of this world view with a value-system which they fail to fully comprehend and which challenges their own perceived reality. Harriet’s first reaction to the letter is revealing:

‘I don’t understand,’ she said; ‘it doesn’t make any sense.’

‘Her letters never did.’

‘But it must be sillier than usual,’ said Harriet, and her voice began to quaver.

‘Look here, read it, mother; I can’t make head or tail.’ (*WAFTT*, 27)

The response to Harriet’s pleading for clarification as she cannot understand ‘“The meaning”’ of the letter is her mother’s interpretation and recodification of it into a form which she can understand: ‘“The meaning is quite clear [. . .] She is going to marry someone she met in a hotel [. . .]” Suddenly she broke down over what might seem to be a small point.’ (*WAFTT*, 28). This interpretation of the letter goes further than a simple interpretation of its linguistic meaning into a codification of the letter’s content socially. It centres on what it imputes to her world view and its attendant code of propriety. The meeting of a man in a hotel will not ‘do’ according to Mrs.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 68.

Herriton's world view and as such the only recourse she has to this linguistic utterance which unsettles the order of her reality is to destroy it and produce a counter-formulation of her own. Her immediate reaction to Harriet's baleful plea, "“Oh, what is to be done?”", is a destructive and assertive one: "“This first!” She tore the letter into little pieces and scattered it over the mould. ‘Next a telegram for Lilia! [. . .]’" (*WAFTT*, 28). Thus we see another example of how a ‘particular social sign is pulled this way and that by competing social interests, inscribed from within with a multiplicity of ideological ‘accents’’.⁵⁰ The nature of these fragments of text which ‘remained, disfiguring the tidy ground’ (*WAFTT*, 28) is similar in direction to those of *The Waste Land* that Eliot shores against his ruins and, in Mrs Herriton's assertion of her monologic meaning, we have a forceful linguistic drive to assert a view akin to Eliot's appraisal of the metaphysical poets' desire ‘to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into [. . .] meaning’.⁵¹

A Room with a View is chronologically the third of Forster's novels to be published, but, as Laurence Brander notes, ‘had been planned and the Italian part written earlier’ than *The Longest Journey*.⁵² *A Room with a View* provides a particularly fine example of the problems of signification and language's socially loaded aspect at the beginning of the novel, after Lucy Honeychurch has realised the ‘contest’ which had ‘widened and deepened’ between the world views of her cousin and the Emersons (*ARWAV*, 25). Upon finally gaining access to the room that she has exchanged with George Emerson, Charlotte Bartlett discovers ‘a sheet of paper on which was scrawled an enormous note of interrogation’ (*ARWAV*, 35). Her reaction to

⁵⁰ Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 195.

⁵¹ T.S. Eliot, *Selected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 64; T.S. Eliot, *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, Frank Kermode (ed.) (London: Faber & Faber, 1980), p. 64.

⁵² Laurence Brander, *E.M. Forster: A Critical Study* (London: Rupert Hart Davis & Co., 1968), p. 100.

this question mark reveals an instance of the belief that Forster was later to articulate in conversation with Angus Wilson, that ‘The possibility of human communication is very small. But that is not the reason for ceasing to write novels. There are always the meetings and breakings’.⁵³ Charlotte Bartlett’s encounter with George Emerson’s ‘enormous note of interrogation’ is one such meeting and breaking. The reason behind the creation of the ‘enormous note of interrogation’ is, as Richard Keller Simon sees it, that the ‘serious and melancholic’ George Emerson derives his melancholy from a questioning of his own father’s world view.⁵⁴ His father explains in Chapter Two that, for George Emerson, “‘things won’t fit . . . the things of the universe”” (*ARWAV*, p. 47). The enormous note of interrogation presents a challenge to the linguistic conveyance of his own father’s world view, that of socialism. However, in ironically miscomprehending the question mark as an interrogation of the premises of her own world view, Charlotte Bartlett’s reaction is interesting:

‘What does it mean?’ she thought, and examined it carefully by the light of a candle. Meaningless at first, it gradually became menacing, obnoxious, portentous with evil. She was seized by the impulse to destroy it [. . .]

(*ARWAV*, 34)

This would appear to be a puzzling response on Charlotte Bartlett’s part if she viewed the enormous note of interrogation as simply a question mark. Instead, it represents a signifier devoid of any signified which appears to her ‘menacing, obnoxious, portentous with evil’ as it threatens to destabilise the code of signification through

⁵³ Interview with Angus Wilson cited in J.H. Stape (ed.), *E.M. Forster: Interviews and Recollections* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan:1993), p. 34.

⁵⁴ Richard Keller Simon, ‘E.M. Forster’s Critique of Laughter and the Comic: The First Three Novels as Dialectic’, *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 31, p. 213.

which she constructs her own world view of conservative, bourgeois propriety. Indeed, it is only when she is able to reconstruct her code of signification by subsuming this signifier into it that she does not destroy the sign; this is similar to the need felt by Mrs. Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. We learn that Charlotte Bartlett's resistance to the destruction of the sign is based upon the fact that she 'remembered that she had no right to do so, since it must be the property of young Mr. Emerson' (*ARWAV*, 34) and is thus able to reconstitute the stability of the sign by assigning the signifier the signified concept of 'young Mr. Emerson's property'. Since in her own world view the destruction of another's property is considered improper, the sign's new meaning allows her to comprehend it and thus it no longer threatens her own socially determined use of language, another example of the 'meetings and breakings' of differing world views and their linguistic articulation.

The Longest Journey presents another meeting of world views resulting in linguistic confusion. The nature of the protagonist's literary endeavours provides an enactment of the problems of signification. Rickie Elliot 'burnt [. . . a] letter [. . .] one of the few tributes Miss Pembroke ever paid to the imagination [. . .] words so sincere should be for Gerald alone' (*TLJ*, 59) before regarding 'a fragment of a little story' he had written which he then declares is 'nonsense' for its inability to refer to 'real things' (*TLJ*, 60). These central tropes of the destruction of unwanted and fragmentary meanings, however, are only part of a developing sense of linguistic chaos within Forster's maturing fiction. Rickie Elliot's floundering literary career is seen within the novel as an example of a more general decay of language's referential function; in Elliot's case, for example, his 'English has gone to the devil' (*TLJ*, 62). Indeed, Rickie Elliott's symbolic hobbling has its counterpart in his linguistic capacity

where ‘the words would stick in his throat, or worse still, would bring other words along with them’ (*TLJ*, 72). His disability is as much one of linguistic isolation as of physical deformity.

He is not, however, alone in this defect. Emily Failing’s literary efforts are dogged by the same inability to express her ideas in language and she is forced to resort to the pre-linguistic when ‘She laid down her pen and said “Ugh!”’ (*TLJ*, 86). Indeed her own literary memoir is abandoned and, in a clearly unintentional play upon the death of the author, she is forced to reappraise and republish the work of her late husband. First she searches the remains of his papers amongst the fragments of ‘a sentence that puzzled her’ yet it is these very fragments that she shores in order to produce a final work, her husband’s ‘*Essays*’. This can be seen as an example of what Derrida, in another context, has described as an ‘interweaving [. . . a] textile [. . .] produced only in the transformation of another text’.⁵⁵ However, this apparent ‘secret’ of the eternal decay and deferral of meaning - Derrida’s *différance* - via the interweaving of ‘traces’ of others’ works into one’s own escapes Rickie Elliott, if not Forster. Elliott is denied access to publication and literary fame as he wishes to convey what things ‘*mean by life*’ (*TLJ*, 151) leaving him feeling that:

the heart of all things is hidden. There was a password and he could not learn it, nor could the editor of *The Holborn* teach him. He sighed and then sighed more piteously. For had he not known the password once - known it and forgotten it already? (*TLJ*, 144)

⁵⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Athlone Press, 1981), p. 25.

Rickie Elliott searches for a purely referential language, one that is able to convey an objective reality. His quest, in defiance of his friend Ansell, is doomed to failure and the ‘password’ of literary success eludes him.

Maurice provides yet more evidence of this notion of socially charged language and what Debrah Raschke terms ‘Forster’s epistemological curiosity’.⁵⁶ The appearance of Risley, an aesthete (examined in more detail in Chapters Five and Six), in discussion with Maurice Hall and the Dean of his college, presents another fascinating example of how conscious Forster is that language is not merely a passive medium through which our world views are expressed but the means by which they are constructed. In defence of his own camp seriousness against the Dean’s stolid conservatism, in line with what Douglas Bolling terms the ‘formidable and dehumanising barriers of society’, Risley asserts his own position before the Dean that ““Words are deeds”” (*M*, 33) in an attempt to force the Dean into recognition of the contingency and construction of his own position.⁵⁷ The Dean, however, ‘came to the rescue’ (*M*, 34) of Maurice Hall and his school friend Chapman, maintaining their adherence to his own bourgeois conservatism and leading Maurice Hall to reflect of Risley that ‘it was bad form, ungentlemanly, the fellow could not have been through a public school’ (*M*, 34-5). However, in his encounters with Clive Durham, Maurice Hall again comes into conflict and miscomprehension with Durham’s construction of what Raschke terms ‘a reassuring alternative vision’ of a Platonic ideal of masculine friendship based upon his readings of *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, the literary

⁵⁶ Debrah Raschke, ‘Breaking the Engagement with Philosophy: Re-envisioning Hetero-Homo Relations in *Maurice*’ in Robert K. Martin & George Piggford (eds.), *Queer Forster* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 152.

⁵⁷ Douglas Bolling, ‘The Distanced Heart: Artistry in E.M. Forster’s *Maurice*’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 20, (1974) p. 161.

precedent that allows Durham to feel capable of declaring his love for Hall.⁵⁸ The moment of this revelation is another example of the problems of connection which reveal the modernist nature of Forster's concept of language. Durham and Hall meet again after a Cambridge vacation, the meeting presenting a confrontation of the two alternative viewpoints relating to language and meaning:

"I knew you read the *Symposium* in the vac," he said in a low voice.

Maurice felt uneasy.

"Then you understand - without me saying more--"

"How do you mean?"

Durham could not wait. People were all around them, but with eyes that had gone intensely blue he whispered, "I love you."

Maurice was scandalized, horrified to the bottom of his suburban soul, and exclaimed, "Oh, rot!" The words, the manner, were out of him before he could recall them. "Durham, you're an Englishman. I'm another. Don't talk nonsense. I'm not offended, because I know you don't mean it [. . .]"

(*M*, 56)

The conflict of different codifications of language is an obvious one, characterised by the unconscious fashion of Maurice Hall's refutation of his friend's proclamation:

'The words, the manner, were out of him before he could recall them'. Maurice is not only incapable of comprehending the meaning of his friend's utterance but goes so far as to attempt to naturalize the utterance back into his own code of signification by asserting Durham's nationality ('You're an Englishman') as a means of attempting to

⁵⁸ Raschke, 'Breaking the Engagement with Philosophy: Re-envisioning Hetero-Homo Relations in *Maurice*', p. 152.

effect a complicity of world views, compounding this with the assumption of linguistic confusion on Durham's part: 'I know you don't mean it'. Maurice Hall goes on, however, to encounter not only the constructedness of his own articulations of his world view but those of many others. When he returns to his old friend, by then, in C. Rising's words, 'married [. . .] 'crossed over' into a heterosexual society unsympathetic to Maurice's loneliness', the latter is 'a bundle of voices [. . .] he could almost hear them quarrelling inside him' (*M*, 154).⁵⁹

Howards End presents yet more evidence of this highly characteristic and modernist stance present throughout Forster's fiction, a facet of the writer's work which has been at least partially critically recognised and which leads Paul B. Armstrong to comment that the novel 'raises philosophical questions through the very language of fiction'.⁶⁰ Language, throughout the novel, provides a constant interface for the contending social formations of the opposing world views at play, each wishing to assert the primacy of their view. Francis Gillen notes that for all the oft-cited liberal humanist optimism of the novel's central aphorism ('only connect the prose with the passion') 'no realistic connection takes place [. . .] Margaret Schlegel is no nearer to understanding or being understood by the Wilcoxes'.⁶¹ I believe that, far from an unrealised yearning for liberal humanist connection, 'an emphasis', according to Elizabeth Langland, 'that sets at naught the complexities of literary modernism', Forster's *Howards End* provides a literary enactment of the very problems of a

⁵⁹ C. Rising, 'E.M. Forster's *Maurice*: A Summing Up', in J.H. Stape (ed.), *E.M. Forster: Critical Assessments*, vol. 3 (Mountfield, East Sussex: Helm Information, 1998), p. 437.

⁶⁰ Paul B. Armstrong, 'E.M. Forster's *Howards End*: The Existential Crisis of the Liberal Imagination', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Comparative Study of Literature and Ideas*, vol. 8, no. 1, Autumn 1974, p. 184.

⁶¹ Francis Gillen, '*Howards End* and the Neglected Narrator', *Novel: A Forum for Fiction*, vol. 3, no. 2, Winter 1970, p. 140.

connection for which he may well have yearned.⁶² However, he was all too aware, through his friendship with Lowes Dickinson, of the impossibility of such connection. The revelation of literature abandoning ‘the continuative binding conventions of syntax and logic’ becomes immediately apparent when Helen Schlegel seems to attain a linguistic control greater than that of the narrator.⁶³ The narrator, rejecting the role of conveying his own expression of the events of the novel, allows the character seeming independence from him, as already discussed in the previous chapter but here encompassing an independent and superior command of her utterances in describing Helen Schlegel’s kiss with Paul Wilcox:

That was ‘how it happened’, or, rather, how Helen described it to her sister, using words even more unsympathetic than my own. But the poetry of that kiss, the wonder of it, the magic that there was in life for hours after it – who can describe that? (*HE*, 38)

The very fact that the narrator denies the responsibility to provide the words for his own narrative – at the very moment that Forster does so – is a highly metafictional tactic, not least when questioning ‘who can describe’ the kiss whilst apparently assuming the guise of omniscience.

Leonard Bast’s struggle with his wife over the discovery of Margaret Schlegel’s visiting card is the site of a contest of meaning. As the ironic narrator notes, a ‘few inches of pasteboard, it became the battlefield on which the souls of

⁶² Elizabeth Langland, ‘Gesturing Towards an Open Space: Gender, Form and Language in *Howards End*’ in Jeremy Tambling (ed.), *E.M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press, 1995), p. 81.

⁶³ Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe 1900-1916*, p. 9.

Leonard and his wife contended' (*HE*, 130). To Leonard Bast the Schlegel name and address 'symbolized the life of culture, that Jacky should never spoil' (*HE*, 130) and it is symbolically placed between 'pages of Ruskin'. The calling card in this sense, just like George Emerson's 'enormous note of interrogation' before it, represents not so much the passive relation between signifier and signified as a tacit acknowledgement on Forster's part of the arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the process of social signification which is enacted upon it. Forster reveals that for Leonard Bast Margaret Schlegel's name and address are imbued with his own longing to enter a world of bourgeois propriety, a 'life of culture' which he believes is his inheritance, that which marks him as intellectually and socially superior to a wife whom he 'could not leave' and 'did not want to hit' (*HE*, 129).⁶⁴ Ironically at odds with this interpretation of the 'few inches of pasteboard' as a locus for the quintessence of culture and civilisation comes Jacky Bast's contending construction of meaning from Margaret's name and address: 'She drew her own conclusion – she was only capable of drawing one conclusion' (*HE*, 130). For Jacky Bast the calling card signifies the only conclusion that she is capable of making, that Margaret Schlegel is Leonard's mistress, her name signifying licentiousness and immorality, thus once more allowing Forster to counterpoint differing codification of linguistic signs.

Evidence of linguistic indeterminacy abounds throughout *Howards End* and is apparent in a central moment of the novel, Mrs. Wilcox's death and the revelation of Margaret Schlegel's inheritance of Howards End. Chapter XI sees the disclosure of

⁶⁴ Of course, just as with the Emersons of *A Room with a View* and, arguably, Fielding in *A Passage to India*, the name employed is itself an ironic, metafictional comment upon the intellectual allegiances of the characters at hand, in Margaret Schlegel's case aligning her with the German idealist philosophical tradition which forms her own family background.

Mrs. Wilcox's final bequest of her house to Margaret Schlegel via a note written on her death-bed that Charles Wilcox reads to the family:

Charles, to steady them further, read the enclosure out loud: 'A note in my mother's handwriting, in an envelope addressed to my father, sealed. Inside: "I should like Miss Schlegel (Margaret) to have Howards End." No date, no signature. Forwarded through the matron of the nursing-home. Now the question is-' (*HE*, 106)

The moment at which the quotation ends, when Dolly interrupts Charles' utterance, provides a vitally important moment concerning the workings of the linguistic sign within *Howards End*, the moment at which the signifiers of Ruth Wilcox's missive to her family are encoded, given significance according to the values of her family's world view. Dolly is the first to question the meaning of the utterance in terms of its legal significance: "But I say that note isn't legal. Houses ought to be done by a lawyer, Charles, surely." (*HE*, 106). The utterance's significance is questioned and its ostensible meaning reversed due to its apparent lack of legality so, via Dolly's analysis, it becomes an affirmation of the Wilcox's possession of Howards End. Furthermore, the utterance is then questioned in terms of its means of production: "Why, its only in pencil! I said so. Pencil never counts." (*HE*, 106). As such Dolly goes further in ensnaring the utterance within the codes of propriety of her own world view - a note written in pencil, however present and readable, none the less has its meaning questioned due to the medium through which it is conveyed.

Although Dolly is quickly dismissed by Henry Wilcox, her claims about the illegality of the utterance are not: ““Legally, I should be justified in tearing it up and throwing it in the fire [. . .]”” (*HE*, 106)). Indeed, Mr. Wilcox affirms this support of his world view, which Martial Rose views as ‘property conscious with sharp and unscrupulous acquisitive characteristics’, with further recourse to psychiatry, another of the apparatuses of the dominant world view he supports, when he questions the soundness of his wife’s mind at the time of her production of the utterance under question: ““[. . .] to my mind the question is the – the invalid’s condition at the time that she wrote”” (*HE*, 106).⁶⁵ The hyphenated hesitation Forster employs is telling. The values of ownership are so strong that Henry Wilcox is willing to question his own wife’s sanity in order to reverse the direction of her final utterance to him, making it conform to his own world view of heredity and the development of capital. The hesitation within his speech is indicative of the lengths he is willing to go to in order to confine this codification of a linguistic utterance to the strictures of his world view. As Lyn Pykett describes, the dominant world view that Forster makes Wilcox a representative of has used the ‘developing institution of psychiatry’, an institution ‘constructed on a model of radical sexual difference’, as a means of limiting and marginalizing those opposing world views which offer a challenge to it.⁶⁶ Thus, at the moment that his own wife’s final utterance becomes challenging to the values of his viewpoint, Wilcox forcefully reverses and discredits its ostensible meaning to make it conform to his outlook. As such, from being the wife of a prominent representative of the dominant world view, Mrs. Wilcox’s single utterance in her final letter to her family sees her reconstituted as ‘treacherous to the family, to the laws of property, *to her own written word*’ (*HE*, 108, my italics). The capitulation

⁶⁵ Rose, *Literature in Perspective: E.M. Forster*, p. 68.

⁶⁶ Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 49.

of the sign to the constraints of a particular world view appears so complete in this instance that - via a skilful use of free indirect discourse - Mrs. Wilcox's utterance, to the mind of the Wilcoxes at least, becomes treacherous to 'her own written word'. In order to subsume it to the demands of their world view the assertion of their interpretation of Ruth Wilcox's words assumes, under the guise of an apparently omniscient narrative voice, the claim that the Wilcoxes actually know her purpose in creating the utterance better than herself and are thus able to label her as unlawful, treacherous and possibly insane. We, therefore, again see within the fabric of a key episode from *Howards End*, a prime example of what Douglass H. Thomson terms 'Forster's questioning of language as a medium for personal intercourse'.⁶⁷

A Passage to India provides perhaps the most famous example of a moment of linguistic (or perhaps, more accurately, pre-linguistic) debate concerning the meaning of the famous 'boum' (*API*, 159) of the Marabar Caves and what it results in. The central event demonstrates within a work of fiction what Vološinov and Bakhtin asserted critically, that 'the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction. When these forms change so does the sign'.⁶⁸ Critics as diverse as P.J.M. Scott, Benita Parry and Sara Sulieri Goodyear are each keen to assert their own meanings concerning the notorious echo in the cave, but Parry amongst them comes

⁶⁷ Douglass H Thomson, 'From Words to Things: Margaret's Progress in *Howards End*', *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 15, no. 2, (1983), p. 122. I differ considerably, however, from Thomson in his notion of the ending of the novel as simply a 'fragile and qualified' (120) reconciliation of the values of the Wilcoxes and Schlegels in the figure of Margaret. The idea of personal intercourse which Thomson proposes throughout his article denies a more deep-reaching Forsterian conceptualisation of the workings of world views at subconscious as well as conscious levels which deny the possibility of personal interaction to be a fruitful possibility outside of the members of a single world view, any inter-ideological mixing being confounded by the constraints of ideologically loaded language where communication becomes the site of conflict and potential conquest and conversion.

⁶⁸ Pam Morris (ed), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Vološinov*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 55 (extract taken from Vološinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, L Matejka & I.R. Titunik (trans.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973)).

nearest to my reading of the echo in her claim that in the very confusion it causes Forster has set out to ‘produce [. . .] a set of radical alternatives to the meanings valorised by an imperialist civilization’, a facet of the text which she sees as ‘the ontological puzzlement of a modernist text’.⁶⁹ Indeed, as Francesca Kazan notes in her suggestion that *A Passage to India* is ‘a text recognizing the imperfections of language’, Forster himself is keen to reveal in this, his latest and most obviously modernist work, that he is all too well aware of the language’s problems of signification in the modern age with the claim that opens the structurally and thematically central Chapter XIV:

Most of life is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it, and the books and talk that would describe it as interesting are obliged to exaggerate in the hope of justifying their own existence. Inside its cocoon of work and social obligation, the human spirit slumbers for the most part, registering the distinction between pleasure and pain, but not nearly as alert as we pretend. There are periods in the most thrilling day during which nothing happens, and though we continue to exclaim ‘I do enjoy myself’ or ‘I am horrified’ we are insincere. ‘As far as I feel anything, it is enjoyment, horror’ - it’s no more than that really, and a perfectly adjusted organism would be silent. (*API*, 145)⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Benita Parry, ‘The Politics of Representation in *A Passage to India*’ in Beer (ed.), *A Passage to India: Essays in Interpretation*, p. 28; Sara Sulieri Goodyear, ‘Forster’s Imperial Erotic’, in Tambling (ed.), *E.M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 152; Scott, *E.M. Forster: Our Permanent Contemporary*, p. 168. Goodyear propounds that the echo in the cave is representative of the yearning for ‘cross-cultural invitations [. . .] between males with racial difference serving as a substitute for gender’ (152) and thus provides a post-colonial homoerotic reading of the echo as an inarticulate yearning for intercultural homoerotic desire whilst Scott asserts a more traditionally humanist reading of the text and the echo as understood solely ‘the English lady’s intuition’ (i.e. that of Mrs. Moore), that of the receptive and non-judgemental, liberal English woman coming to an understanding of the impenetrable mystery of India.

⁷⁰ Francesca Kazan, ‘Confabulations in *A Passage to India*’, *Criticism*, vol. 29 (1987), p. 197; Malcolm Bradbury’s *Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) claims that the novel provides ‘one of the most powerful evocations of nullity’ (p. 95); George H

This notion of silence as the basis of modernist art chimes with Forster's discontent with the expressive, truth-bearing potential of language. It seems to be fully echoed in later modernist theorists' conceptualisations. Gabriel Josopovici's claim that 'modern art always moves towards silence, away from language, towards the annihilation of language and of the work', for example, appears almost inspired by Forster's words.⁷¹ Mrs. Moore's encounter with the echo in the caves at Marabar provides an instance similar to Volosinov's comments that 'the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved'.⁷² Hearing the all-negating 'boum' leads her to question the values of Christianity and Western liberal humanist epistemology. Mrs. Moore seems to affirm S.P. Rosenbaum's claims about Dickinson who also could not 'see how anyone could help being confused in the universe'.⁷³ The echo that she encounters:

[. . .] is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever it said, the same monotonous noise replies [. . .] 'Boum' is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or 'bou-oum, or 'ou-boum' – utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce 'boum'. (*API*, 159)

The echo negates language to the point where Forster self-reflexively expresses the inability of 'the human alphabet' to 'express it'. In Gillian Beer's words, it

Thomson, *The Fiction of E.M. Forster* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1967) p. 28, sees the novel as a literary manifestation of the 'psychological demands of the twentieth century'; James Merrett, 'E.M. Forster's Modernism: Tragic Faith in *A Passage to India*', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Comparative Study of Literature and Ideas*, vol. 17, no. 2, (Summer 1984) discusses 'the modernism in his world view' (71).

⁷¹ Josopovici, *The Lessons of Modernism and Other Essays*, p. 114.

⁷² Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Vološinov*, p. 55.

⁷³ Rosenbaum, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, p. 176.

‘linguistically subverts fixed order, and produces echoes and disturbances of fixed meaning’: all is reduced to the same earth shattering nullity which is akin both to silence and the drowning out of all utterances, a sonic ‘waste land’.⁷⁴ Mrs. Moore’s response to this is that the echo ‘began in some indescribable way’ to undermine her whole life asserting the message that ‘everything exists, nothing has value’ (*API*, 160). She wishes to retreat into the safe linguistic community and world view of her conception of Englishness that her family had hitherto represented for her, via a letter to her children in England yet she finds herself faced with the instability of the ‘boum’ to the extent that her own religion, world view and personal identity are threatened:

all [. . .] divine words, from ‘Let there be light’ to ‘It is finished’ only amounted to ‘boum’ [. . .] she realised that she didn’t want to write to her children, didn’t want to communicate with anyone, not even with God [. . .] She lost all interest even in Aziz and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air’s. (*API*, 161)

In the face of the ‘boum’, Mrs. Moore recognises the contingency of her own world view and its necessary expression in an unstable language. She comes to a meta-linguistic realisation of the contingency and inexpressibility of any notion of the ‘self’ or any presence of a ‘self’ without a world view which mediates and inhabits language. In this sense she represents Forster’s ultimate novelistic iteration of his mentor’s own belief that ‘in the very last resort, all values are dogmas’ and that such

⁷⁴ Gillian Beer, ‘Negation in *A Passage to India*’, *Essays in Criticism*, vol. XXX, (1980), p. 158.

dogmas are indissoluble from their linguistic iteration, indeed that such iteration forms the very construction of these dogmas.⁷⁵

As noted above, critics such as Robert Langbaum have been clear in their identification of ‘Forster’s last novel, published in 1924’ as one which ‘increasingly detaches itself from the rest of his work as incommensurably major’.⁷⁶ However, my own examination demonstrates that in relation to the problems of linguistic expression such a belief, expressed by the otherwise insightful Gillian Beer in her appraisal of the early works in relation to *A Passage to India*, hardly holds water: “‘Only Connect’”, often taken to be apt for the whole of Forster’s *oeuvre* rather than apposite only to *Howards End*, is in this novel [*A Passage to India*] presented as insufficient and dangerous advice’.⁷⁷ My own analysis suggests that this is far from so. In *A Room with a View*, Charlotte Bartlett’s ‘panic and emptiness’ when faced by a similarly subversive and self-reflexive signifier to Mrs. Moore’s ‘boum’ shows that Forster has been occupied throughout his writing career not so much with the ironically phrased maxim to ‘only connect’, but rather with the modernist concern of internally revealing the problems of connection so readily recognised by critics in relation to *A Passage to India*.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ G.L. Dickinson, Dean Inge, H.G. Wells, J.B.S. Haldane, Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Walford Davies, *Points of View: A Series of Broadcast Addresses* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930), p. 14.

⁷⁶ Langbaum, *The Modern Spirit*, p. 127.

⁷⁷ Gillian Beer, ‘Negation in *A Passage to India*’, pp. 52-3.

⁷⁸ C.f. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 82 for an account of the early drafts of ‘Lucy Novel’ which proved to be a first draft of *A Room with a View* and which were produced in 1901, before Forster had embarked upon *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

IV Intertextual Subversion

The fragments shored by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, of which the Bhagavad Gita is one amongst hundreds, present a complex web of intertextual references at play within his poetry, part of the ‘infraction of syntax and narrative rules, the forging of a new lexicon of style, the breaking of established rules of genre’ that Allon White quite rightly sees as a key facet of modernist art.⁷⁹ I believe Forster employs a similar web of intertextual reference that allows, in Graham Allen’s terms, ‘the literary work [. . . to be] viewed not as the container of meaning but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations coalesce [. . . a] site of words and sentences shadowed by multiple potentialities of meaning’.⁸⁰ Alongside the overt intertextuality and remotivation at play within Forster’s work he employs pastiche and the intermingling of often contending genres and the metafictional stance of including authors within the novels, revealing the problems of the production of meaning. These devices only add to the modernist innovation at play throughout the novelist’s body of work.

Where Angels Fear to Tread is perhaps Forster’s least stylistically playful novel but even here we see the intermingling of genres, the self-conscious construction of what Genette terms the ‘palimpsestic’ text, transtextualized from the threads of other texts with a self-conscious clash of genres and text types.⁸¹ A fine example of this palimpsestic tactic is employed in the inclusion of an insert, purportedly from Baedeker’s guide, on the fictional Tuscan city of Monteriano: ‘**Monteriano** (pop. 4,800). *Hotels*: Stella d’Italia, moderate only’ (*WAFTT*, 29). An

⁷⁹ Allon White, *The Uses of Obscurity*, pp. 30-31.

⁸⁰ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 12.

⁸¹ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes: La Littérature au Second Degré* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), p. 8.

often parodied source of reliable information is wilfully extracted to support the reader's understanding of a place of the author's invention. It not only clashes with the fabric of Forster's own prose but also draws attention to the artifice of his fictional world via its juxtaposition to a text type supposedly firmly rooted in the real yet used here to describe the fictional. Indeed, the use of quotation within this early work is, furthermore, self-consciously employed by the narrator who draws attention to the selection of quotations by characters:

'Italy too,' the other continued a little resentfully, 'is a great country. She has produced many famous men – for example, Garibaldi and Dante. The latter wrote the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, the *Paradiso*. The *Inferno* is the most beautiful.' And with the complacent tone of one who has received a solid education, he quoted the opening lines:

Nel Mezzo del cammin di nostra vita

Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,

*Che la diritta via era smarrita*⁸²

a quotation which was more apt than he supposed. (*WAFTT*, 41)

The intertext employed refers to a loss of direction in the middle of life. It is employed by Philip Herriton in the diegesis as a display of his greater scholarship and knowledge of Italian culture than Gino Carella. However, Forster equally remotivates it to refer to the lack of direction in Philip Herriton's life or, indeed, to the sub-textual

⁸² Midway this way of life we're bound upon
I woke to find myself in a dark wood
Where the right road was wholly lost and gone

sexual crisis of his interaction with Gino Carella (discussed in more detail in Chapter Six). Forster constructs the diegetic and extra-diegetic intentions at cross purposes as another subtle means of making the reader aware of the constructedness and fictionality of the text. Moreover, the narrator's position of extreme omniscience that the 'quotation [...] was more apt than he supposed' is an assertion of narratorial control that draws attention to and problematises the relation between the supposed autonomy of the character to select quotations independent of the narrator and of the narrator's knowledge of Herriton's fate. It also self-consciously draws the reader's attention to the selection of quotation through its insertion and remotivation.

If these concerns are not wholly developed within *Where Angels Fear to Tread* then *The Longest Journey* is far more systematic in their examination. Forster's own avowal that 'I write for two reasons: partly to make money and partly to win the respect of people whom I respect' is reflected in the presentation of multiple writers within the novel.⁸³ Rickie Elliott's putative fictional career is contrasted with that of the ironically named Mr. Failing and his wife, both of whom fail in their literary ambitions within their own lifetimes, whilst Stewart Ansell represents the failed academic writer, another recurring trope within Forster's self-reflexive fiction. Forster's quotation shows him to be clearly aware of the world of professional writing which is self-consciously revealed within his own fiction when Rickie Elliott considers the life of the writer: "I read somewhere, too, that Marie Corelli's about the only person who makes a thing out of literature. I'm certain it wouldn't pay me." (*TLJ*, 15). His work self-reflexively parodies the patterns of genre fiction and no more so than in its undermining of the romance genre of which Corelli was the leading light

⁸³ Mary Lago, Linda K Hughes and Elizabeth MacLeod Walls (eds.), *The BBC Talks of E.M. Forster, 1929-1960: a Selected Edition* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2008), p. 456.

of Forster's age. Forster is aware that, as R.C. Terry notes, 'the audience of *Daniel Deronda* was not always separate from that of *Good-bye Sweetheart!*'⁸⁴ An examination of Forster's reading list from this period is instructive, encompassing mass market fiction such as Francis Marion Crawford's *Don Orsino* and *Corleone* and Robert Thorne's *Shan Bullock* alongside Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer.⁸⁵ He wilfully inter-mingles elements of popular-cultural genres within his work, especially in the continually re-worked closure of *Maurice* as discussed in Chapter Six. However, the unsatisfactory nature of Rickie Elliot's fiction, its artificiality, is wilfully revealed by Forster. Upon an interview with a possible editor, Elliott receives a critique of his work:

"Your story does not convince." He tapped it. "I have read it-with very great pleasure. It convinces in parts, but it does not convince as a whole; and stories, don't you think, ought to convince as a whole." (*WAFTT*, 143)

Alongside the narrative tactics outlined above, the careful reader of Forster is aware that his own fiction may also 'not convince' in as much as it gradually reveals that it does not passively reflect the 'life' that it describes.

A more radical stance is also taken within *The Longest Journey* in the revelation of the nature of Elliot's creative work, one of his stories describing the transformation of a modern young woman into a tree and leading his wife to question 'How could Rickie, or anyone, make a living by pretending that Greek gods were alive, that young ladies could vanish into trees?' (*WAFTT*, 151). The short story, of

⁸⁴ R.C. Terry, *Victorian Popular Fiction, 1860-80* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 4.

⁸⁵ C.f. King's College, Cambridge's E.M. Forster archive in their Modern Archive and Library (classmark EMF/13/12) for Forster's booklists from 1898 to January 1909.

course, is not simply an invention for the sake of *The Longest Journey* but Forster's own work, the story 'The Other Kingdom', which recounts the transformation of Miss Beaumont in Other Kingdom wood to a tree, a modern transtextualisation of the myth of Daphne and Apollo. Forster's tale was first published in *English Review* in 1909 and thus was unpublished but extant at the time of Forster's composition of *The Longest Journey*.⁸⁶ The very inclusion of his own 'real' published work within the fabric of another novel is a metafictional tactic that Matei Calinescu sees as 'an overall tendency toward oblique and even secret or quasi-secret textual reference' that is as typical of postmodern novelists as of modernists.⁸⁷

This tactic is redoubled in the inter-weaving of characters from his other fictional work within *The Longest Journey*. During his consideration of Rickie Elliot's fictional career, Herbert Pembroke, a Sawston School House Master, considers the employment of his matron, remembering that 'There was a certain Miss Herriton who, though far inferior to Mrs Orr, would have done instead of her' (*TLJ*, 150). The reappearance of Harriet Herriton, the spinster of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* within the same fictional world of Sawston, is not a work of fictional laziness on Forster's part, but a meta-fictional device. The multi-valence of the text is so evident that it reveals its own textuality through the production of fictional characters from other works, making the reader question the relation of one fictional world to another and, by association, with the reader's own reality. In Friedman's terms such intertextual reference to one's own works reveals that:

⁸⁶ C.f. B.J Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of E.M. Forster* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965), p. 109.

⁸⁷ Matei Calinescu, 'Rewriting' in Hans Bertens and Douwe Fokkema (eds.), *International Postmodernism: Theory and Practice* (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 1997), p. 243.

the separate volumes must stand on their own, and yet their interrelated existences require of us a comparatist's eye and judgement. The whole becomes not only the sum of the parts but also of something more: the interconnectedness between and through the several volumes [reveals] narrative ambivalence [. . .] when several perspectives merge, creating moral confusion'.⁸⁸

This game of the reappearance of characters fleetingly from one novel to the next is a recurring feature of Forster's works that will be seen throughout much of the later fiction. It is similar in vein to that of, for example, James Joyce's repetition of characters, particularly between *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*, as Margot Norris observes.⁸⁹

The Longest Journey is equally self-reflexive in its use of intertexts from other works. At one of the climactic moments of the novel, as Rickie Elliot comes to a moment of reconciliation to the demise of his marriage, his thwarted literary ambitions and acceptance of his half-brother, he reaches for poetry as he comes to his epiphany atop the Cadbury Rings and employs a quote from Shelley's 'Epipsychidion' to express his mood:

He drew out a book-it was natural for him to read when he was happy, and to read [. . .]

I never was attached to that great sect

⁸⁸ Alan Warren Friedman, *Multivalence: the Moral Quality of Form in the Modern Novel* (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 3.

⁸⁹ Margot Norris, 'Narrative Bread Pudding: Joyce's "The Boarding House"', *European Joyce Studies*, Vol. 7 (*New Perspectives on Dubliners*), 1994, p. 144.

Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the world a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion [. . .] (TLJ, 126)

Forster makes the literary Rickie Elliot view his own epiphany of contentedness and a desire to love all people via an allegiance to the sentiments of the Shelley intertext. This is only in order to wilfully puncture the sentimentality of the protagonist's romantic reconciliation of nature and man atop the hills. Forster is sure within moments to reveal to the reader, through Mrs. Failing, that 'what you call the 'symbolic moment' is over. You had it up by the Rings' (TLJ, 137), that this epiphany is merely an over-crafted fictive moment. This echoing of previous literary moments, a 'symbolic moment' that is, in Barthes' terms, a 'chambre d'échos' of previous 'symbolic moments' is a fact made all the more evident by virtue of the novel's title coming from the original Shelley poem.⁹⁰

The novel also reveals the constructedness of academic discourse. The presentation of the posthumously published 'Essays of Anthony Eustace Failing' (TLJ, 207) is particularly telling in its revelation of the source material for Forster's own dialogic method. The presence of an allegorical essay within this fictional work of philosophy in which 'Solitude, star-crowned, pacing the fields of England, has a dialogue with Seclusion' (209) gives tacit intertextual acknowledgement of the dialogic source of Forster's own narrative method, the dialogues of a similarly

⁹⁰ Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, (trans.) Richard Miller (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p. 8.

obscure philosophical figure, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, whose considerable influence I have charted in the previous chapter.

However, it is in the figure of Stewart Ansell and his academic career that Forster goes furthest in *The Longest Journey* in his self-reflexive revelation of the problems of writerly production. Ansell constructs his fellowship dissertation in the reading room in the British Library, a symbol of the synchronic function of contending intertexts into palimpsestic texts that was – again, self-consciously – to later find its articulation in *Aspects of the Novel*'s trope of the world's writers 'seated together in a room [. . .] a sort of British Museum reading-room, all writing their novels simultaneously' (AN, 27). Ansell tries to bring alive and remotivate the texts of the past to forge a living narrative:

Ansell was in his favourite haunt- the reading-room of the British Museum. In that book-encircled space he always could find peace. He loved to see the volumes rising tier above tier into the misty dome. (TLJ, 177)

That the British Museum reading room remains a trope for the synchronic existence of intertexts within a literary work is made all the more ironic for Ansell by virtue of Forster's revelation that the philosopher chooses the wrong intertexts in the production of his thesis. Upon the revelation of his failure to win a fellowship, Ansell's mother reveals that the problem with his work is due to:

"Hegel," she continued vindictively. "They say he's read too much Hegel. But they never tell him what to read instead. Their own stuffy books, I suppose.

Look here- no, that's the Windsor." After a little groping she produced a copy of *Mind*, and handed it round as if it was a geological specimen. "Inside that there's a paragraph written about something Stewart's written about before, and there it says he's read too much Hegel, and it seems now that that's been the trouble all along." Her voice trembled. "I call it most unfair, and the fellowship's gone to a man who has counted the petals on an anemone." (*TLJ*, 197)

Quite apart from laying on further intertexts with the inclusion of *Mind* and *Windsor*, Forster's knowing revelation of the flawed construction of Ansell's work is made all the more ironic through the revelation of quotations within his own. The novel, at two levels reveals, as Kristeva claims, that 'tout texte se construit comme mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption d'un autre texte'.⁹¹ The self-reflexivity of this strategy is especially effective for the Forster scholar by the inter-connectedness of this failed dissertation with that of Forster's earlier short story, 'Ansell', written, according to Oliver Stallybrass, 'around 1902 or 1903', (*TLC*, 9, Stallybrass introduction). In the short story the eponymous character witnesses the wrecking of another dissertation with the descent of a box of 'books [which ...] plunged like meteors through the trees into the river. One or Two of the smaller ones roosted coyly for a minute on the branches before they too slipped through and disappeared' (*TLC*, 32). The resultant intertextual mess, in which the coherent narrative of the dissertation is destroyed along with the web of quotations that caused it is all the more ironic in that the Ansell of this story, rather than the creator of the dissertation is the unwitting

⁹¹ Julia Kristeva, *Sèmeiotikè: Recherches pour un Sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), p. 89.

destroyer of it, another of the layers of sub-textual reference and subtle evasion at play throughout the novel.

If ‘Ansell’ presents one tale of the description of a narrative then *A Room with a View*’s Eleanor Lavish offers another in the tale of the destruction of her novel when ‘her life’s work was carried away in a landslip’ (*ARWAV*, 40) in a description that has echoes of literary destruction elsewhere in the short stories such as the destruction of another ‘fellowship dissertation’ in ‘The Story of a Siren’ which ‘fell downward through the waters of the Mediterranean’ (*CSS*, 179). However, Lavish represents a more radical presentation of the writer within the literary work, retextualising Forster’s own work internally in a fashion that mirrors his crafting of the novel. We are told early, in a typically self-reflexive narratorial comment that ‘Miss Lavish [. . .] represented intellect’ (*ARWAV*, 42), drawing our attention to the representational tactics of the narrator via what Genette terms ‘internal analepses: since [. . .] the temporal field of the first narrative’ intrudes through the narrative action of the plot’s main timescale to comment on the constructedness of the plot itself.⁹² Indeed, in Lavish’s comments concerning her novel, there is a tacit self-revelation of Forster’s own targets. It is a novel in which, ‘There will be a deal of local colouring, description, of Florence and the neighbourhood [. . .] I shall also introduce some humorous characters. And let me give you fair warning: I intend to be unmerciful to the British tourist’ (*ARWAV*, 55). The resulting work re-casts the climactic kiss at Fiesole in ‘Under a Loggia’ and is worth examining in its entirety:

What fun, Cecil! Read away...

⁹² Gérard Genette, ‘Order in Narrative’, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, (trans.) J.E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 42.

‘The scene is laid in Florence,’ repeated Cecil, with an upward note.

Lucy recollected herself.

‘ “Sunset. Leonora was speeding-” ’

Lucy interrupted. ‘Leonora? Is Leonora the heroine? Who’s the book by?’

‘Joseph Emery Prank. “Sunset. Leonora was speeding across the square. Pray the saints she might not arrive too late. The sunset of Italy. Under Orcagna’s Loggia - the Loggia de’ Lanzi, as we sometimes call it now-” ’

Lucy burst into laughter. ‘ “Joseph Emery Prank” Indeed! Why, it’s Miss Lavish! It’s Miss Lavish’s novel, and she’s publishing it under somebody else’s name.’ (ARWAV, 167-8)

The ‘Leonora’ of Miss Lavish’s novel is, of course, the Lucy of the main text and yet, as explored in Chapter Six, the careful reader is aware of the transfiguration of Lucy Honeychurch as a literary character from the initial male protagonist of ‘The Lucy Novel’ manuscript. ‘Orcagna’s Loggia’ of the text described is the ‘real’ Fiesole of *A Room with a View*. In the act of revealing the artificial nature of one level of fabulation, Forster equally reveals the artifice of the main narrative’s Fiesole also. Furthermore, in ‘Leonora’, a near anagram of Eleanor, he reveals the autobiographical nature of Lavish’s fiction, slyly revealing the novel’s connection to his own experience by association. Forster employs the pastiche of the romance genre, moreover, wilfully to reveal the metafictional self-referentiality of Lavish’s novel and its reflection upon the rest of his text. The ostensible narrative closure of Honeychurch’s and Emerson’s union in the final chapter of Forster’s novel is similar to that of the typical Victorian romance novel as produced by Eleanor Lavish or the

already cited Marie Corelli, as George Paizis reveals in his identification of the closure of the romance novel:

the third and final element of the narrative dynamic is the Solution [. . .] In romances, the denouement, the point of convergence and unravelling of the textual threads, is the last scene between the heroine and hero. As such it brings together and resolves the elements of the narrative that went towards creating the drama [. . .] The final scene also confirms the overcoming of obstacles'.⁹³

I believe that Paizis's appraisal is far from the case for *A Room with A View*. Forster's closure of the novel is so problematic that he later sought to explain his purpose in a postscript, written in 1958, fifty years after the initial publication of the novel, 'A View without a Room', which seeks to reveal the considerably more ironic nature of the closure than Paizis supposes. Forster's diaries of 1905 serve as evidence of his consideration of this very problem:

artists now realise that marriage, the old full stop, is not an end at all, the second, because it would be fine to end happily & they cannot. It doesn't mean that they are pessimistic in life, but that they are too clumsy to be optimistic in art. For art is concerned with complete things, life puts up with incompleted, does not - or should not – apply the test of durability (*KMAC*, 12/7 MS, 'The Notebook Journal')

⁹³ George Paizis, *Love and the Novel: the Poetics and Politics of Romantic Fiction* (Basingstoke and London: MacMillan, 1998), p. 148.

Indeed, the intermingling of romance forms with high literary works is evident from an examination of Forster's reading of the period where, as he drafted the Italian novels he read Wells, Conrad and Bennet alongside popular romance writers such as Marion Crawford and Seton Merriman (*KMAC*, EMF 13/12 MS). To the close reader, the pseudonym Forster awards Lavish as creator of 'Under a Loggia' is thus especially revealing; the 'prank' of 'Joseph Emery Prank' is just the 'playful, self-cancelling' tactic that Marcel Cornis-Pope views as an archetype of the self-referential novel.⁹⁴ This game of character nomination serves similar intertextual functions elsewhere in *A Room with a View* and is a recurring feature of Forster's fiction more widely. The Emersons of the novel are clearly related in their libertarianism to the American transcendentalists, a fact self-consciously exposed when Mrs. Honeychurch remarks that 'I trusted they were no relations of Emerson the philosopher, a most trying man' (*ARWAV*, 121). The tissue of quotations that surrounds the characterisation of the Emersons is revealed upon the Rev. Beebe's and Freddie Honeychurch's first visit to them at Cissie Villa where their;

'sitting-room [. . .] was blocked with books [. . .] 'What have they got? Byron. Exactly. "A Shropshire Lad". Never heard of it. "The Way of All Flesh". Never heard of it. Gibbon. Hullo! Dear George reads German. Um – um – Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and so we go on'' (*ARWAV*, 132-3).

Nowhere, however, are their literary precedents more fully revealed than in the description of 'the cornice of the wardrobe [where] the hand of an amateur had painted this inscription: 'Mistrust all enterprises that require new clothes.''' (*ARWAV*,

⁹⁴ Marcel Cornis-Pope, 'Self-referentiality', *International Postmodernism: Theory and Practice*, p. 257.

133). The (mis)quotation from Thoreau's *Walden* pre-figures the similarly transcendentalist pastiche of a Whitmanesque bathing scene at the 'sacred lake', discussed in Chapter Six.⁹⁵ Similar intertextually playful nominations abound throughout Forster's fiction, from the Schlegel sisters of *Howards End* who, as Stuart Sillars notes, share their name 'with one of the more significant German philosophers of the early romantic movement', to *A Room with a View*'s aesthetic Vyse whose 'vice', as I shall explore below, precludes any realistic chance of a romantic allegiance with Lucy Honeychurch.⁹⁶

The epistolary section that occurs within Chapter Eleven of *A Room with a View* presents another recurrent thread of stylistic playfulness evident throughout Forster's fiction. Michael Levenson describes this as Forster's 'strategy of pretending to employ traditional narrative functions even while exposing their status as conventions through the very act of mimicking them'.⁹⁷ The incursion of this epistolary section from Chapter Eleven begins a consistent engagement with jarring epistolary sections at play throughout Forster's fiction. It is part of what David Hayman recognises as 'destabilizing the reading process, making distancing procedures a part of the message', a tactic that he identifies within the modern novel as especially employed within the 'epistolary novel [. . . where] we participate more or less directly in the production of the text'.⁹⁸ Stuart Sillars discusses perhaps the most famous epistolary section within Forster's fiction, the opening chapter of *Howards End*, commenting on the somewhat arbitrary, rather flippant tone of the

⁹⁵ The exact quotation is to '*Distrust all enterprises . . .*'. Is it too much to imagine that the misquotation is a deliberate tactic to draw attention to the remotivation of the intertext?

⁹⁶ Sillars, *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing, 1910-1920*, p. 45.

⁹⁷ Michael Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form from Conrad to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 117.

⁹⁸ Hayman, David, *Re-forming the Narrative: Towards a Mechanics of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 8;12.

narrator's remark that 'One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister' (*HE*, 19) as an example of how the narrator 'is admitting the reader into the secret that novel-writing is an improvisatory and imperfect business, implying that one might just as easily have begun in any of several other places.'⁹⁹ Indeed, this tacit undermining of the epistolary mode through the opening comment is, as Sillars rightly identifies, another facet of the self-reflexive nature of Forster's practice, where he 'is speaking of a literary convention that he both accepts and wryly satirises'.¹⁰⁰

Sillars's and Paul Armstrong's excellent analyses of the narrative function of the novel need little elaboration from me. *Howards End* continues many of the same concerns of Forster's earlier works, often re-doubling these efforts through the depth of intertextual reference. To dwell briefly upon the text, it is notable that Forster's wilful revelation of the interconnectedness of his work appears to take a step forward here. Tibby Schlegel's revelation that 'I like Guy and Mr. Vyse most' (*HE*, 118), links Schlegel to the 'vice' implied within Mr. Vyse's name and his associations with aesthetic homoeroticism whilst it also reveals the fictive inter-relation of Forster's worlds. Furthermore, Frank Kermode astutely identifies 'a mysterious Miss Quested' who appears within Chapter 9 of the novel, playing the piano briefly at the end of Chapter IX of *Howards End*, again linking the fictional milieus of the characters whilst highlighting their fictive natures.¹⁰¹

The intertextual function of *Maurice* is deeply inter-linked with issues of contending theories of homosexuality addressed in detail in Chapters Five and Six. However, the novel's self-reflexivity goes considerably further than this. Intertexts

⁹⁹ Sillars, *Structure and Dissolution in English Writing, 1910-1920*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Kermode, *Concerning E.M. Forster*, p. 29.

are self-consciously acknowledged throughout the text as Maurice Hall's means of coming to a burgeoning understanding of his own identity, the classics being a particularly compelling site of remotivational contest. The young protagonist seeks an affirmative Hellenic statement of his escalating same-sex desire in a relative's library: 'Books: the school library was immaculate, but while at his grandfather's he came across an unexpurgated Martial, and stumbled about in it with burning ears' (*M*, 27). However, Forster is sure to measure this against the prescriptions of a post-Arnoldian public school and university system which hopes to inscribe its own meanings upon Hellenic intertexts. At Hall's school leaving service, he is awarded 'Grote's *History of Greece* amid tremendous applause' (*M*, 28). The award symbolises barely deserved and homosocially oriented academic respectability that is similarly constructed by a don's later instruction amidst a translation class to '“Omit: a reference to the unspeakable vice of the Greeks.”' (*M*, 50) Clive Durham's similar sexual awakening, however, is consciously formulated from an awareness of 'The love that Socrates bore Phaedo' (*M*, 91) that again demonstrates the shifting nature of the intertexts' meaning. Moreover, Forster consciously critiques the cultural imperialism of the Arnoldian notion of the Hebraic and Hellenic. The novelist echoes Wilde's famous employment of the story of David and Jonathan in his own remotivation of Biblical intertexts to affirm the legitimacy of same sex relationships, describing Maurice Hall's identification of 'David and Jonathan; there was even the 'disciple that Jesus loved' (*M*, 68). With reference to the Wilde Trial, discussed in Alan Parkes' critique of modernist censorship, Forster deepens the range of intertextual reference further so that Hall identifies himself to his family doctor as one of the 'unspeakables of the Oscar Wilde sort' (*M*, 136).¹⁰²

¹⁰² Adam Parkes, *Modernism and the Theatre of Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996),

Indeed, Forster is clear to further develop the trope of a writer within his novels as, in preparation to see the hypnotist Lasker-Jones, Maurice Hall goes further than just constructing a notion of himself through the collection of intertexts. Forster makes him enter into self-inscription, contributing to the developing psycho-analytic literature of the period by attempting to ‘compose a written statement about his case’ (*M*, 151). Whilst undergoing treatment Hall is, furthermore, described as merely a vessel for the contending intertexts from which he hopes to weave a coherent narrative, ‘a bundle of voices, not Maurice, and now he could almost hear them quarrelling inside him’ (*M*, 154).

As well as the central epistolary section marking Clive Durham’s repudiation of his homosexual identity - notable for its extreme brevity of chapter length and jarring epistolary moment - the novel also contains other self-reflexive devices that mark a further progression of Forster’s novelistic practice. As Hall’s and Durham’s Cambridge romance unfolds, Forster writes a section that appears to be less a pastiche than a sincere homoerotic re-working of the pages of a romance novel whose conventions my analysis reveals Forster was readily aware of:

They swirled across the bridge and into the Ely road. Maurice said ‘Now we’ll go to Hell.’ The machine was powerful, he reckless naturally. It leapt forward into the fens and the receding dome of the sky. They became a cloud of dust, a stench, and a roar to the world, but the air they breathed was pure, and all the noise they heard was long drawn cheer of the wind (*M*, 72).

This image of romantic flight from the constraints of authority is as self-consciously literary as Forster's pastiche of the romance novel written by Eleanor Lavish in *A Room with a View* and prefigures what Kristin Ramsdell identifies as the emergence alongside 'the modern gay movement [. . . of] the publishing of gay and lesbian fiction, including romance'.¹⁰³

For the defender of the sexually explicit in others' work (Forster, for example, acted as an expert witness in the *Lady Chatterley* trial) it is depressing that Forster felt it necessary to suppress anything other than the posthumous publication of his own work and continued to vacillate over the nature of the novel's ending and the extreme self-reflexivity of this ending.¹⁰⁴ The composition of *Maurice* led to a considerable barren period in his creative production.¹⁰⁵ The novel's resolution is a highly contingent one in which the protagonist and Alec Scudder are not granted any facade, however narratorially undermined, of a realist ending to their romance. Whilst they are condemned to 'take to the greenwood' (*M*, 185) this ending is fully consigned to the realm of the absolutely artificial:

the closing of a book that would never be read again, and better close such a book than leave it lying about to get dirtied. The volume of their past must be restored to its shelf here, here was the place, amid the darkness and perishing flowers. (*M*, 213)

¹⁰³ Kristin Ramsdell, *Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre* (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1999), p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ C.f. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 2, p. 311 for an account of Forster's participation as an expert witness in the *Lady Chatterley* trial.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

The published ending masks the presence within Forster's papers of an epilogue which is directly opposite in its orientation to 'A View without a Room' and its puncturing of a realist romantic closure. This final chapter was never allowed to reach publication as Forster finally did not wish to countenance a realistic portrayal of a sexually liberated Maurice who resides in the woods of Yorkshire as a forester, living alongside Scudder as partners in a poor but realistic world. The Maurice Hall who Forster excises from the published draft is 'a new man [who] throbbed – tougher, more centralised, in as good form as ever, but formed in a fresh mould, where muscles and sunburn proceed from inward health' (KMAC, EMF/1/5/2 p. 2). Instead, Maurice and his companion are consigned to a self-consciously literary 'Greenwood', to reside forever as the residents of a 'volume' from which they might never escape, a mark of Forster's commitment to the self-reflexivity of his fiction.

The figure of the frustrated writer once more emerges in numerous guises within *A Passage to India*. Dr. Aziz's failure to compose a letter to his English superior, Dr. Callender, within the second chapter of the novel prefigures Narayan's eponymous *English Teacher's* failure to express his subalternity in his letter of resignation. This small literary failure from the aspiring post-colonial poet foreshadows the more critically noted literary failure experienced by Mrs Moore in the aftermath of Marabar and the ontological crisis it represents for her where, in the face of the echo:

she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul, the mood of the last two months took definite form at last and she realized that she didn't want

to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God. (*API*, 133)

Mrs. Moore's intertextual wrestling with the inexpressibility of her own words alongside those of the Bible is part of a larger intertextual web at play within the text. If Marabar represents the literal enactment of Barthes' 'chambre d'échos' then it is reflected within a wider sphere of remotivated intertexts throughout the novel. Next to the 'fragments' of Persian poetry that Aziz 'shores' against his concept of self that other might have 'secretly understood my heart' (*API*, 12) comes a contending popular cultural intertext – Forster posits that whilst Aziz ponders Persian poetry his supposed cultural superiors at the colonial club are engaged in 'The third act of *Cousin Kate*' (17). At one level, this is the characteristic intermingling of high and popular cultural intertexts that Astradur Eysteinnsson notes in his observation that Joyce's *Ulysses*, the high mark of the movement, 'is seething with popular culture: popular songs and music, bits and pieces out of newspapers, religious pamphlets [...] advertisements'.¹⁰⁶ The *Cousin Kate* reference is merely a reformulation of Forster's continuing juxtaposition of high and popular intertexts, a repetition of Jacky Bast's music hall tinged complaint that she will be left 'On the shelf/ On the shelf/ Boys, boys, I'm on the shelf' of *Howards End* in the face of her husband's obsession with Ruskin (*HE*, 64). However, there is a further level to the self-referential play at hand in this seemingly innocuous reference: the choice of Hubert Henry Davis' play, as Kenneth W. Munden notes, concerns 'Cousin Kate Curtis, a novelist' whose job is to sort out a romantic entanglement and affect a happy resolution to a romantic

¹⁰⁶ Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 121.

comedy.¹⁰⁷ Again, Forster's intertexts make subtle reference to the process of literary production and draw attention to the failed romances – both textual and subtextual – within his own novel and its variation from conventional romance forms, a subtle continuation of the 'Prank' of Joseph Emory Prank/Eleanor Lavish's romantic novel writing within *A Room with a View*.

The very textuality of *A Passage to India* is again highlighted within the ironic narrator's commentary on the novel's action:

Most of life is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it, and the books and the talk that would describe it as interesting are obliged to exaggerate, in the hope of justifying their own existence. (*API*, 117)

The novel's final climactic moment presents a typically Forsterian 'muddle' with both Fielding's and Aziz's parties plunged into the river at Mau and amidst the Hindu celebrants, a fluid intermingling of contending viewpoints within a muddle where no one viewpoint gains dominance. Just as the Hindu mantra intertextually floats within the midst of Forster's scene – as cross-cultural a reference as Eliot's 'Shantih. Shantih. Shantih' – so the final image of this scene is one of writing unshackled from a single meaning as 'the letters of Ronny and Adela, broke loose and floated confusedly' (*API*, 282).¹⁰⁸ That this confusion is part of the comic action, rather than these 'fragments' being 'shored' against 'ruin' as in Eliot's poem, perhaps speaks volumes about Forster's greater optimism in the comic and human potential of

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth W. Munden (ed.), *Feature Films, 1921-30 (American Film Institute Catalog of Films Produced in the United States)*, 2 vols. (New York and London: R.R. Bowker Co., 1971), p. 149.

¹⁰⁸ Eliot, *Selected Poems*, p. 67.

ontological crisis.

The shorter fiction, spanning Forster's creative career, demonstrates a similar engagement with issues of intertextuality and self-referentiality. 'The Celestial Omnibus' concerns a journey towards a similar intertextual 'muddle', a 'heaven' where writers mingle and adapt the meanings of their works synchronically, an allegory similar in function to the trope of the simultaneous production of texts in the reading room of the British museum, discussed above. The young, naive unnamed protagonist of the story takes with him to this 'heaven' Septimus Bons, a representative of literary propriety and the enforcer of socially acceptable meanings who 'lent one books, [. . .] he had donated to the Free Library enormously; he presided over the Literary Society' (CSS, 41). Bons's name, a reversal of 'Snob', speaks of his desire for the monologic status of texts. His snobbishness leads to his inability to exist within the dialogic heaven of the story and precipitates his demise.

'The Machine Stops', a Wellsian dystopic pastiche, is a critique of the mechanisation and mass production of culture and what Walter Benjamin terms the 'altered mode of representation [. . .] resulting from reproductive technology'.¹⁰⁹ Whilst there may be some truth in John Carey's criticism of modernism's discontent with the mass production of popular culture in Forster's story, 'the button that produced literature' (CSS, 113) within the titular 'machine' portrays the manufacture of ideologically monologic mass-produced literature rather than Carey's belief that modernist art seeks 'the placing of art beyond the reach of the mass'.¹¹⁰ The commodity fetishism of 'the Book of the Machine' by Vashti, the hero's mother, is

¹⁰⁹ Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, (trans.) J.A. Underwood (London: Penguin, 2008 edition), p. 45.

¹¹⁰ Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 17.

emphasised as she ‘Thrice [. . .] kissed it, thrice inclined her head, thrice she felt the delirium of acquiescence’ (CSS, 114). This single volume with its dictatorial instructions over the way to conduct one’s imprisoned life is critiqued, where all debate and contention between points of view is reduced to an aporia so complete that a single view can be asserted. The story presents this notion of intertextual debate leading to the dissolution of meaning through the discussion of the academic process in a fashion similar to that of Stewart Ansell’s problematic fellowship dissertation in *The Longest Journey*. On a discussion over the correct means of constructing a lecture on the sea, an entity long lost to the inhabitants of the machine, we hear that:

Even the lecturers acquiesced when they found that a lecture on the sea was none the less stimulating when compiled out of other lectures that had already been delivered on the same subject. ‘Beware of first-hand ideas!’ exclaimed one of the most advanced of them. ‘First hand ideas do not really exist. They are but the physical impressions produced by love and fear, and on this gross foundation who could erect a philosophy? Let your ideas be second hand, and if possible tenth-hand, for then they will be removed from that disturbing element – direct observation. (CSS, 133)

Ansell’s discussion of Hegel within *The Longest Journey* relates to the concepts of dialectic and sublation, where his mother objects that he is not willing to simply reformulate the ideas of the ‘stuffy books’ (TLJ, 197) of his academic superiors, but would rather attain sublation to some higher truth via his dialectic with them. The opposite notion is expressed within ‘The Machine Stops’, the distrust of ‘first hand ideas’ within the lecture leading to ‘tenth hand’ re-workings of previous intertexts,

resulting in the eventual reduction of meaning. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, Forster's fiction shows scant faith in the sublation of contending discourses into any higher truth. Nor does he want the nullification of all ideas that Marabar portends. Rather his fiction presents the inter-negation of world views and their joyful clamour for a dominance that never comes. Intellectual vivacity without conclusion is opposed to the result for the machine, vacuity in which all ideas are reduced to a single pale one. This reduction is - again, self-consciously - expressed within the story by way of an intertext from Meredith's 'The Lark Ascending' as being 'seraphically free / From taint of personality' (CSS, 136).

V Elements of Modernism

Where then does Forster's self-reflexivity and narratorial playfulness leave the reader? That his work is increasingly regarded as 'characteristically modernist in a number of ways' is something that David Medalie recognises whilst elucidating the direction of this modernity in a different direction from my own examination.¹¹¹ What Barbara Rosecrance identifies as 'ultimately [. . .] unsuccessful' in Forster's narrator is the failure of 'the desperation of his attempt to harmonize and persuade'.¹¹² However, I believe that Forster's intertextual play, the subtle undermining of narrative authority, the revelation of the constructedness of fiction and the presence of writers within the works themselves might, in the light of this analysis, be viewed as a more conscious failure of a narrator. Paul B. Armstrong and Stewart Sillars recognise the narrative voice as not Forster's own voice but rather the endeavour of a writer who, in Alan Friedman's terms, looks to consistently write in a multivalent fashion 'a work of

¹¹¹ Medalie, *E.M. Forster's Modernism*, p. 101.

¹¹² Barbara Rosecrance, *Forster's Narrative Vision* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 134.

fiction whose hallmarks [lay in . . .] expressing an overt consciousness of itself as artefact'.¹¹³ Naturally, the development of these devices over the course of Forster's novelistic career is striking. Whilst in many ways Robert Langbaum's contention that *A Passage to India* bears scrutiny as a work of high modernism remains true, tracking a course through Forster's earlier fiction suggests that the facets of a self-reflexive modernist style are rapidly developed throughout the course of Forster's fictional career and are not confined to reside within this single work.

¹¹³ Friedman, *Multivalence: the Moral Quality of Form in the Modern Novel*, p. 2.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL APPARATUSES AND THE IMPOSITION OF WORLD VIEWS

I Disconnection

Throughout the previous chapters, it is clear that Forster's place in the evolution of liberal thought is somewhat more complex than widely supposed. Forster's fiction does not solely reproduce nineteenth-century liberal humanism as Sunil Kumar Sarker states. Sarker claims that Forster's writing represents 'a categorical imperative [. . .] to propagate [liberal humanism . . .] through his fictional and non-fictional works'.¹ Indeed, what many take for a desire for 'connection', what R.A. Scott-James, an early reviewer of *Howards End*, claims as Forster's 'motto, not only for his book but also for his method of work', is a more problematic affair than simply the union of inviolable individual souls who are able to unite free from the constraints of society.²

Christopher Lane's comments regarding Forster's hope for connection are observant: 'I think Forster was torn between the hope for "connection" and the realization, undoubtedly magnified by historical circumstances, that [. . .] he had alighted on a more extensive ontological difficulty about human relations'.³ Lane's analysis centres on the 'historical circumstances' of legal proscriptions against male homosexuality, and the 'ontological difficulty' that he believes arises from the inter-class relations prevalent in Forster's fiction that lead to problematic connection. Lane's analysis is highly credible but, as I shall address in the next two chapters, privileges issues of sexual identity above political concerns.

¹ Sunil Kumar Sarker, *E.M. Forster's A Passage to India* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2007), p. 150.

² R.A. Scott-James, 'The Year's Best Novel', *Daily News*, 7th November 1910 in *E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, Philip Gardner (ed.), (London: Taylor & Francis e-library, 1973; 2002), p. 135.

³ Christopher Lane, *The Burdens of Intimacy: Psychoanalysis and Victorian Masculinity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1999), p. 203.

Whilst these sexual concerns are interesting and relevant to an understanding of the fiction, it is the coalescence of political, formal and sexual politics that I believe constitutes a more complete literary schema than has to date been recognised. Forster's liberalism is difficult to separate from his emerging sexual identity. He explored both topics on the hearth-rug of Apostles' discussions, just as his dialogic method and means of presenting it were learned there. In Dickinson more than any other influence, Forster found a model for the unification of these influences, since Dickinson was a man at the heart of the New Liberal socialistic renovation of political liberal ideology whose own homosexuality was conceptualised via the classics alongside his Socratic method.

In previous chapters, I have explored Dickinson's place within this evolution of political liberal thought and have examined Forster's reformulation in prose of Dickinson's dramatic dialogue form via the creation of a polyphonic novel that undermines monologic narrative statements in a quest to undermine didactic novelistic practice. Moreover, in the previous chapter, the depth of Forster's stylistic engagement with what Lane terms the ontological problems of human relations has become apparent via the novelist's consistent revelation of the social codification of signifying practices. Ontological crisis, as we have seen, lies at the heart of Forster's stylistic concerns and is unified to a consistent desire that any form of 'connection' between individuals or social groups comes not through the imposition of one world view upon another but rather via the recognition of the limitation of all viewpoints. This chapter examines the extent to which Forster's fiction demonstrates not a connection of ideas, but a war for hegemonic dominance of one world view over another.

As examined in Chapter One, Forster's early short story 'The Machine Stops' provides an example of a conception of social mechanisms based on apparatuses which are presented and controlled by a dominant world view 'to equip subjects with

the forms of consciousness necessary for them to assume their posts or functions' within the remit of that world view's perspective.⁴ However, whilst the story presents a convenient first starting point, an example of a world view which attempts to enslave all to its perspectives, the pressing of social apparatuses is present throughout all of Forster's fiction, in the forms of 'representatives of authority [such] as school teachers, doctors and clergymen', as Philip Gardner notes.⁵ Gardner claims that a critical appreciation of the negative portrayal of such apparatuses within Forster's fiction springs from the publication of *Maurice* in 1971 and the attendant 'revelation' of Forster's homosexuality. This, I believe, is only obliquely to appreciate the depth of Forster's understanding of the workings of these apparatuses. That his disdain for the enforcement of a world view upon apparatuses of social authority was particularly acute when he addressed it to the nature of homosexuality is unquestionable. In Chapter Five I examine those mechanisms which seek to pathologise, define and marginalize the homosexual subject. I believe, however, that that this is only one facet of a wide reaching portrayal of society. Forster's conception of these social apparatuses is distinct. As Gardner notes, the medical establishment, education, law, business and culture number amongst the institutions he wished to reveal as the vehicles of repression and mono-perspectivism. Forster ironically reveals their attempts at asserting single world views by placing them in tense dialogic relation with contending perspectives, making the competition for dominance dialogic. I therefore wish to examine Forster's presentation and ironisation of three such apparatuses: education, particularly the public school and its didacts; the use of culture, particularly in the figure of the 'man of culture' and the 'pseudo aesthete' figures that recur throughout much of Forster's fiction; and the church, both as a means of enforcing dominant world views and as the refuge to propriety of those who are otherwise marginalized by dominant world views.

⁴ Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, p. 148.

⁵ Gardner (Ed.), *E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, p. 37.

II Education and the Moulding of Character

Education proves to be a particularly fruitful subject of Forster's attention, from the earliest short stories to his last published works. Here, again we see the influence of Dickinson in his attitude to the Public School system in particular. Philalethes of *After Two Thousand Years* outlines to a resurrected Plato the workings of the modern public school and its social function in one of Dickinson's modern Socratic dialogues:

PH: We have, in our country, certain institutions which resemble, more than anything else among us, your Sparta. In these places boys are taught to act all together. Individual tastes, and above individual consciences, are discouraged, and if possible suppressed. To feel and act altogether is thought more important than to act rightly, and to follow a leader to destruction nobler than to take a lonely road to salvation. (*ATTY*, 92)

Furthermore, Philalethes goes on to discuss the workings of the Public School as being founded less upon the intellectual than upon the ideological indoctrination of the pupil, stating that at the moment of national crisis 'The old school they cry, the old regiment, the old country, the old empire, whether it is right or wrong; and that call washes out any faint and feeble traces that books or talk might have scribbled on the surface of their minds' (*ATTY*, 92). In Dickinson's work we once more encounter a strong thread of influence in providing a model of the mechanistic function of the Public School in asserting the veracity of dominant world views' perspectives, one which could well be interpreted as influential to Forster.

Forster's early text 'The Story of a Panic' provides his first fictional ironisation of the spirit of the English public school and its attendant world view of 'muscular Christianity'.⁶ The narrator of the story, a man on holiday with Eustace, the tale's main subject, asserts his reliability in the opening paragraph, stating himself to be a 'plain, simple man, with no pretensions of literary style' ('The Story of a Panic', *CSS*, 9). Lawrence Brander states that 'we are bound to believe him'. But, in my view, Forster's use of him is, as Wilfred Healey Stone comments, 'ironic', though not perhaps in the way that Stone analyses it.⁷ Of the product of the public school, Forster was later to write: 'He has been taught at his public school that feeling is bad form. He must not express joy or sorrow, or even open his mouth too wide when he talks- his pipe might fall out if he did' (*AH*, 15). The narrator of 'The Story of a Panic' appears to conform to this portrayal in his appraisal of the inter-mixing of the English and the Italians: 'this habit of promiscuous intimacy was perfectly intolerable, and could only lead to familiarity and mortification for all' ('The Story of a Panic', *CSS*, 22). Forster's later appraisal of the English public schools' attitude to emotion is irrefutably ironic and negative. The narrator of 'The Story of a Panic's conformity to this irony, however, appears to have been missed. The narrator's attitude reflects the public schools' commitment to the development of 'muscular Christianity' which Henry Randolph Harrington notes appears equally evident in the narrator's assertion that Eustace is a damnable example of effeminate youth as 'his features were pale, his

⁶ For studies on the evolution of the concept of muscular Christianity c.f. Henry Randolph Harrington's *Muscular Christianity: A Study of the Development of a Victorian Idea* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971) or Donald E. Hall's *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; 2006).

⁷ Lawrence Brander, *E.M. Forster: A Critical Study* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), p. 202; Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain*, p. 132. However, Stone's claims that this irony was between Forster's 'present and outgrown self' (132) or that 'might it not represent Forster's attempts to provide Eustace with the paternal protection he himself longed for as a counterforce to dreadful aunts and guardians' (133) appears to my mind to be an act of amateur psychology which does not value the philosophical underpinnings of Forster's stories or appreciate the ironic distance between the narrative voice and authorial intention that is a key facet of my investigations in Chapter Three.

chest contracted and his muscles underdeveloped' (CSS, 10).⁸ The narrator judges Eustace as 'feminised' deviation from the normative model of masculinity asserted by the bourgeois, conservative world prevalent in Edwardian England and developed by the public school.⁹ Forster goes even further in his ironising of the narrator, the representative product of this apparatus and its world view, by internally revealing the contradictions within the narrator's position: the 'delicate' Eustace's actions and deviation from the narrator's world view can, to the latter's mind, be eradicated by the administration of 'a sound thrashing' (CSS, 10; 22). The internal contradiction of the symptoms of supposed deviance from a world view and their apparent cure are clearly ironic, evidence of the internal destabilisation of the dominance of the narrative voice.

The Longest Journey's Herbert Pembroke provides perhaps the most famous example of the repressive school master within Forster's fiction. He inhabits the world of the Sawston and its school which for Forster became emblematic of all that he came to ironise for its suburban constraint. This fictional town is the embodiment of the English public school system which Forster himself so despised during his days at Tonbridge School.¹⁰ The school is symbolically described by the narrator as 'a fortress of learning' (TLJ, 155) which, like the Pension Bertolini in the opening chapter of *A Room with a View*, is decorated with symbols of the world view which it wishes to enforce. In Herbert Pembroke's opening address to the boys of Dunwood House we learn of 'portraits of empire builders hung on the wall and he pointed to them. He quoted imperial poets' (TLJ, 158). Pembroke's educational methodology is

⁸ For details on the Victorian public school fixation with the ethos of *mens sana in corpore sano*, especially as epitomised in Thomas Arnold's archetypal model at Rugby School, c.f. Bruce Haley's excellent *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1978).

⁹ Chapter One of Lyn Pykett's *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995) gives a cogent account of the 'feminisation' of the male body which does not conform to prevalent notions of Victorian masculinity.

¹⁰ According to P.N. Furbank, Forster's schooldays were 'wretched, probably the most unhappy of his life', Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 41.

that of drilling a young boy into the miniature version of the dominant world view's ideal. He asserts in the opening of his address to the boys of his house that 'school is the world in miniature' (*TLJ*, 157) and as such the teacher's role is one of correction, discipline and instruction. His advice to Rickie Elliot on this matter is illustrative:

[. . .] you cannot be friends either with boy or with man unless you give yourself away in the process, and Mr. Pembroke did not commend this. He, for 'personal intercourse', substituted the safer 'personal influence', and gave his junior hints on the setting of friendly traps in which the boy does give himself away and reveals his shy, delicate thoughts, while the master, intact, commends or corrects them (*TLJ*, 164).

The message appears clear. The teacher, according to Herbert Pembroke's assessment of his role, should in no way reveal any personality of his own but should rather act as the inviolable conduit of instruction of the dominant world view, correcting the deviance of a boy's 'shy, delicate thoughts', commending adherence to those ideals valued whilst maintaining himself 'intact' untouched by any dialogue with a contending perspective.

Maurice's Mr. Read, the protagonist's prep school teacher, fulfils a very similar role, using his status as an authority figure to assert the dominant Edwardian world view on the nature of sexuality and sexual education. As Joyce Hotchkiss notes of Mr. Read, 'He immediately seems an absurdly conscientious do gooder [. . .] with a pompous attitude and a cliché dominated mind'.¹¹ Hotchkiss views Read, as I do, as one of a group of authority figures throughout Forster's fiction who are 'in Edwardian England, which as school masters they are helping to form'.¹² Thus, Mr. Read's attitude, stated in an ironic fashion by Forster's narrator as progressive amongst his

¹¹ Joyce Hotchkiss, 'Romance and Reality: The Dualistic Style of E.M. Forster's *Maurice*', *Journal of Narrative Technique*, No. 4, (1974), p. 167.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.168.

colleagues, asserts the primacy of heterosexual marital intercourse in his preparation for entry into his public school, forwarding this procreative model of sexuality as the sum of all sexual activity. In presenting the values of the dominant world view Read uses the support of another apparatus, that of religion (examined in the next section of this chapter) to add authority to his assertions:

He spoke of the male and the female, created by God in the beginning in order that the earth might be peopled, and of the period when the male and the female receive their powers [. . .] He spoke of the ideal man - chaste with asceticism. He sketched the glory of woman [. . .] To love a noble woman, to protect and serve her - this, he told the little boy, was the crown of life. (*M*, 8)

Procreation is seen as the prime object of sexual activity, one whose sole position as the total of intercourse is supported via the reference to the book of Genesis and the biblical formation of the sexes, thus once more asserting the Christian ethic of the English public school. Furthermore, Read, like the earlier Herbert Pembroke, swiftly rebuffs Maurice Hall's challenge of this viewpoint, that 'I think I shall not marry' (*M*, 21) with a statement that fails to even acknowledge Hall's previous utterance: "“This day ten years hence- I invite you and your wife to dinner with me and mine”" (*M*, 22), denying the young man's attempts to resist his didacticism. The result, as so often with Forster's schoolboys, is one of compliance. As a result of Read's assertions we learn that 'Maurice began to contemplate marriage' (*M*, 22). The irony of Read's actions is that if he wished to promote the prominence of procreative sex in Maurice's life he may very well have asserted his world view more effectively through some engagement with the subject he wished to avoid, homosexuality, given that, as Jeffrey Weeks notes, 'By the 1850s homosexuality was institutionalised in some of the major schools'.¹³ Forster's irony is that by Read making Maurice innocently unaware of any

¹³ Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth-century to the Present* (London: Quartet Press, 1977), p. 34.

form of homosexuality on arrival at his public school he allows Hall to form his own opinions less influenced by the dominant world view's judgements than Read's didactic approach suggests he and his type might wish.

Indictments of *A Passage to India's* Cyril Fielding are a frequent characteristic of criticism of the novel. He is often seen as a figure who has 'come into line with the oppressors of India' (*API*, 202). Critics as notable as Edward Said cite Fielding as the character with whom 'Forster identifies the course of the narrative'.¹⁴ On this supposedly incriminating basis Said damns both to charges of imperialist marginalisation of dissident Indian voices. I partially agree with this negative appraisal of Fielding's actions and attitudes, particularly towards the close of the novel. One may, however, view the novel's early portrayal of Fielding as amongst the more sympathetic representations of schoolmasters within Forster's fiction. Early in the novel he is less willingly the symbol of the 'repudiation of the Raj' than Brian May contends that he is throughout its course.¹⁵ Fielding is a man who has enigmatically had a career which 'though scholastic was varied and had included going to the bad and repenting thereafter' (*API*, 79). The implications of his 'going to the bad' seem to centre on a flight to India from the norms of the English educational establishment in some form of disgrace, sliding away from the public school ethos highlighted above. His career has progressively seen that 'public school boys, mental defectives and policemen had all come his way' (*API*, 79). Whilst the ironic narrator casts aspersions upon Fielding's career path, the reader observes in him none of the moral didacticism of Herbert Pembroke, Mr. Read *et al.* The early Fielding of the 'Mosque' section of *A Passage to India* embodies S.P. Rosenbaum's portrait of the Cambridge Apostles in his dialogic educational method: 'More important than the particular points of view that were argued [. . .] was their belief that one learned from opposing opinions'.¹⁶ Fielding appears to value this dialogic method and is portrayed

¹⁴ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf Press, 1993), pp. 203-4.

¹⁵ May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist*, p. 117.

¹⁶ Rosenbaum, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, p. 166.

as ‘Neither a missionary nor a student, he was happiest in the give and take of private conversation. The world, he believed, was a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can do so by the help of culture and intelligence’ (*API*, 80). The Arnoldian belief in ‘culture and intelligence’ as the means by which men can reach mutual understanding is a view contrasted by his later ‘hardening’ to the dominant Anglo-Indian perspective. I shall suggest that Forster does not support Fielding’s perspective as some of his critics have supposed.¹⁷ However, whether one is to argue for Forster presenting Fielding as an ideal educator or not, his method appears at least more sympathetically portrayed by the author. Far from the rigid rows of portraits of imperialists in Herbert Pembroke’s Dunwood House, Dr. Aziz comments upon the eclectic mix of Fielding’s possessions and their dissimilarity to those of Forster’s typical schoolrooms and characters:

“But I always thought that English man kept their rooms tidy. It seems that is not so [. . .] Everything ranged coldly upon shelves was what I thought [. . .]” (*API*, 82).

In a narrative so deeply enriched by symbolism, the plethora of influences in Fielding’s surroundings, their disorder and contention and Fielding’s attitude to teaching as best served by ‘private conversation’ at least lay the foundations in Forster’s last novel for a schoolmaster who is less didactically assertive of the dominant world view of his society. Fielding, prior to his ‘hardening’, presents a more welcoming adherent of dialogism and the eclectically aporetic.

¹⁷ For a cogent illustrative example of the view of Forster as an Arnoldian disciple, inherently cherishing and expressing the redemptive power of culture over anarchy cf. H.A. Smith’s ‘Forster’s Humanism and the Nineteenth-century’ in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Malcolm Bradbury (ed.) (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1966).

III Cultural Assertion

If the schoolmaster is portrayed as a didactic figure who imposes a particularly repressive dominant world view upon his charges, then a contending and equally important figure emerges throughout Forster's fiction. H.S. Jones insightfully analyses the representation of the Victorian man of letters in his exploration of Forster's Cambridge background, and identifies a character type devoted to 'the lifelong task of mental cultivation for its own sake' similar to Mark Pattison in Victorian Oxford.¹⁸ Amongst Forster's men of culture it is perhaps again only with *A Passage to India* that we encounter a sympathetically portrayed figure, one not willing to employ works of art primarily as a vehicle for the enforcement of a world view or as a means of asserting one's own respectability within and conformity to that world view.¹⁹

Forster's essay 'The Duty of Society to the Artist' articulates the perspective of representatives of the dominant world view that 'I always assumed that art existed to make men better citizens' (*TCFD*, 105). This is a clear and ironic statement that Forster sets forth to ironise within his fiction, the notion that art moulds individuals' thoughts along lines acceptable to the dominant force of any society.

Within Forster's fiction there appear to be two main contending formulations of the cultured man. There is a regularly recurring figure who wishes to assert the primacy of the dominant world view of his society via interpretations of cultural artefacts. This figure views culture in Arnoldian terms, seeing it as the link of 'man's two great natural forces, Hebraism and Hellenism' that will create 'a joint force of right thinking and strong doing to carry him [mankind and their 'perfect' society] on

¹⁸ H.S. Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 9.

¹⁹ 'Man of culture' is a term I employ as, despite the presence of the Schlegel sisters, Mrs. Failing and Eleanor Lavish as women of culture, the targets of Forster's opprobrium are mostly male.

towards perfection'.²⁰ Art is, to this figure, a moral force that will civilize people in line with the dominant world view's notions of propriety ensuring that, as Forster would put it, the subject will 'do' according to polite society.²¹ The other position of the man of culture, dealt with in considerably more detail in Chapter Five, could perhaps be termed the 'pseudo-aesthete', encountered within many of Forster's fictional works. This figure, as Joseph Bristow notes, finds his masculinity questioned by representatives of 'imperialist masculinity' and so seeks refuge in the ostensible respectability of culture. He is a character whom Bristow terms 'the intellectual artistic type of leisure class aesthete'.²² A complete study of the occurrence of 'the man of culture' is beyond the remit of this chapter. In the guise of the pseudo-aesthete, his presence is evident in *The Longest Journey*, *Maurice* and *Howards End*. These characters are addressed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six. Bristow contends that in dialogue with the 'cricket playing son of the empire' the aesthete may integrate himself into the respectable world of his antagonist, providing the latter with a reflection of his socially valued culture whilst obtaining from him in return a similar association with the acceptable masculinity of 'muscular Christianity'.²³

Representatives of both aspects of the man of culture exist in abundance in the short stories. Stephen of Forster's posthumously published 'Ansell' - written 'around 1902-1903' (*TLC*, 'Introduction', 9) - provides one example of the 'effeminate' young scholar who describes 'the slope of my shoulders and the curve of my back and contraction of my chest' (*TLC*, 30). Stephen, placed as Joseph Bristow notes, in direct

²⁰ Matthew Arnold, Conclusion to *Culture and Anarchy*, in *Selected Prose of Matthew Arnold*, P.J. Keating, (ed.), London: Penguin (1970) p. 296.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Joseph Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing After 1885* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), p. 56. I would, however, strongly contest Bristow's thesis that Forster 'clearly identified' (56) with the aesthete figure so often encountered within his works: as the analysis of Chapters Five and Six progresses I contend that these figures' assertions of societal respectability due to their cultural knowledge and attempts to enforce world views via the medium of artistic interpretation are as strongly ironised as the many other positions at play within Forster's fiction. Indeed, one might interpret the tenuous social respectability afforded by the pseudo-aesthete's role as an act of self-conscious closeting, a position I seek to explore in Chapter Six.

²³ Ibid., p. 57.

contrast to the muscular farm boy Ansell, attempts to assert his place in society via the social legitimacy gained from his academic dissertation upon ‘the Greek optative’ (*TLC*, 31) which, if successful in a fellowship examination, would allow him to ‘receive eighty pounds a year and rooms in college and a free meal every evening, and be allowed a place to impart my knowledge to others’ (*TLC*, 31), in short, to be allowed a place to teach the youth of the empire and thus gain social acceptance. The irony of Stephen in ‘Ansell’ is that his manuscript is an attempt to culturally sublimate his sexuality into a socially acceptable thesis, distilling a Hellenically oriented homoerotic desire into a ‘respectable’ treatise on Greek grammar. He inadvertently places himself, in every sense, in the hands of the muscular ‘man of nature’. Ansell destroys Stephen’s chance of social acceptance physically via the loss of his notes and he is placed into an aporetic relation with him via his contending belief in the natural life. In another sweep of irony, it is their homoerotic friendship that leads Stephen to participate in the respectable physical life that results in ‘a bruise on my shoulder from shooting and a cut on the foot from bathing’ (*TLC*, 35) after the failure of his academic ambitions. In the search for respectability in the face of the physical deficiency via a sublimation of his effeminacy in academia, ‘Ansell’ sees Stephen attain respectable physicality via country life but with it the opposite in his burgeoning relationship with the farm boy. Culture offers the prospect of a refuge from public homoerotic temptation and towards social respectability, a refuge sought as a result of supposed physical inadequacy. When his place in academia is lost, his respectability is ostensibly gained through allegiance with Ansell’s world of physicality. However, in a pre-figuring of the events of *Maurice*, Ansell’s muscularity is so homo-erotically charged as to undermine this source of social propriety also. The man of culture cannot wholly transform himself in terms acceptable to society.

Philip Herriton appears as the first in a string of such men of culture throughout Forster’s novels. As Glen Cavaliero notes, ‘Philip, like Mr. Bons, is a pseudo-aesthete’ and like so many of those who precede and follow him, he attempts

to carve a niche for himself as a respectable aficionado of the culture in which he immerses himself.²⁴ David Shusterman observes that ‘It is the aesthetic vision that envelops Philip, the vision of beauty that surpasses everything’ yet this vision of beauty is one founded solely within the artistic not the physical, an artistic conception which Philip Herriton creates for himself as a means of escaping his feelings of physical inadequacy.²⁵ Forster neatly summarises this feeling in the opening of Chapter Five of the novel: ‘below the eyes all was confusion, and those who believe that destiny lies in the mouth and chin shook their heads when they looked at him’ (*WAFTT*, 70). Herriton’s reaction to a ‘weakness’ of the physiognomy which marks him as not possessing the requisite manliness to ‘progress’ - a facet of Victorian and Edwardian scientific belief outlined by Daniel Pick – means that he has ‘made a niche’ (*WAFTT*, 70) in the realms of a culture.²⁶ Akin to Stephen in the short story ‘Ansell’, discussed above, he uses a means of distance as, whilst he could not face the physical world, he ‘could at all events laugh at it thus attaining an intellectual superiority’ (*WAFTT*, 70). This intellectual superiority comes in the form of assuming an aesthetic pose. He presents the persona of the aesthete, one who is able ‘to wear parti-coloured ties and a squashy hat, to be late for dinner on account of the sunset and to catch art from Burne Jones’ (*WAFTT*, 70). The apotheosis of Philip Herriton’s aesthetic ‘niche’ is Italy, a country he travelled to at ‘twenty-two’ where ‘he absorbed into one aesthetic vision whole olive trees, blue sky, frescoes, country inns, saints, peasants, mosaics, statues, beggars’ (*WAFTT*, 70). This aesthetic vision is notable for the fact that there is no differentiation between ‘statues’ or ‘beggars’, ‘mosaics’ or ‘peasants’. The physical and the artistic are moulded into a uniform aestheticisation of Italy as a cultural ideal which amounts, in Philip Herriton’s eyes, to a ‘culture’ which

²⁴ Cavaliero, *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, p. 67.

²⁵ Shusterman, *The Quest for Certitude in E.M. Forster’s Fiction*, p. 82.

²⁶ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848 – c. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). The text gives an excellent account of the means by which Victorian and Edwardian scientific treatises posited the composition of the human face as an indicator of degenerative impulses.

he creates, avows to understand and holds forth as a mark of his ‘intellectual superiority’.

It is with this notion of superiority as a man of culture that Philip Herriton travels to Italy to avert the marriage of his sister-in-law to Gino Carella. Here he comes face to face with an Italian whose presence quickly challenges the aestheticised view of Italy that he has constructed and which he strongly asserts via the voice of the ‘bouncing narrator’: ‘Philip had seen that face in Italy before a hundred times [. . .] But he did not want to see it opposite him at dinner. It was not the face of a gentleman.’ (*WAFTT*, 41). Forster heavily ironises Herriton’s desire to enforce the propriety of his cultured pose from his first meeting with Gino Carella where Herriton attempts to assert his intellectual superiority via an ostentatious display of scholarship:

‘ “She [Italy] has produced many famous men, for example, Garibaldi and Dante. The latter wrote the *Inferno* the Purgatorio, the Paradiso. The Inferno is the most beautiful’ And with the complacent tone of one who has received a solid education he quoted the opening lines.’ (*WAFTT*, 41)²⁷

The persona Herriton presents to Gino Carella is difficult to maintain in the face of Carella’s real personality. Far from the romantic view of the nation he constructs, Carella is unromantically boorish and joyful in equal measure. Like Cecil Vyse in *A Room with a View*, Herriton is ostensibly ‘in for equality’ (*WAFTT*, 43). He is a

²⁷ Philip Herriton’s quotation from the *Inferno* (Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita/ Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,/Che la dirritta via era smaritta) is particularly ironically remotivated by Forster, as partially already addressed in the previous chapter. However, Herriton’s quotation (translated by Oliver Stallybrass as ‘Midway this way of life we’re bound upon,/ I woke to find myself in a dark wood,/ Where the right road was wholly lost and gone.’) is particularly pertinent to his employment as a representative of Edwardian cultured men. It is used on Forster’s part against Herriton’s apparent goal of proving his culturally superior knowledge of Italy: Herriton’s quotation can evidently be interpreted as a Forsterian comment of Herriton’s ‘path’ of creating an aestheticised view of Italy as a ‘niche’ for life being ‘wholly lost and gone’ when he is placed within the ‘dark wood’ of Italy itself and confronted by an Italian who undermines his romanticised construction.

believer in the democratising and civilizing effects of culture, yet when he is challenged with what he sees as Gino Carella's 'brutality' (*WAFTT*, 92) he retreats to the position of supposed cultural superiority over Carella. Herriton states his censure of Carella on the grounds that he 'understood Signor Carella was a member of the Italian nobility' and is incapable of accepting him as cultured on the grounds that he is not noble.

Herriton's later responses to Italy are similarly ironically treated by Forster. When he encounters a letter written by Gino Carella he even quails at the insufficiency of the Italian language next to the aestheticised visions he has constructed of it, stating once more in free indirect discourse:

every delicate compliment and superlative [. . .] would have felled an Ox. For a moment Philip forgot the matter in the manner; this grotesque memorial of the land he loved moved him almost to tears [. . .] He knew the originals of these lumbering phrases [. . .] A boulder's a boulder, whether he lives in Sawston or Monteriano' (*WAFTT*, 87).

It is evidently ironic on Forster's part that Phillip Herriton's view of the Italian language has been sublimated to the extent that even confrontation with the utterances of a native speaker fail to conform to his own construction of Italian as the finest medium for the conveyance of what he believes to be the quintessence of culture itself: his idealised notion of Italy.

Even upon his second visit to Italy Philip Herriton remains enshrouded in his own preconception about the country, rather than being 'awakened' by his protracted contact with Gino Carella, as Alan Wilde claims.²⁸ At one of the novel's climactic

²⁸ Alan Wilde, 'The Aesthetic View of Life: *Where Angels Fear to Tread*', *Modern English Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, (1961), p. 207. Wilde claims that Philip Herriton encounters an epiphany upon seeing Caroline Abbot and Gino Carella bathing Carella's child, one which enlightens 'the drabness of

moments, when Philip Herriton sees Caroline Abbot and Gino Carella bathing Carella's son, far from the prevalent critical view that Herriton's 'system of values has been thoroughly revised', I believe that Herriton's adherence to his own aestheticised view of Italy remains resolute.²⁹ This climactic moment of the text is narrated via free indirect discourse with Forster 'bouncing' the reader momentarily into the perspective of Philip Herriton. We directly receive Herriton's view of the scene in an ironically mediated comment that 'Philip entered and saw, to all intents and purposes, the Virgin and Child with Donor' (*WAFTT*, 126).³⁰ It seems clear that Herriton's aestheticisation of Italy extends at this point to transforming that which exists before his very eyes: the scene which he encounters is made artistic to Herriton via its transformation into a version of the renaissance art which he so treasures in his aesthetic vision where Abbot and Carella effectively become 'Virgin' and 'Donor'.

Even at the end of the novel, after the death of Carella's child, the return to Sawston ensures that Herriton's aesthetic view of life never really wavers. The predominant critical view of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* as a text forwarding the emancipation of Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbot concurrently assesses the novel as somewhat puzzling in its conclusion, a position asserted by P.J.M. Scott: 'no convincing answer comes back to the question "So what? What does that idea illuminate in the book?"'³¹ This appraisal of the novel's conclusion is, I believe, a misreading. Herriton views the unrequited nature of Caroline Abbot's passion for Gino Carella as an opportunity to offer his own proposal and thus attain the social

ordinary life' (208) and which is characteristic of Forster's fiction more generally. I hope throughout this chapter to counter this prevalent critical formation that Forster's fiction presents an emancipatory message.

²⁹ Szala, 'North and South: Civilization in Forster's First Novel', p. 35.

³⁰ The root of the difference between Szala's reading of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and my own may lie in our differing conceptions of the function of narrative throughout the text. Szala clearly asserts 'the omniscience of the teller of the story [. . .] the authorial narrator whose views can be assumed to be identical with those of the narrator' ('North and South: Civilization in Forster's First Novel', p.38) and thus sees all narrative interventions within the course of the novel being a clear statement of Forster's opinions of the moral worthiness of the actions of his characters. As I have addressed throughout the course of Chapter Two, I believe Forster's narrative technique is considerably more self-reflexive and dialogic than Szala claims.

³¹ Scott, *E.M. Forster: Our Permanent Contemporary*, p. 51.

propriety he craves through marriage. The aborted proposal is, however, half-hearted even in its conception. It is a defence mechanism against his own incipient attraction for Carella which, upon receipt of the news that Abbot shares this passion for the Italian, he is able to rescind. Thus, the final moments of the novel see Herriton retreat, unemancipated, once more into his own 'niche' of aestheticisation. It is not accidental that before entering 'the St. Gotthard Tunnel' (*WAFTT*, 160), symbolic of an enclosure into one's own perspective, the end of the dialogic relations which the novel's action enacts, the last thing that Herriton sees is another aspect of the Italian landscape he so values 'the Campanile of Airolo' (*WAFTT*, 160). This sparks a further aestheticisation of both the landscape and Abbot who becomes a part of it:

Philip's eyes were fixed on the Campanile of Airolo. But he saw instead the fair myth of Endymion. This woman was a goddess to the end. For her no love could be degrading: she stood outside all degradation. This episode, which she thought so sordid, and which was so tragic for him, remained supremely beautiful. (*WAFTT*, 160)

Herriton thus immortalises Abbot into the general schema of his aesthetic vision alongside the campanile which prompted his new contemplation of her: she become a 'goddess', Endymion in flesh, her dilemma 'tragic' in the literary sense. Far from being a man for whom exposure to the 'true' culture of the pastoral ideal of Italy leads to emancipation from the conformity of his previously repressed life, he remains as deeply entrenched as ever in his own aesthetic vision. He is a man of culture who, despite all evidence to the contrary, sticks steadfastly to a preconceived notion of a country he idealises. There is no 'connection' with other modes of life here. Indeed, Forster shows the protagonist of his first published novel embodying the antithesis of Dickinson's Socratic vision and doomed to unhappiness for it. Herriton is a character so fully entrenched in his own view that death and disaster cannot uproot him from it.

A Room with a View has been more clearly noted for its use of art as a means of constructing dialogic relations between opposing world views. One of the more obvious examples of this debate over the nature of art occurs in Chapter Two of the novel where, as Claude J. Summers notes, ‘Forster uses the works of Giotto both as a mirror by which to reveal the values of his characters and as a touchstone by which to measure them [. . . Giotto] emerges as an ambiguous figure whose protean work reflects the preconceptions of those who observe it [. . .] their projections of their own psychological needs and limitations’.³² Chapter Two sees the two protagonists of the novel, Lucy Honeychurch and George Emerson, together in the cathedral of Santa Croce viewing Giotto’s fresco ‘The Ascension of St. John’ with Mr. Emerson when they encounter the English chaplain in Florence, the Reverend Cuthbert Eager, conducting his own tour of the cathedral’s art works. ‘The Ascension of St. John’ becomes a locus for a clash of world views between the socialist Mr. Emerson and the High Church Rev. Eager. Eager expounds on Giotto’s fresco as a means by which to extol the virtues of the cathedral in which it is housed as an example of the values of adhering to church doctrine:

“Remember,” he was saying, “The facts about this church of Santa Croce; how it was built by faith in the full fervour of medievalism, before any taint of the Renaissance had appeared. Observe how Giotto in these frescoes - now,

³² Claude J. Summers, ‘The Meaningful Ambiguity of Giotto in *A Room with a View*’, *English Literature in Transition*, vol. 30, no. 2, p. 165. I disagree partially with Summers’ appraisal of the role of art within the novel in the second of his distinctions: whilst I agree that Forster employs Giotto within Chapter Two as a means by which to ‘reveal the value of his characters’ I am considerably less certain that their critical appraisals of Giotto are employed by Forster as a means ‘by which to measure them’. Summers claims that Eager is ‘hypocritical [. . .] the novel’s most thorough going villain’ (166) by using Giotto as a vehicle for religious indoctrination whilst Emerson should be viewed as judging ‘the fresco only in terms of its technical competency in depicting the physical’ (168) appears highly questionable, as discussed above. I believe that each employs Giotto’s ‘The Ascension of St. John’ as a means to assert their world views to Lucy Honeychurch and George Emerson, a reading which, as discussed below, I think the largely misunderstood closure of the novel bears out.

unhappily, ruined by restoration - is untroubled by the snares of anatomy and perspective. Could anything be more majestic, more pathetic, beautiful, true? How little, we feel, avails knowledge and technical cleverness against a man who truly feels!" ' (ARWAV, 43)

The structure of Eager's eulogy on the nature of the fresco is highly revealing in two important respects. Before any critical appraisal of the fresco itself takes place, it is prefixed by the assertion of an obviously slanted version of the church's construction which Eager attempts to use as a means to give credence to his view of Giotto. According to Eager's account it is the same uncomplicated medievalism and simple adherence to the doctrine of Christianity which has allowed Santa Croce to be 'built by faith in the full fervour of medievalism' and that has allowed Giotto to be 'untroubled by the snares of anatomy and perspective'. According to Eager's thesis a 'true' appreciation of Giotto's art thus becomes contingent upon first accepting the church as a spiritual guide which must be accepted by virtue of faith. Indeed, it is this faith which the rhetorical structure of his panegyric so wishes to enforce in his statement of the ostensible 'facts' about Giotto and Santa Croce that he attempts to enforce it grammatically through assumption of his audience's compliance with his world view. After rhetorically questioning his audience concerning the superiority of Giotto's work to that imbued with renaissance developments in perspective ('Could anything be more pathetic, beautiful, true?'), Eager assumes the complicity of his audience with his own world view, asserting it via a switch from his interrogative style to the use of the first-person plural, stating on the audience's behalf 'How little, *we* feel, avails knowledge and technical cleverness against a man who truly feels' (My emphasis).

If Rev. Eager is capable of using ‘The Ascension of St. John’ as a means of enforcing his world view upon his audience, as Claude J. Summers notes, so too is Mr. Emerson in his rebuttal of Eager’s assertions. Far from Jeffrey Meyers’s assertion that Eager and his supporters represent ‘snobbery, hypocrisy, repression and sterility’ whilst Emerson and his son are viewed as ‘sincere’ and the forces who, by the end of the novel, have ‘liberated’ Lucy Honeychurch, Mr. Emerson appears to be equally dogmatic in the enforcement of his world view via an appraisal of Giotto.³³ In response to Rev. Eager’s claims Emerson is equally assertive:

“No!” exclaimed Mr. Emerson, in much too loud a voice for church.

“Remember nothing of the sort! Built by faith indeed! That simply means the workmen weren’t paid properly. And as for the frescoes, I see no truth in them. Look at that fat man in blue! He must weigh as much as I do, and he is shooting into the air like an air-balloon” (ARWAV, 43-4).

In an ironic mirroring of Eager’s rhetorical tactics, Emerson similarly subordinates the appraisal of the actual work of art to his own assertions concerning his world view and only then goes on to analyse how ‘The Ascension of St. John’ supports them. His primary assertion is an interrogation of Eager’s claims about the building of Santa Croce as representing the building of the cathedral ‘by faith’. His counter assertion that ‘built by faith’ in fact ‘simply means the workmen weren’t paid enough’ is a broadly socialist claim that the church subordinates the proletariat to the will of the dominant ideology, denying them financial recompense in order to maintain their

³³ Jeffrey Meyers, ‘The Paintings in E.M. Forster’s Italian Novels’, *London Magazine*, vol. 13, (February-March 1974), pp. 53-4.

subordinacy in the power relations which determine the bourgeoisie's domination of material production.³⁴ Again, it is only once his world view has been asserted that Emerson turns his attentions to the Giotto fresco to legitimise it. His aesthetic appreciation of the fresco is based around its absence of scientific knowledge ('And as for the frescoes, I see no truth in them. Look at that fat man in blue! He must weigh as much as I do, and he is shooting into the air like an air-balloon') and is posited by the ironic use of a conjunction to start the sentence, 'And as for the frescoes', as merely an adjunct to his world view. It takes its basis in the rebuttal of Eager's claims that Giotto's greatness is founded in being 'free from the snares of anatomy and perspective' (a facet of his appreciation of Giotto based on his belief that this medievalism is valuable due to its correspondence to a faithful allegiance to the church). Emerson contends that the absence of realism within the work is a mark that there is 'no truth in them' as they do not show any signs of the renaissance. Emerson's valuing of the renaissance appears again Marxian in its conception of history as progressing towards a humanism from which the next inevitable consequence is the revolution of the proletariat in the next phase of historical evolution. Furthermore, in the assertion of this world view, Emerson is even more obvious in his use of rhetorically charged grammatical devices to assert his will: the use of the imperative voice in his order 'Think nothing of the sort!' admits no response. Rather, it is an attempt to wipe out any dialogue between the contending view points for Lucy Honeychurch and his son.

³⁴ Mr. Emerson's claims about the building of Santa Croce appear to be a deliberate mirroring on Forster's part of the statements concerning the church in *The Communist Manifesto*. In response to supposed criticism that 'Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis' Marx and Engels respond that 'The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms ... which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms' (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 103). Emerson's claims that in the building of Santa Croce the 'workers weren't paid enough' seems very similar to this notion that the church in Marxist terms is a vehicle for maintaining 'class antagonisms' by denying the proletariat their fair share of labour capital.

A Room with a View equally presents another outstanding meeting with the pseudo-aesthete in the figure of Cecil Vyse. Vyse gains his social propriety via the well cultured pose of the ‘leisure class aesthete’, a position identified by Joseph Bristow and which Vyse asserts in his claims to Mr. Beebe that “‘I have no profession [. . .] It is another example of my decadence. My attitude - quite an indefensible one - is that so long as I am no trouble to anyone I have a right to do as I like’” (*ARWAV*, 110).³⁵ Yet Vyse’s claims of decadence are ironically undercut by the narrator from the first moment of the character’s introduction into the narrative when he is described in terms that would equally suit Rev. Eager. Far from being the decadent follower of ‘democracy’ (*ARWAV*, 136) he claims to be, Vyse is portrayed from the first as ‘medieval. Like a Gothic statue [. . .] he resembled those fastidious saints who guard the portals of a French cathedral’ (*ARWAV*, 106). Vyse appears to differ from these saints less in terms of the value he places upon the propriety central to the dominant world view than in the choice of the religion which he employs to support it. He supplants the Anglicanism of the Rev. Eager with the very Italian renaissance art which, ironically, Mr. Emerson attempts to employ against Eager.

Like Philip Herriton, Vyse sees himself as an ‘Inglese Italianato [. . .] È un diavolo incarnato’ (*ARWAV*, 116). It is in much the same spirit as Herriton that he constructs a vision of Italy which he has idealised and constructed into a unitary vision of all that is culturally ‘proper’ and which he uses, I will contend in Chapter Five, in order to mask and sublimate his homoerotic desires. Indeed, his cultural appreciation throughout much of *A Room with a View* allows him to make cultural

³⁵ Bristow, *Effeminate England*, p. 56.

distinctions according to his own world view about what will and will not 'do', that most Forsterian of social distinctions. Lucy Honeychurch is valued particularly for her choice of music when, in the midst of cultured metropolitan society at 'Mrs Vyse's Well-Appointed Flat' in Chapter Eleven, she demonstrates that she had been able to 'learn the framework of society' (*ARWAV*, 140-1) to such an extent that she "'Kept to Schumann when, like an idiot, I wanted Beethoven. Schumann was right for this evening. Schumann was the thing [. . .]'" (*ARWAV*, 142) Lucy is, in Vyse's eyes, valued for her adherence to his aesthetic vision.

As John Lucas comments, 'The comedy of Cecil's impercipience reaches its peak in his readiness to see Lucy as a work of art' and this is particularly true in his view of her as reminding 'him of a Leonardo' (*ARWAV*, 108).³⁶ This aestheticisation of Lucy is particularly keen in Chapter Nine of the novel (subtitled 'Lucy as a Work of Art') when, having left the engagement party held for them by Sir Harry Ottway, the couple venture into the woods around Summer Street and Cecil Vyse attempts to steal a kiss amongst the artistically sylvan setting. He becomes irritated that Lucy does not aestheticise him as he does her, stating rhetorically "'I connect you with a view - a certain type of view. Why shouldn't you connect me with a room?'" (*ARWAV*, 125), doing so with a 'tone of subdued irritation' (*ARWAV*, 125) which springs from her inability to conform to the aesthetic vision of their relationship. It is in conformity to his own aestheticised view of femininity, akin to Philip Herriton's view of Caroline Abbot as a 'goddess', that he frames Lucy within the sylvan setting via free indirect discourse as 'some brilliant flower that has no leaves of its own, but blooms abruptly out of a world of green' (*ARWAV*, 126). Forster again ironically uses

³⁶ John Lucas, 'Wagner and Forster: *Parsifal* and *A Room with a View*', *English Literary History*, vol. 33, (1966), p. 104.

the symbolism employed by Vyse within his aesthetic vision. The absence of leaves denotes an unnatural flower, one unable to sustain itself, sustained instead by Vyse's own florid imagination. Yet the ultimate irony of the chapter comes when Vyse receives the kiss he hopes for when symbolism again rounds upon him:

At that supreme moment he was conscious of nothing but absurdities [. . .] She gave such a businesslike lift of her veil. As he approached her he found time to wish that he could recoil. As he touched her, his gold pince-nez became dislodged and flattened between them. (*ARWAV*, 127)

At the moment of the first physical manifestation of the couple's supposed intimacy it is Vyse's studiousness, the 'gold pince-nez' (symbols of the supposed culture which he cloaks himself in so as to attain propriety) which inhibit any consummation of his relationship, thus inevitably leading him to lose the 'Leonardoesque' wife he hoped to acquire as the ultimate symbol of his social acceptability. Indeed, only at the moment of his loss of Lucy Honeychurch, the point at which she falls into the thrall of another world view, does Vyse gain any real self-consciousness about his actions, stating via the narrative voice that 'From a Leonardo she had become a living woman with mysteries and forces of her own' (*ARWAV*, 191). Only at the moment of the loss of the totem of his aesthetic vision does Vyse gain any perspicacity regarding his own construction of the vision at all. As such, he evades Philip Heritton's bleak end by becoming self-reflexive and placing his own aesthetic world view in ironic dialogue with that of others.

A Passage to India offers a much more critically recognised conception of the dialogic ironisation of institutions, one which has been asserted from the earliest reviews of the novel. Rose Macaulay, for example, termed it ‘really a story about this Anglo-Indian wall, and the futile occasional attempts, from either side, to surmount it’.³⁷ David Dowling perhaps recognises this inter-negation of value-systems most fully in his claims that ‘it is the ideas of Forster’s characters, not of Forster, which are being formulated and challenged’.³⁸ The value systems are numerous throughout the novel, spanning the imperialist English, the more liberal Fielding, Aziz’s integrationist and latterly nationalist Islam and Godbole’s Hinduism. As Malcolm Bradbury states, ‘when one value system meets another confusion and muddle ensue’.³⁹ Each at times attempts to assert the primacy, indeed the exclusivity, of their world view as the bastion of truth during the novel’s progress whilst in Fielding’s tea party of the ‘Mosque’ section of the novel we encounter an illustrative interplay and inter-negation of their various limitations. As Dowling notes, ‘everywhere the comfortable assumptions of art are attacked’.⁴⁰

Upon his exit from India, Fielding asserts the primacy of his culture in a highly illuminating passage which bears quoting in full:

He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills [. . .]
but oh, these Italian churches! [. . .] the harmony between the works of man

³⁷ Rose Macaulay, ‘Women in the East’, *Daily News*, 4 June 1924 in Gardner (ed.), *E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, vol. 1, p. 198.

³⁸ David Dowling, *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 75.

³⁹ Malcolm Bradbury, ‘Two Passages to India: Forster as Victorian and Modern’, in Stallybrass (ed.), *Aspects of E.M. Forster*, p. 133.

⁴⁰ Dowling, *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf*, p. 82. However, Dowling claims that the interrogation of the various cultural claims for the *exclusive* legitimacy of their world views leads to the sublation into a final awakening within the novel to a higher truth of mutual understanding, a facet of his work which I contend within the following pages.

and the earth that upholds them [. . .] the spirit in reasonable form [. . .] he felt that all of them [his Indian friends] would miss the joys he experienced now [. . .] The Mediterranean is the human norm. When men leave that exquisite lake whether through the Bosphorous or the Pillars of Hercules, they approached the monstrous and the extraordinary; and the southern exit leads to the strangest experience of all. (*API*, 278)

Fielding encounters the Italian landscape and architecture during his journey back to England, the beginnings of the process of his recidivism back to the Anglo-Indian imperialist value-system which he had previously questioned. As Benita Parry notes, he ‘withdraws, as he inevitably must, within the boundaries of the embattled communities’.⁴¹ The valuing of culture as the means of affirming and enforcing his ideas about the verity of this new value system are clear in his claim that ‘The Mediterranean is the human norm’ a supposed ‘fact’ which the ‘monstrous and extraordinary’ Indians he has previously encountered would ‘miss’.

Similarly, Aziz’s visit to the mosque at the opening of the novel, following closely from his conversation with friends concerning ‘whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman’ (*API*, 33) appears to be an act of self-conscious cultural affirmation of the truth of his world view. It is structurally ironised by Forster, given that the visit to the mosque precipitates his meeting with Mrs. Moore and the placement of his world view ever more firmly in dialogue with that of the English colonists. Aziz, expressing himself through the narrative voice, is inspired by his appreciation of the mosque’s:

⁴¹ Parry, ‘The Politics of Representation in *A Passage to India*’, p. 34.

contrast between this dualism [of the black and white frieze featuring the ninety nine names of Allah] and the contention of shadows within [which] pleased Aziz and he tried to symbolize the whole into some truth of religion or love' (*API*, 33).

Aziz concludes that 'Here was Islam, his own country, more than a Faith, more than a battle cry, more, much more [. . .] Islam, an attitude towards life both exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home' (*API*, 41). It is notable here that it is not through the ninety-nine names of Allah that Aziz is able to formulate the affirmation of his world view. Rather, it is through the contrast between the clear delineation of their colours and the shadows which play upon them that Aziz is capable of creating his affirmation: art serves as the revivifying source required to bolster his belief that Islam is where 'his thoughts found their home'. Art equally becomes the well-head of his newfound nationalism, articulated through the Persian poetry which he had admired whilst still at Chandrapore and which he attempts to use as a conduit to inter-cultural communication with the liberal Fielding of the earlier sections of the novel. We learn at the beginning of Chapter 34 that Aziz's poetry concerns itself with 'oriental womanhood', declaring that "the purdah must go", claiming the rights of women fighting next to men as the means for the creation of an India free from British rule, a claim which pits him directly via his poetry against 'Colonel Maggs [. . .] the Political Agent' (*API*, 290).

Even Godbole, the apparently ascetic, unworldly Brahmin of the novel, is party to the employment of culture as a means of affirming the Hindu world view

when we learn at the temple that the poems that ‘the poets of the state composed were hung where they could not be read’ (*API*, 283), their presence enough behind the venerable Professor and authority on Hindu song to support the verity of the world view he asserts. Furthermore, having helped Dr. Aziz from Chandrapore to the Hindu principality of Mau, under the proviso that he become a Brahman ‘for purposes of intrigue’ (*API*, 289), he is even able to assert cultural authority in the remotivation of Aziz’s poetry, reinterpreting it as ‘bhakti [. . .] different and very good [. . .] it might be rendered into Sanskrit almost’ (*API*, 290). Godbole attempts to assert Aziz’s compliance to his ostensibly adopted world view via the assertion of his own cultural authority.

Fielding’s tea party sees the teacher attempt to act as ‘an agent of liberal contact through goodwill plus culture and intelligence’ yet the attempts to integrate Muslims, Hindus and the English hardly have the effect that Bradbury claims Fielding to have desired.⁴² H.W. Massingham’s implicitly racist claim in 1924 that ‘the Anglo-Indian state is a tangle of [. . .] obscure and warring spiritualities’ serves perhaps as true of the English at the tea party as of their English guests, Fielding’s ‘obscure spirituality’ being a form of liberal humanism which I believe Forster interrogates equally as thoroughly throughout the text as any of the other contending world views of the text that it interacts with.⁴³

The first of the clashes surrounding culture at the tea party occurs before Godbole, Adela Quested and Mrs. Moore have even arrived when Aziz questions Fielding about the cultural pitch which their conversation should take:

⁴² Bradbury, ‘Two Passages to India: Forster as Victorian and Modern’, p. 139.

⁴³ H.W. Massingham, ‘The Price of India’s Friendship’, 27th June, 1924, 10, *New Leader* in Gardner (ed.), *E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, p. 98.

“You can talk to Miss Quested about the Peacock Throne if you like – she is artistic they say.”

“Is she a Post Impressionist?”

“Post-Impressionism, indeed! Come along to tea. This world is getting too much for me altogether.”

Aziz was offended. The remark suggested to him that he, an obscure Indian, had no right to have heard of Post-Impressionism – a privilege reserved for the Ruling Race. (*API*, 84)

Fielding assumes an in-depth knowledge of the cultural touchstones of Aziz’s world view, and he attempts to assert the correct gauge at which he may address them to the newly arrived colonial, a mark not simply of the worldly man. Teresa Hubel’s statement that the novel is ‘a powerfully influential middle class text [. . .] Viewed as the pinnacle of Anglo-Indian literature’ rings especially true here.⁴⁴ Fielding, for all his liberal humanism and attempts to engage in dialogue with the Indians of Chandrapore still tries to understand and define them along the lines of his own thought and to assert his own meanings of their culture upon them. Aziz, similarly, attempts to reverse this enforcement of one’s own mastery of the culture of the other upon Fielding, claiming an understanding of Adela Quested as ‘a Post Impressionist’ to be met simply with a mockery of his counter assertion (‘Post Impressionism, indeed’) that leaves him feeling in the position of ‘an obscure Indian’ in relation to the ‘Ruling Race’.

⁴⁴ Teresa Hubel, *Whose India? The Independence Struggle in British and Indian Fiction and History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 85.

Ellin Horowitz's claim that 'Fielding cannot be intimate with anyone, and Aziz and his friends can never understand Fielding' appears to have some legitimacy.⁴⁵ The interlocutors fail to agree on each other's rights to the cultural intertexts that each employs as a means of supporting mutually exclusive world views. Aziz tries if not to bridge the cultural divide which separates Fielding and himself then at least to shout across it what he conceives to be a mutually acceptable snipe at a supposedly shared adversary, the Hindus, in his commentary upon Hindu historiography: "Do you know what the Deccani Brahmins say? That England conquered India from them – from them, mind, and not from the Moghuls [. . .] They even bribed it to appear in textbooks, for they are so subtle and immensely rich [. . .]" (*API*, 84-5). Evidently, whilst Aziz does not recognize his own efforts to assert the cultural primacy of his world view, he is aware of the tactics employed by contending world views in the marginalisation of his own.

Aziz is in fact so sure of the primacy of his world view that he is confident enough to claim to Fielding "There shall be no muddle when they come to see me [. . .] Mrs. Moore and everyone – I invite you all [. . .]" (*API*, 86). Aziz does indeed manage to assert himself upon the arrival of Quested and Mrs. Moore to the extent that the ironic narrator informs us that 'As for Miss Quested, she accepted everything Aziz said as true' (*API*, 88). Once again Adela Quested only comprehends Aziz from the perspective of her own world view's cultural experience; she equates Aziz's attempts to assert his influence over her as 'proofs of his broad-mindedness; she had heard such talk at home in advanced academic circles, deliberately free' (*API*, 89).

⁴⁵ Ellin Horowitz, 'The Communal Ritual and the Dying God in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*', *Criticism*, no. 6 (1964), p. 77.

Adela Quested appears to judge Aziz as one of the men of culture already encountered in so much of Forster's earlier fiction, as an aesthete who affects the pose of 'free' talk as a means of attempting to construct a bohemian, cultured identity which assures his place within the bourgeois English world view's code of propriety. This is, of course, a deliberate irony constructed on Forster's part; Aziz attempts precisely the opposite, to assert the cultural propriety of his own world view as distinct and different from the English.

Godbole appears to be a figure of hope to the English visitors. He seems to be a man who 'suggested harmony – as if he had reconciled the figures of the East and West, mental as well as physical' (*API*, 89). He appears to the English as a form of bridge between what the visitors perceive to be a simple divide of world views between East and West, what Edward Said terms an 'orientalist' conceptualization of the otherness of Indians which denies the evident difference within the text between the world views of Hindus and Muslims and their differing cultural enforcements of these views.⁴⁶ Godbole, however, does not affirm these assumptions; remaining silent throughout Aziz's assertions, 'he only ate' (*API*, 89). Contention occurs between Godbole and Aziz throughout the tea party, each disagreeing over the meaning and definition of the Marabar caves which Aziz offers as an excursion he will organize in hope of bettering the offer of 'healthy sweets' (*API*, 90) by Godbole. Godbole quickly asserts his own cultural knowledge of the caves as superior, 'impressively' (*API*, 90) leading Aziz to understand that he is 'defeated at every move by an opponent who would not even admit that a move had been made'. Aziz evidently views the

⁴⁶ C.f. The introduction to Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978; 2003) for a definition of the term, describing the 'enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient' (p. 3).

encounter with Godbole as an oppositional one, each attempting to assert the greater legitimacy of their world views over the contentious issue of the caves, which they each wish to explain for the English women before them.

The ostensibly objective appraisal of the scene by Fielding is again an aestheticisation of his patronizing view of the Indian's argument: 'A scene from a play, thought Fielding who now saw them across the garden, grouped among the blue pillars of his beautiful hall' (*API*, 94). Fielding's method of explaining a contention which he is not fully able to comprehend is again via the medium of art: Aziz's and Godbole's vying is assimilated comfortably into Fielding's own world view of them as a form of entertainment, a play at the end of which comfortable resolution may occur. This is not a matter to be taken seriously, but rather a complete and unified scene which he may appreciate as a whole rather than evidence of a divide between world views. Teresa Hubel comments that this is evidence of an attempt 'to colonise the intellectual territory of India.'⁴⁷ Ellin Horowitz's observation that 'Fielding cannot be intimate with anyone, and Aziz and his friends can never understand Fielding' is, therefore, equally true of each of the representatives of the differing world views of the novel, leading the party to become irked with each other to the extent that, from Fielding's perspective, 'irritation exuded from the very soil' (*API*, 94).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Hubel, *Whose India? The Independence Struggle in British and Indian Fiction and History*, p. 89. Hubel's assertion, however, extends to Forster himself, claiming that Forster constructs a notion of 'India as illusory, amorphous and unattainable' (88), an ideal of India which she maintains is a mark of his middle-class English literary modernism, the India presented in *A Passage to India* no more than a reflection of the ontological uncertainties of modernist art which 'leads ultimately to the western novel itself'. Whilst I have a certain sympathy with her understanding of the novel as embracing ontological uncertainty – as addressed in the previous two chapters – the notion that Forster shares the ideological viewpoint of any one of his characters is a central area of divergence in our readings of the text.

⁴⁸ Horowitz, 'The Communal Ritual and the Dying God in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*', p. 77. Noticeably, Fielding is sure to equate this supposed phenomenon closely with an aesthetic appraisal of the Indian landscape, conjecturing, 'Could one have been this petty on a Scotch moor or an Italian alp?'

The tea party ends with Godbole's singing of a Hindu verse that is ironically mediated by Fielding's free indirect speech. Fielding states that 'At times there seemed rhythm, at times there was the illusion of a Western melody. But the ear, baffled repeatedly, soon lost any clue, and wandered in a maze of noises, none harsh or unpleasant, none intelligible' (*API*, 95). The appraisal of the verse as seeming at times to have rhythm whilst being thoroughly unintelligible is evidently contradicted by Godbole's desire to 'explain in detail' (*API*, 96) the religious complexity of the verse, and its rhythmic qualities, which according to the Professor are not only present but carefully selected and appropriate given that 'The song is composed in a raga appropriate to the present hour' (*API*, 96). The tea party ends in the way it has started, as a site for contending attempts to legitimize world views via artistic interpretation. For Godbole, the choice of song and raga asserts not only the theological truths of Hinduism but also sound aesthetic judgement in the choice of a song so appropriate in form and timing. Yet Fielding - ostensibly the liberal intellectual open to the lessons to be learnt in India - appraises Godbole's song as arrhythmic and unintelligible. This is an attempt to affirm the superiority of his own value system, which undercuts his liberalism and allows Forster to undermine his position as one amongst a long line of supposed men of culture throughout the novelist's work.

(*API*, p. 94). Clearly for Fielding the aesthetic appearance of the Indian landscape, judged by the values of his own world view, is deemed sufficient to create such tension, another facet of Forster's subtly ironic revelation of the contingency of Fielding's perspective.

IV The Church: Pulpit and Refuge

The church is the last of the triumvirate of social apparatuses I wish to examine. It is an institution rigorously ironised throughout Forster's fiction in a variety of ways.⁴⁹ There are two particularly prevalent formulations of the church's presentation throughout Forster's work which contend for dominance. The Anglican clergyman is often ironised as a figure who enforces the views of bourgeois Edwardian England and its code of propriety. Nigel Yates neatly sums up anxieties from within the Victorian Anglican Church concerning how far the church had become a passive organ, reproducing the values of the state, stating that 'within the Church of England there was a growing body of opinion among the clergy that the bishops had become little more than government spokesmen on religious issues and that the church was in danger of losing its spiritual integrity'.⁵⁰ Colonialism provides a particular facet of this church support for the actions of state as has been presented in colonial and postcolonial texts as contrasting as Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. John Peck notes that 'Christian militarism in a colonial setting helps the Victorians to define themselves and their role in the world'.⁵¹ This was equally true in respect of Anglican support for the criminalisation of homosexuality. The church

⁴⁹ By the term 'the church' I am, of course, aware of the myriad of different Christian belief-systems which could be implied. Equally, especially in regard to *A Passage to India*, the more far reaching examination of Forster's apparatus based conception of religion as a means of asserting the values of a particular world view is particularly pertinent to an appreciation of his fiction. However, to give the subject the attention it deserves is beyond the spatial constraints of this thesis. Thus, my own use of the term 'the church' in this context applies solely to the Anglican church, excluding the non-conformist Protestantism which formed so important a part both of Forster's family history and of Victorian and Edwardian society: in doing so I do not wish to detract from the appreciation of these religious discourses within Forster's work, simply to spotlight a particularly prevalent formulation of religious belief presented and examined within Forster's work.

⁵⁰ Nigel Yates, 'Pugin and the Medieval Dream', *Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth-century Society*, Gordon Marsden (ed.) (London: Longman, 1990), p. 62.

⁵¹ John Peck, *War, The Army and Victorian Literature* (Macmillan: Basingstoke and London, 1998), p. 77.

damned homosexuals to moral censure to the extent that Gregory Woods examines how this condemnation was so deeply engrained within Victorian consciousness that Wilde's famous defence of his homosexuality upon claims of its biblical equivalence with the story of David and Jonathan profoundly scandalised Victorian society and established a publicly voiced homosexual religious counter-discourse.⁵² As I will suggest, Forster's work presents and interrogates these positions.

Equally, a second type of clergyman is evident throughout much of Forster's fiction, one akin to that examined above in the figure of the pseudo-aesthete, a clergyman who inhabits his socially valued position in order to attain the marks of propriety which, due to (often self-) perceived deficiencies, he would otherwise be excluded from. I identify such figures and their potential homosexuality in more depth in the following two chapters.

Mr. Sandbach in 'The Story of a Panic' provides one of the first examples of the clergyman as pillar of the dominant world view. He is a representative, as Stephen K. Land writes, of 'the Church of England as a social institution'.⁵³ The narrator tells us of Sandbach's didactic role in the story's opening page. Sandbach attempts to quell what he views as the protagonist's degenerative impulses. We are told that, using the apparatus of education, explored above, he 'had taken in hand Eustace's education – which was then sadly deficient – and was endeavouring to fit him for one of our great

⁵² C.f. Gregory Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 108-23 for an account of the use of the Bible in Wilde's defence at his second trial.

⁵³ Land, *Challenge and Conventionality in the Fiction of E.M. Forster*, p. 4.

public schools' (CSS, 9). Indeed, Sandbach's role throughout the story is one of moral instruction and support of the narrator's views, which, as I have explored in Chapter Two, Forster clearly undermines. Sandbach is what Glen Cavaliero terms one of Forster's 'guardians of the proprieties'.⁵⁴ Whilst preparing Eustace for public school - an educational system founded upon study of Classics - he enforces the primacy of Christianity over Hellenism, telling 'the striking story of the mariners who were sailing near the coast at the time of Christ, and three times heard a loud voice saying: 'The great God Pan is dead'' (CSS, 13). Sandbach's assertion of the superiority of a Christian God over Pan may not appear overly didactic until one takes into account Arthur Martland's reading of Pan as representative of 'those aspects of nature which are wild and terrifying' and have a highly charged 'homoerotic content'.⁵⁵ Upon accepting this reading, it appears clear that Sandbach's assertion of Christianity's dominance over Hellenism is a codified assertion of progenerative sexuality over homosexuality, an interpretation made all the more credible when we consider Sandbach's reaction to the discovery of Pan's footprints. His declaration that "'[. . .] The Evil one has been very near us in bodily form' (CSS, 18) is markedly medieval in its use of religion to enforce conformity to socially dictated codes of behaviour.

'The Curate's Friend' demonstrates another facet of Forster's ironisation of the church as a social apparatus. The text focuses on the role the church plays in providing social acceptance for those otherwise marginalized by the dominant world view. As John Boswell notes, 'the priesthood and religious communities exercised a particular appeal for gay people, especially in those societies that treated them as

⁵⁴ Cavaliero, *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p. 79.

“outsiders” and in which there was no other alternative to heterosexual marriage’.⁵⁶ Such could well be argued to be the case for the protagonist of ‘The Curate’s Friend’ who possesses ‘a certain quality, for which truthfulness is too cold a name and animal spirits too coarse a one’ (CSS, 86), a facet of his nature which he ‘tried to conceal [. . .] not only from nature but from himself’ (CSS, 92). The appearance of the faun within the curate’s world opens the carefully closed ecclesiastical closet which the latter has constructed, an aspect of the text which Robert K. Martin identifies and equates with Forster’s closeting of his own homosexuality within his fiction: ‘He put the matter most clearly in ‘The Curate’s Friend’ where he [. . .] deluded his readers into believing they were reading a mere tale, a fiction suitable for the train. In fact they were reading a diary of the soul, of the recovery of joy’.⁵⁷ The narrator admits that his life, prior to the appearance of the faun, is one of carefully constructed ecclesiastical propriety, a vocation based around asserting ‘proper’ ways of living which conform to those of the dominant world view, in an attempt to attain recognition as an adherent of such codes of propriety. The curate especially highlights his weekly routine to the reader:

Every Sunday I would speak to my rural parishioners about the world in the tone of one who has seen behind the scenes, or I would explain to them the errors of the Pelagians, or I would warn them against hurrying from one dissipation to another. Every Tuesday I gave what I called my ‘straight talk to my lads’ – talks which led straight past anything awkward. And every

⁵⁶ John Boswell, ‘Homosexuality and Religious Life: A Historical Approach’, in *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*, James B. Nelson and Sally P. Longfellow (eds.), (London: Mowbray Press, 1994), p. 365.

⁵⁷ Robert K. Martin, ‘Forster’s Greek: From Optative to Present Indicative’, *Kansas Quarterly*, vol. 9 (1977), p. 73.

Thursday I addressed the Mothers' Union on the duties of wives and widows (*CSS*, 86)

The evidently didactic nature of his 'straight talks with my lads' and its irony have been detected by many critics as Donald Salter has noted in the cases of Jeffrey Meyers, Alan Wilde and Wilfred Healey Stone, who have all 'commented on the homosexual relationship of the Curate and his friend the Faun'.⁵⁸ Such 'straight' talking appears in the light of these critical readings to support my own reading of the protagonist's curacy being the foothold upon which he climbs to a tenuous propriety within the dominant world view. The true irony of the text is that when the curate is faced by the faun and confronts 'a great crisis in my life' the crisis is predominantly that the faun's presence presages that he will 'permanently lose my self-esteem' (*CSS*, 90) as a valued enforcer of his world view's values. It hardly takes a leap of imagination to see Forster's irony in the curate's demands to the faun to "'Get thee behind me!'" (*CSS*, 90). The presence of the faun dismantles the supposedly final aspect of the curate's façade of integration into the codes of propriety of the dominant world view, his engagement but this only leads to assumptions of the curate's clerical celibacy. His 'living' within the church is secure and he is safe to 'sit in my comfortable bachelor rectory, amidst the carpet slippers that good young ladies have worked for me [. . .] the offerings of people who believe that I have given them a helping hand, and who have really helped me out of the mire themselves' (*CSS*, 93). The only proviso upon which this continued survival rests is that:

⁵⁸ Donald Salter, 'That is my ticket': The Homosexual Writings of E.M. Forster', *London Magazine*, vol. 14, no. 6, February-March 1975, p. 6.

I can tell no one exactly how it came to me. For if I breathed one word of that, my present life, so agreeable and profitable, would come to an end [. . .] I might find myself an expense to the nation' (CSS, 92-3).

As Salter notes, the euphemism of becoming 'an expense to the nation' is a 'veiled reference to imprisonment for the crime of homosexuality'.⁵⁹ Thus, the faun, rather than effecting the liberation of the curate from the societal closet in which he previously comfortably existed, removes the constraint from his free enjoyment of his homosexuality within the environs of this ecclesiastical closet. The faun eliminates the impediment of the curate's engagement, leaving him free to enjoy social endorsement via his preaching of the values of the dominant world view without the necessity of fully adhering to them himself.

A Room with a View provides two contending examples of Forster's conceptualisation of the Church in the figures of Rev. Beebe and Rev. Eager. Eager, the figure of the clergyman as guardian of the value system of the dominant world view, appears within the opening page of the novel, in name at least, when he is very much a part of the symbolic decoration of the bastion of Englishness abroad, the Pension Bertolini. We encounter the highly ordered environment of the Bertolini metonymised in:

the rows of white bottles of water and red bottles of red wine that ran between the people; at the portraits of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate that hung behind the English people, heavily framed; at the notice of the English

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

church (Rev. Cuthbert Eager, M.A. Oxon.), that was the only other decoration on the wall (*ARWAV*, 23).

Eager symbolises the Church's collusion in the affirmation of the dominant value system. He appears to confirm William Gladstone's assertion that 'The State and the Church have both of them moral agencies' via his presence in conjunction with the values of the 'late Queen' alongside the 'late Poet Laureate' as a representative of the same value system.⁶⁰ Eager holds a particularly firm grasp on his role as the enforcer of propriety due to his sole position as representative of the Church of England in Florence, one recognised by Charlotte Bartlett in Chapter Five of the novel when responding to his invitation to drive with him to Fiesole: 'Mr. Eager was no commonplace chaplain. He was a member of the residential colony who had made Florence their home [. . .] Therefore an invitation from the chaplain was something to be proud of [. . .] it was his avowed custom to select those of his migratory sheep who seemed worthy, and give them a few hours in the pastures of the permanent' (*ARWAV*, 71). Eager's selection of the 'worthy' tourist to receive his attentions is based upon their receptiveness to his own use of that other social apparatus, culture, which he is keen to praise in a fashion akin to that of Cecil Vyse, in order to assert his propriety, a propriety which ostensibly legitimises his moral strictures. Along with his invitation, Eager provides a critical commentary on 'Alessio Baldovinetti [. . .] That man had a decided feeling for landscape' (*ARWAV*, 71) a cultural knowledge which he forces upon Lucy Honeychurch and Charlotte Bartlett and that legitimises a similar bit more damning critical judgement of the Emersons. Whilst attempting to maintain the façade of progressiveness with opinions that ostensibly promote 'the desire for

⁶⁰ William Ewart Gladstone, *The State in its Relations with the Church* (1841) in David Nicholls (ed.), *Church and State in Britain Since 1820* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 55.

education and social advance' (ARWAV 74), Eager condemns the socially progressive Emersons with the accusation "'That man murdered his wife!'" (ARWAV, 75). The accuracy of these claims is so tenuous that they have to be qualified with the assertion that the 'murder' is 'in the sight of God' alone. Forster satirises Eager. The vicar is portrayed as believing his position as a clergyman enables him to make any accusation of improper action if he can claim the affirmation of God in support of it. Claude J. Summers judges him as 'hypocritical [. . . and Eager as] the novel's most thorough going villain'.⁶¹

Rev. Beebe's character is more enigmatic and has merited considerable critical attention. David Shusterman believes that he 'seems to be a genial clergyman, apparently understanding of and sympathetic to Lucy's needs [who] is in reality a neurotic whose own asceticism gnaws at his vital urges and prevents him from taking pleasure in anyone else's happiness'.⁶² Whilst I would partially agree with Shusterman's appraisal of Beebe, he does not fully explain the motivation behind the clergyman's asceticism, a facet of Beebe's characterisation which could perhaps be justified by Margaret Goscilo's reading of the vicar as representative of a 'queer coding' which places him within the 'ecclesiastical closet' as firmly as the protagonist of 'The Curate's Friend'.⁶³

Beebe's attitude to Lucy Honeychurch in the third chapter of the novel is illuminating when he appraises her whilst she is playing the piano:

⁶¹ Summers, 'The Meaningful Ambiguity of Giotto in *A Room with A View*', p. 166.

⁶² Shusterman, *The Quest for Certitude in E.M. Forster's Fiction*, p. 133.

⁶³ Margaret Goscilo, 'Forster's Italian Comedies: Que[e]rying Heterosexuality Abroad' in *Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature*, Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simon (eds.), (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 203.

Girls like Lucy were charming to look at, but Mr. Beebe was, from rather profound reasons, somewhat chilly in his attitude towards the other sex, and preferred to be interested rather than enthralled' (*ARWAV*, 53-4).

The 'rather profound reasons' for the chilliness of Beebe's attitude to women are never explicitly revealed within the text but hints towards his carefully concealed homosexuality are abundant, not least in his attitude to Lucy's proposed voyage to Greece with the Miss Allans. Edward Carpenter was amongst many thinkers of the late nineteenth-century who saw the precedent of Hellenic same-sex desire as an affirmation of the legitimacy of modern homosexual love. Carpenter claimed that never 'has the ideal of this love been quite so enthusiastic and heroic as among the post-Homeric Greeks'.⁶⁴ Although he is keen for Lucy to travel because he hopes that she will thereby avoid her engagement, Beebe's personal reaction to Greece is enlightening. He states:

"[. . .] I haven't been to Greece myself, and don't mean to go [. . .] It is altogether too big for our little lot [. . .] Italy is just about as much as we can manage. Italy is heroic, but Greece is godlike or devilish – I am not sure which, and in either case absolutely outside of our suburban focus [. . .] The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel for me. There the contrast is as much as I can realize. But not the Parthenon, not the frieze of Phidias at any price [. . .]" (*ARWAV*, 197-8)

⁶⁴ Edward Carpenter, *Homogenic Love and its Place in a Free Society*, Manchester Labour Society (1894), in *Nineteenth-century Writings on Homosexuality*, (ed.) Chris White (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 125.

Beebe's lack of enthusiasm for the Hellenic, and his preference for the Italian, can be viewed as a self-conscious distancing from the physicality of real homoerotic activity as either 'godlike or devilish'; it asserts a preference (much like that of Cecil Vyse), for aestheticised masculinity in the 'ceiling of the Sistine Chapel', in what Margaret Goscilo terms 'Michelangelesque terms'.⁶⁵ Beebe seeks distance from the immediacy of 'the frieze of Phidias' and the physical immediacy of masculinity in Greek sculpture which Forster was later to put to such homoerotic effect in his short story 'The Classical Annex'. Richard Deacon's comments upon the Edwardian clergymen of the Cambridge Society of Apostles shed some light upon Beebe when he states that 'Homosexuality was paradoxically related to fervent Christian believers and to atheists. In the case of the former quite a few of the clergy and those preparing to enter the Church entertained the hypocritical and sophisticated theory that in some esoteric way all was well if one's sexual adventures were confined to the same sex'.⁶⁶ Whilst I do not accept Deacon's homophobic account of ecclesiastical closeting, the point remains that one of the loci of closeting within Edwardian society was the church. Michel Foucault, for example, examines ecclesiastical abstention from any form of sexual activity as an archetype wherein the 'virtuous hero who is able to turn aside from pleasure, as if from a temptation into which he knows not to fall, is a familiar figure in Christianity'.⁶⁷ Beebe appears to present himself as one such figure of Foucauldian abstention in his reaction to the end of Lucy Honeychurch's engagement to Cecil Vyse where we discover that 'His belief in celibacy, so reticent,

⁶⁵ Goscilo, 'Forster's Italian Comedies: Que[e]rying Heterosexuality Abroad', p. 210; 'The Classical Annex' relates the tale of a nude classical statue of 'an athlete or gladiator of the non-intellectual type' (*LTC*, 181) who undergoes 'an obscene change in [. . .] physique' (182) to display an erection before apparently raping the son of a curator in the museum which it is housed in, transforming both into 'a Hellenistic group called The Wrestling Lesson' (185).

⁶⁶ Deacon, *The Cambridge Apostles: A History of Cambridge University's Elite Intellectual Secret Society*, p. 60.

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality Volume 2*, (trans.) Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 20.

so carefully concealed beneath his tolerance and culture, now came to the surface and expanded like some delicate flower' (ARWAV, 207). The comparison of Beebe's emergent belief in celibacy to a 'delicate flower' is revealing if we view him as Eric Haralson does, as a "'feminized" man of the cloth' who reminds us of the flower image Wilde uses to imply Lord Henry Wotton's homosexuality in the second chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.⁶⁸ We might, therefore, read Beebe's celibacy less as that of a 'virtuous hero' *per se* as of a man whose curacy is a means by which to assert his propriety and evade social censure of identifiable homosexual desire. Thus, far from 'trying to murder Lucy's soul' as Lionel Trilling believes Beebe is guilty of when advising that she go to Greece, a locus of homosexuality which would, to Beebe's mind, offer little in the way of temptation to her and allow her to 'confirm her resolution of virginity' (ARWAV, 207), he is attempting to make her a 'virtuous hero' in following the Miss Allans, duplicating their and his own model of celibacy.⁶⁹ He may, however, be the 'mixture of good and bad' Richard Keller Simon sees him as embodying given that the object of his suppressed homoerotic feelings appears to be George Emerson with whom he swims at 'the sacred lake' in Chapter Twelve in a Whitmanesque bathing scene.⁷⁰ Upon learning that Mr. Emerson has affected his son's engagement to Lucy Honeychurch, however, he dismisses the younger Emerson with the otherwise puzzlingly statement that the marriage is "'[. . .] lamentable, lamentable – incredible'" (ARWAV, 225) and that George Emerson 'no longer interests me'. Beebe appears to assert the need for celibacy in Lucy Honeychurch and

⁶⁸ Eric Haralson, "'Thinking About Homosex" in Forster and James', in Martin and Piggfor (eds.), *Queer Forster*, p. 68; The floral imagery of Chapter Two of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* presents Wotton's attraction for Gray symbolically in the anal imagery of the 'stained trumpet of a Tyrian convolvulus [. . . which] seemed to quiver' when agitated. Richard A. Kaye identifies the floral imagery being employed to 'legitimize male-male eros' in *The Flirt's Tragedy: Desire without End in Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p. 180.

⁶⁹ Trilling, *E.M. Forster*, p. 96.

⁷⁰ Keller Simon, 'E.M. Forster's Critique of Laughter and the Comic: The First Three Novels as Dialectic', p. 211.

himself as a form of moral superiority, one which comfortably serves to distance himself from his own desires and enables him to attain additional kudos as a figure of ecclesiastical propriety. In attempting to make Lucy Honeychurch follow his apparently morally motivated strictures by going to Greece with other celibates, however, he possibly leaves the door open to a closer relationship with George Emerson, one denied by George's final engagement to Lucy Honeychurch, an allegiance affected by the actions of George's father. In an attempt to feign indifference, Beebe retreats to his avowed celibacy and lack of interest in marriage. This allows him to appear to be wholeheartedly embracing an extreme form of clerical propriety (which firmly bolts his ecclesiastical closet) whilst maintaining an assured social position within the value system of the dominant world view. Whilst hypocritical, he is no more open to criticism as the villain of the piece than any of the other varied ideologues of the novel.

V Probing the Weaknesses

John Lucas notes 'how committed Forster is to probing the weaknesses in the Edwardian social fabric'.⁷¹ As we have seen throughout Chapter Two, his understanding of what he terms the 'apparatus' of society is profoundly informed by a wholesale renovation of the very nature of political Liberalism. Indeed, the closest model for this apparatus based conception of society came from Forster's mentor and friend, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson via his political dialogues and is echoed not only in Forster's biography of him but, moreover, explicitly in the latter's critical works of the late 1920s and after.

⁷¹ Lucas, 'Wagner and Forster: *Parsifal* and *A Room with a View*', p. 103.

Forster's portrayal of the church, culture and education, presents them as apparatuses employed to enforce the dominant world view of the early twentieth-century bourgeoisie or to secure a place within this world view. Indeed, far from presenting the connection of individuals imbued with free will, these apparatuses are consistently depicted as seeking to shackle the conformity of any member of society to the dominant value-system, denying the very individualist concept of liberal humanism so comfortably and consistently identified by earlier critics as Forster's political allegiance.

The social institutions identified in this chapter are not the sole apparatuses present throughout Forster's fiction. Others, particularly the medico-scientific, will be examined in more detail in Chapter Five, whilst the law, in the figure of Ronny Moore in *A Passage to India*, and business, in Henry Wilcox of *Howards End*, each have their place in supporting the perspective of the dominant world view. Such apparatuses serve in the attempt to enforce what is a highly contingent world view and its value systems upon the members of its society as 'truth'. Throughout Forster's fiction, however, I believe the author carefully undermines such claims, subverting them through their placement in carefully constructed dialogic relations to the contending 'truths' of other world views. His heroes invariably come to moments of ontological crisis where the reconciliation of their own world views with those of others inevitably lead to the famous Forsterian 'muddle' where the desire to 'connect' with a contending world view, to subsume it to the dominant one or reject it out of hand is subverted, leads to an aporia that Vasilis Politis terms 'a mental state of

perplexity, of being at a loss' outside of the comfortable constraints of a single perspective.⁷²

In this chapter we have already seen the employment of religion and culture in particular as sites where not only are the social mechanisms used as apparatuses for the enforcement of a world view but are, indeed, the site of contest between world views such as in the case of the debate over the reading of Giotto between socialist and capitalist readings of frescoes in *A Room with a View*. However, as we have seen, wielding authority and social acceptability through a position of power in one of these social institutions can also be viewed as a site of refuge for those on the margins of the dominant world view's code of propriety. This is no more clear than in the case of Rev. Beebe's employment of his religious vocation as a means of masking any possibly dissident desire for another man.

It is in the realm of contending discourses of same-sex desire that Forster enacts a profoundly dialogic and playful undermining of the dominant world view's stranglehold over the use of social apparatuses as vehicles for the assertion of authority. As I shall examine in the final two chapters, the dialogic play for authority over social apparatuses marks one particularly fine example of the dialogic impulse at play across the full range of the author's fiction.

⁷² Vasilis Politis, 'Aporia and Searching in the Early Plato', *Remembering Socrates: Philosophical Essays*, (eds.) Lindsay Judson and Vassilis Karasmanis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 88.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUEER CONVERGENCES: THE WEB OF CONTENDING FORMATIONS OF SAME-SEX DESIRE

I The Emergence of the Homosexual

In his highly comprehensive study *On Queer Street*, David Hugh claims that, in Maurice Hall, Forster has produced ‘the first convincingly *real* homosexual hero of twentieth-century fiction’.¹ With the emergence of Queer Theory providing a radical reappraisal of the nature of same-sex relations and their representation within literature, any critic of Forster must look again at this profoundly important aspect of the author’s work. However, studies of Forster’s conception of sexual identity do not adequately examine how his presentation of a nascent homosexual identity represents a vital and critically under-valued aspect of the wider self-conscious, dialogic and modernist liberalism outlined in the previous chapters. This Forsterian notion of same-sex desire provides a considerably more problematic and ironic appreciation of the social forces influencing self and social identification of the homosexual subject. Moreover, it provides yet further evidence of how Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was closer to the heart of Forster’s appreciation of what might loosely be termed homosexuality than critical opinion has so far suggested.

In the light of Queer Theory, the problem of terminology when discussing same-sex encounters and identity arises. As Moe Meyer states, the use of the term ‘Queer’ ‘indicates an ontological challenge to dominant labelling philosophies,

¹ David Hugh, *On Queer Street: A Social History of British Homosexuality* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 38.

especially the medicalisation of the subject implied by the word “homosexual,” as well as a challenge to discrete gender categories embedded in the divided phrase “gay and lesbian.””² However, as Jeffrey Weeks makes clear, the ‘1000 or so works on homosexuality which [. . .] appeared between 1898 and 1908’ were predominantly the work of a medical establishment which attempted to ‘classify a social phenomenon as a disease’, pathologising, defining and limiting those same-sexual interactions proscribed by these doctors as morbid.³ This is the post-Wildean era when Forster came to an awareness of his sexual identity at Cambridge and after, and was the most fruitful period of his fictional writing. Whilst Meyer may view the term ‘homosexual’ as a ‘medicalization of the subject’, it is one which, for all its political offensiveness, accurately represents the historical reality of the dominant scientific discourse emerging when Forster came to sexual awareness. It provides the reader with an unpleasant reminder of the externally defining, repressive forces which Forster ironically deconstructs within his fiction.⁴ As such, whilst Queer theory represents a contemporary reappraisal of the presentation of sexual identity, Forster’s notion of his ‘queerness’ (a term he uses of Cecil Vyse (*ARWAV*, 113) and that he employs covertly throughout the entirety of his fiction) lies in tense relation to the dominance of the medicalised concept of the ‘homosexual’ emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is just this examination of the mechanics of domination of one world view over another and Forster’s ironising of it that lie at the heart of this and the next chapter.

² Moe Meyer, ‘Introduction: Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp’, *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, Moe Meyer(ed.), (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-2.

³ Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth-century to the Present*, p. 26;28.

⁴ Another potential choice of terminology in this respect could perhaps have been ‘Uranian’ or ‘Urning’ terms used by the affirmative late Victorian and Edwardian theorists of same-sex desire Edward Carpenter and John Addington Symonds respectively. However, as discussed below, these terms were rejected on the basis that employing such terminology implies a stronger influence from either of these thinkers upon Forster than I believe has perhaps been the case.

I wish to survey the emergence of a web of contending apocalyptic, pseudo-scientific and affirmative conceptualisations of male same-sex desire and to examine how they vied for dominance in Forster's work. In early twentieth century society, 'homosexual' is employed as the portmanteau term for ease of reference and reflects no personal ease with the term, rather the historical reality that it came to prominence as the term of identification most commonly employed throughout Forster's lifetime. His own discontent with its prevalence and his quest throughout his fiction to reveal this imposition and question it form the subject of Chapter Six.

II Personal relations

To examine the contending discourses of homosexual identity at play within Forster's work, the rich critical heritage of the author's examination of 'personal relations' is first necessary. Of course, given his longevity, a wide body of Forster criticism and biography was produced before the author's death in 1970. As P.N. Furbank notes, whilst Forster's homosexuality may have been an open secret amongst his Cambridge and Bloomsbury contemporaries, the critical establishment and society at large were ignorant of the fact and thus at liberty to comment upon Forster's works however they saw fit, ignoring or intuiting any trace of the homoerotic within his work, thus providing a fascinating insight, as much into the homophobia (and otherwise) of the pre-1970 academic community.⁵

⁵ C.f. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, pp. 78-9, 182-3, 193-5; vol. 2, pp. 38-41, 81-6, 107-8, 185-6 and 319-20 for a full discussion of Forster's discussion of his desires with friends and the circulation of some of his posthumously published fiction amongst them. Forster's later biographers, Nicola Beauman and Wendy Moffat have privileged Forster's sexuality more fully within an appraisal of his work than Furbank, Moffat's introductory assertion in the prologue to *A Great Unrecorded*

F.R. Leavis was a Cambridge don during the time of Forster's regular visits to Cambridge and election to a three year fellowship to the King's College in 1927. His early critical attention provides one instance of the homophobic darkly asserting itself in the work of a critic who, given the circles they shared, is likely to have known of Forster's homosexuality.⁶ In his review of Rose Macaulay's *The Writings of E.M. Forster* in *The Common Pursuit* Leavis, in the opening sentence of the review, criticises 'the oddly limited and uncertain quality of his [Forster's] distinction', criticising Macaulay for the exclusion from her work of the 'biographical information that, however impertinently in one sense of the adverb, we should like to have [. . .] We should like to have it because it would, there is good reason for supposing, be very pertinent'.⁷

Whilst such sly suggestiveness is hardly uncharacteristic of Leavis, nonetheless to damn a critic to the faint praise of 'oddly limited and uncertain [. . .] distinction' and claim that limitation could best be explained by 'biographical information' which Leavis himself has 'good reason' to believe could be 'pertinent' reveals a veiled threat of publicising Forster's sexuality on the grounds that this supposed 'oddness' (as such he terms it) is the cause of Forster's purported literary limitation. In short, Leavis makes the threat of critical blackmail on the grounds that the critic supposes homosexuality to be a literary flaw. Leavis was far from alone,

History, of Christopher Isherwood's opinion that "Unless you start with the fact that he is a homosexual, nothing's any good at all" proving instructive of the later critical centrality of Forster's sexuality in appraisals of his work, Moffat, *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster* p. 20.

⁶ Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 2, p. 144. Interestingly, in a footnote to a commentary on the series of Clark lectures which were later to form *Aspects of the Novel* and on the basis of which Forster was awarded his fellowship, Furbank notes that Leavis was present at the lectures and 'was enraged by them, finding them 'intellectually null' and their success 'gruesome''

⁷ Leavis, *The Common Pursuit*, p. 261.

however, in the implicit homophobia of this critical judgement of Forster. H.J. Oliver feminises the author in his appraisal of the early novels in his 1960 study *The Art of E.M. Forster*, describing the writer, perhaps perceptively, as ‘unable to treat the love for each other of a man and a woman’, and seeing him as identifying more with celibate older women: ‘Forster deliberately chooses the comparatively sexless woman to write about [. . .] of the sexless type and of the older woman, he shows an exceptional understanding’.⁸ This claim about the writer’s identification with the ‘sexless type’ and the ‘comparatively sexless woman’ seems again to hint at the marginalisation of the writer on grounds of implicit homosexuality and inability to discuss heterosexual relations with any realism that meets Oliver’s approval. I have already commented upon Forster’s critical marginalisation in the introduction of this thesis, outlining that I believe the appraisal of his standing within the modernist canon, until the arrival of May’s, Bradshaw’s and Medalie’s reappraisals, lies in a misunderstanding of what Leavis terms the ‘limited and uncertain quality’ of his fictional work, something I believe to be vital and central to our understanding of the novelist as a modernist. However, the marginal positioning of Forster in relation to the ‘grand old men’ of modernism is once more immediately present in Robert Langbaum’s conceptualisation of modernism, *The Modern Spirit*, published in the year of Forster’s death, when he comments on ‘the spinsterish fastidiousness of Forster’s comedy that reminds us of Jane Austen [. . .] the old maid quality can, when it shines forth, seriously mar his work’.⁹ Again, by virtue of the supposed effeminacy of Forster’s prose, ‘the old maid quality’ which Langbaum identifies, Forster’s fiction is again labelled feminine and thus classified as ‘other’ in what Eve Kosofsky

⁸ H.J. Oliver, *The Art of E.M. Forster* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 31.

⁹ Langbaum, *The Modern Spirit: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature*, p. 139.

Sedgwick terms a ‘heterosexist’ fashion by which the hetero-normative values of heterosexual society are used to label and marginalize dissident sexual identities.¹⁰ It is interesting, as I noted in the introduction, to see how Forster’s likening to Austen goes hand in hand with an all too easy certainty in linking him to supposedly redundant nineteenth-century writers, an equivalence which I believe to be as ill-founded as it is inaccurate. Even purportedly affirmative analysts of turn-of-the-century homosexual literature, such as Jeffrey Meyers, are quick to discuss Forster’s ‘sexual problems’; in the introduction to his work, Meyers criticises Forster’s early fiction for ‘subtle concealment’; he describes his posthumously published fiction as a ‘didactic failure’ and rather grudgingly admits that ‘apologies seemed inappropriate’ for the homoerotic content of the work.¹¹

Forster has fared only a little better under more recent theoretical approaches. Sara Suleri Goodyear’s postcolonial reading of *A Passage to India* posits that the relationship between Fielding and Aziz is Forster’s ‘revision of an imperial erotic’ where the colonial project is enacted in the purportedly homoerotic desires of Fielding for Aziz.¹² According to her reading ‘the most urgent cross-cultural invitations occur between male and male, with racial difference serving as a substitute for gender’.¹³ For Goodyear the homoerotic tensions present within the novel allow Forster to replicate the colonial repression of the native Indian by ‘feminising’ Aziz as Indian, thus marginalizing him and labelling him as other, using the fact that he is Indian as ‘a

¹⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 31. Sedgwick discusses Foucauldian and post-Foucauldian reconceptualisations of Queer identity based upon a reappraisal of homo/heterosexual diametric oppositions, discussing the ‘cumulative incoherence of modern ways of conceptualizing same-sex desire and, hence, gay identity; an incoherence that answers [. . .] to the incoherence with which *heterosexual* desire and identity are conceptualised’ (82).

¹¹ Jeffrey Meyers, *Homosexuality and Literature 1890-1930* (London: University of London and The Athlone Press, 1977), pp. 1-3.

¹² Goodyear, ‘Forster’s Imperial Erotic’, p. 152.

¹³ *Ibid.*

substitute for gender'. This rather avoids the obvious fact that, should such homoerotic tension exist and, if it is concealed, then this must occur by virtue of the very fact that Aziz *is* a man, hence the sub-textual nature of the desire. Goodyear's implicitly homophobic postcolonial analysis of Forster's homoerotic characterisation is predicated on the basis of a rather cock-eyed [*sic*] hetero-normative formulation which can only conceptualise same-sex relations occurring via the substitution of a heterosexual partner for one of the same sex, rather a reductive and closed-minded perspective from an ostensibly emancipatory discourse.

George Piggford and Robert K. Martin identify Wilfred Healey Stone as 'one of the first critics actually to describe some of Forster's characters in terms of homosexuality'.¹⁴ Stone's observation that Eustace of *The Celestial Omnibus*'s 'The Story of a Panic' is the tale of 'an adolescent's sexual awakening and its homosexual bent' is at least engagingly open in its frankness and bravery for a critic producing his landmark study in 1966.¹⁵ However, Piggford and Martin underplay Frederick C. Crews's implicitly homophobic recognition in 1959 that 'there is more than a whiff of homosexuality in Ansell's [of *The Longest Journey*] temperament'.¹⁶ Whilst homophobia has existed and continues to be manifested in some Forster criticism, pre-1970 appraisals of Forster were more often characterised by a retrospectively amusing naivety in relation to the representation of sexuality in Forster's work. Lawrence Brander's 1968 study is characteristic in his appraisal of the tangled web of attractions encompassing Caroline Abbot, Gino Carella and Philip Herriton of *Where*

¹⁴ Robert K Martin and George Piggford, 'Introduction: Queer Forster?' in (eds.) Martin and Piggford, *Queer Forster*, p. 17.

¹⁵ Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E.M. Forster*, p. 136.

¹⁶ Crews, 'The Longest Journey and the Perils of Humanism', p. 17 claims that his appreciation of the homoerotic subtext of the early novels is limited to a footnote in which he suggests this could be 'a possible explanation of Beebe in *A Room with a View*'.

Angels Fear to Tread. Brander, ignoring the tensions between Gino and Philip, views the novel from the position of Caroline Abbot as ‘a love story, inspired by the classics, where every kind of love is found, the love for a beautiful boy which can never be consummated’.¹⁷ Subsequent readings of the text - and my own – benefit from the hindsight of being written after the publication of Forster’s posthumous fiction and view this desire for the ‘beautiful boy which can never be consummated’ as equally likely to be Philip Herriton’s desire for Gino as Caroline Abbot’s.

Robert K. Martin and George Piggford have edited one of the two book-length works so far published that exclusively concern themselves with Forster’s sexuality, his representation of sexualities, and particularly his fictional presentation of homosexuality. They claim that ‘Forster’s death in 1970 and the subsequent publication of *Maurice* and *The Life to Come* opened the floodgates for critical studies incorporating his sexual themes’.¹⁸ June Perry Levine believes that an entirely new realm of comprehension is quite possible as a result of these publications.¹⁹ She claims that the revelation of Forster’s homosexuality via the publication allows a new understanding of all of the fiction as a search by the ‘tame’ and ‘civilized’ representative of the ‘ruling class’ to seek ‘completion’ through conquest and conjunction with the ‘savage’ other of a foreign or working class partner, thus providing a subversive social edge to Forster’s fiction.²⁰

¹⁷ Brander, *E.M. Forster: A Critical Study*, p. 94.

¹⁸ Martin and Piggford, ‘Introduction: Queer Forster?’ in Martin and Piggford (eds.), *Queer Forster*, p. 18. The other, the only monograph to have been published on the subject is Arthur Martland’s *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose* (Swaffham: Gay Men’s Press, 1999).

¹⁹ June Perry Levine, ‘The Tame in Pursuit of the Savage: The Posthumous Fiction of E.M. Forster’, *PMLA*, vol. 99, no. 1, pp. 72-88 articulates the view that Forster’s work requires complete reappraisal in the light of the posthumous revelation of the author’s homosexuality.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Joseph Bristow agrees, claiming that Forster sought to ‘connect’ the effeminacy of the aesthetically oriented intellectuals recurrent throughout Forster’s fictions with ‘real men’ of anti-intellectual physicality. Bristow states that ‘he seeks to synthesize the aesthete and the athlete, trusting that the intellectual man can and should refine the sensibility of the cricket playing son of the empire, while the vigorous hearty type may reciprocally virilize the scholarly fellow’.²¹

Such formulations of inter-racial, inter-class or other forms of connection between different ‘types’ of man abound throughout much post-1970 criticism of the homosexual texts or subtexts within Forster’s works. Douglas Belling’s reading of *Maurice* as a ‘novel about the barriers to love in a largely sterile and class-ridden society’, an attempt to ‘elude the societal negations which reach out to destroy it’, is similar in its analysis of the novel as a search for connection and completeness between different ‘types’ of homosexual man.²² Rae H. Stoll repeats this formulation when she views *The Longest Journey*’s Rickie Eliot’s aesthetic effeminacy as symbolised in his club-foot, which she sees as ‘an emblem of his true homosexual nature’; this nature seeks its completion in partnership with the anti-intellectual, ‘natural’ Stephen Wonham, thus again asserting the ‘tame’/‘savage’ dichotomy articulated so fruitfully by Levine.²³

The trend continues throughout much Forster criticism. It assimilates into the generally accepted notion of Forster as (*A Passage to India*, partially, aside) idealistically liberal humanist, a view of an author who hopes for men to connect in

²¹ Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885*, p. 57.

²² Douglas Belling, ‘The Distanced Heart: Artistry in E.M. Forster’s *Maurice*’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1974), p. 158.

²³ Rae H Stoll, ‘Aphrodite with a Janus Face: Language, Desire and History in Forster’s *The Longest Journey*’, *Novel: A Forum for Fiction*, vol. 20, no. 3 (1987), p. 258.

democratic and tolerant 'personal relations'. The notion of his homosexuality is, in this sense, one manifestation of his supposed liberal humanism in sexual terms. Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks neatly sum this critical line up in their assertion that 'Forster wanted men to be able to express love from the heart and he wanted them to transcend the race and class divide'.²⁴

Along with this approach to Forster's sexuality and its manifestation within his fiction, the development of gay and lesbian studies, and latterly of queer theory, has seen another strand of Forster criticism develop, one which has sought to ally Forster to affirmative contemporary explicators and advocates of homosexuality. The attempt to ally Forster to Edward Carpenter as the predominant influence upon his conception of homosexuality has been a key source of identification, albeit not the only one. The two primary exponents of this school of thought have been Robert K. Martin and Tariq Rahman.²⁵ The origins of this strand of criticism lie within Forster's own work, particularly the 'Terminal Note' which he appended to *Maurice* in 1960 during his revision of the work, outlining how the novel was inspired by:

a visit to Edward Carpenter at Milthorpe [. . .] It must have been on my second or third visit to the shrine [Milthorpe, Carpenter's home and that of his lover

²⁴ Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis* (London: Pluto Press, 1977), p. 124.

²⁵ Tariq Rahman outlined his approach in his article 'Edward Carpenter and E.M. Forster', *Durham University Journal*, vol. 79, (1986), pp. 56-69 and 'Maurice and *The Longest Journey*: A Study of E.M. Forster's Deviation from the Representation of Male Homosexuality in Literature', *Studies in English Literature*, Tokyo: 1990, pp. 57-75. Robert K. Martin's 'Edward Carpenter and the double structure of *Maurice*', *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 8, nos. 3-4 (1983), pp. 35-46 has proven to be highly influential in forming the current critical opinion of Forster's place within the development of notions of the 'homosexual identity'. However, much work elsewhere has been completed, allying Forster to Walter Pater, D.H. Lawrence, T.E. Lawrence, John Ruskin, Howard Sturgis and William Meredith, to name but a few: for an extensive collection of different comparative critical approaches to Forster cf. Stape, JH (ed), *E.M. Forster: Critical Assessments, Vol. 4, Relations and Aspects; The Modern Critical Response, 1945-1960*, Robertsbridge: Helm Information: (1998).

George Merrill] that the spark was kindled [. . .] Merrill [. . .] touched my backside – gently and just above the buttocks [. . .] It seemed to go straight through the small of my back and into my ideas’ (*M*, 217).

Forster’s acknowledgement of an influence has been enough to inspire a rush of critical attention towards Carpenter, a figure more than worthy of such attention in his own right. Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks were quick to assert that ‘the fiction of E.M. Forster [. . .] carries uncanny echoes of Carpenter and his circle’ whilst Ira Bruce Nadel claims that Carpenter represents the culminating influence with which *Maurice* ends, stating that, ‘Carpenter actually and symbolically represented the possibility of life in the greenwood’.²⁶

As I shall examine in the next chapter, I have no doubt, particularly in light of my analysis of the excised final chapter of the novel, that Carpenter was indeed a major influence on *Maurice*. One need only examine his exultations in his ‘Locked Journal’ of 1913: ‘Edward Carpenter! Edward Carpenter! Edward Carpenter!’ on New Year’s Eve, surveying the lessons learned that year as he celebrates the death of his writer’s block with ‘Maurice born on Sep 13th [. . .] But will he ever be happy. [sic] He has become an independent existence – Greenwood feels the same.’ (KCMA, ‘*The Locked Journal*’, 31st January 1913). However, as Sheila Rowbotham acknowledges in her biography of Carpenter, the ‘extraordinary gift he [Forster] had received from Carpenter’ did fade and in 1929, Forster observes that it is ‘Astonishing how he

²⁶ Rowbotham and Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis*, p. 123; Ira Bruce Nadel, ‘Moments in the Greenwood: *Maurice* in Context’, *E.M. Forster: Centenary Revaluations*, (eds.) Judith Scherer-Herz and Robert K. Martin (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), p. 177.

[Carpenter] drains away'.²⁷ That this influence, important as it might be, extends from 1913 to a recognition of its fading in 1929 leaves a considerable period of Forster's fictional career free from Carpenter's influence.

Tariq Rahman added specificity and rigour to the claims of Carpenter's influence in his 1986 and 1990 studies, asserting that these and a number of other critical flashes of recognition have 'been made in passing and no attempt has been made to substantiate them' a factor which his work redresses, identifying Carpenter as the sole influence which gives Forster's works 'meaning as covert statements of homosexual concerns'.²⁸ Robert K. Martin's work is somewhat more perspicacious and historically grounded in claiming Carpenter's influence upon Forster's, recognising that although 'Forster's concept of homosexuality was not fully developed until he had absorbed the ideas of Carpenter, some of the elements that are present within *Maurice* can be traced back at least a decade earlier'.²⁹ However, Martin's reading of *Maurice*, the text upon which he founds his explication of Carpenter's influence, posits that, whilst the work is dialogic, it provides a simple bi-partite dialogue between 'John Addington Symonds and the apologists for "Greek Love"' and 'Carpenter and his translation of the ideas of Walt Whitman'.³⁰ For Martin, whilst the former has precedence within the foundation of the first half of the novel and forms the basis of 'the Maurice-Clive relationship', the latter comes to prominence as the novel reaches its conclusion, demonstrating that, in Carpenter, Forster had 'come to see the possible link between a homosexual love that crossed

²⁷ Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), p. 441.

²⁸ Rahman, 'Edward Carpenter and E.M. Forster', p. 41.

²⁹ Martin, 'Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of *Maurice*', p. 30.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

class barriers and the questioning of the assumptions based on class'.³¹ Such a bipartite reading of *Maurice* as the reconciliation of two diametric oppositions neatly replicates once more the standard line of Forster criticism, the humanist reading of the texts as emancipatory paeans to 'connection' between individuals as means of escape from the shackles of society, the connection in this sense coming from the reconciliation of the working class youth, the 'savage' in Levine's terms, with the tame pseudo-aesthete, or Symonds tinged advocate of the merits of hellenistically inspired platonic friendship. Rahman's later 1990 study goes on, despite avowing that Martin has 'failed to distinguish clearly between the two homosexual traditions', to repeat the dichotomy between 'John Addington Symonds's idealism' and [. . .] Edward Carpenter's radicalism', once more asserting in the conclusion to his article that the end of the novel sees Maurice Hall 'brought into harmony with nature and his sexual self by a working class youth such as Carpenter had celebrated in his *Towards Democracy*'.³²

Even in one of the more recent articles concerning the Forster/Carpenter link Gregory W. Bredbeck at least partially aligns himself with Levine's dichotomy, stating that 'Levine's essay is laudable' and praising the 'generality of Levine's binary terms'.³³ However, Bredbeck goes some way further in his analysis of the influence of Carpenter on Forster when he makes an important qualification of his praise for Levine, that, whilst employing her methodological framework, 'wherever we encounter the savage in Forster, we are encountering the highest effect of the tame

³¹ Ibid.

³² Rahman 'Maurice and The Longest Journey: A Study of E.M. Forster's Deviation from the Representation of Male Homosexuality in Literature', p. 439.

³³ Gregory Bredbeck, "'Queer Superstitions': Forster, Carpenter, and the Illusion of (Sexual) Identity' in (eds.) Martin and Piggford, *Queer Forster*, p. 55.

– and what is more important, I am suggesting that Forster is *entirely aware of this*'.³⁴ Bredbeck recognises a degree of self-consciously ironic contingency in Forster's presentation of any notion of homosexual identity, although he does not couch it in these terms, believing it to be wilfully contradictory, existing 'within a series of split and contradictory goals; to articulate whilst repudiating, to affirm whilst disavowing, to speak for while silencing and, ultimately, to be whilst not being'.³⁵ Forster's self-closeting and sub-textual elision of homoerotic relationships beneath the more obvious but flawed heterosexual relationships, which form the ostensible fabric of his work, subtly subverts and denudes the stability of definable sexual identities. Furthermore, he posits that Forster's presentation as a humanist adherent to liberalism, a believer in the emancipatory powers of the arts and personal relationships, is a critical formation which reflects the movement of literary criticism rather than Forster's own intentions. He states that it 'is only [. . .] a *critical* humanism – both within the academy and within the world of gay and lesbian politics – that has resolved these contraries into a humanist Forster, a champion of the individual and of freedom for all'.³⁶ I agree, if not wholly with the route by which Bredbeck gets to his conclusions via the exclusive study of Carpenter, then at least with his conclusion that 'Forster worked within a framework that always believed there was something beyond the status quo, something that spans before it and after it, something unrepresentable from any point within the system and therefore of paramount importance'.³⁷ This absence, or rather presence, of the unspoken or unspeakable, which Bredbeck asserts regarding Forster's conception of homosexual identity appears to neatly correspond to Virginia Woolf's early recognition that there:

³⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

is something baffling and evasive in the very nature of his gifts [. . .] we are often aware of contrary currents that run counter to each other and prevent the book from bearing down upon us and overwhelming us [. . .] his vision is of a peculiar kind and his message of an illusive nature'.³⁸

Bredbeck's assertion of the ironic undermining of a single affirmative position of sexual identity within Forster's work is an instructive one that sits comfortably with my own understanding of his stylistic and political undermining of monologic assertions throughout the fiction. Whilst there is ample evidence for Carpenter's influence over Forster's fiction, claims of the dominance of this influence are perhaps over-stated and reduce the novelist's complex understanding of the web of contending formulations of homosexuality to a single over-riding influence. An examination of Carpenter's interlocutors from this period is instructive.

III Edward Carpenter's Influence

Jeffrey Weeks skilfully outlines a picture of turn-of-the-century England and its various contending medical discourses. These discourses sought 'to break down the formerly universally execrated forms of non-procreative sex into a number of 'perversions and deviations'' and of the variety of contending affirmative 'self-concepts, meeting places, a language and style [. . .] complete and varied ways of life' which homosexuals created to counter such discourses.³⁹ On the basis of this

³⁸ Woolf, 'The Novels of E.M. Forster' *Collected Essays*, Project Gutenberg of Australia e-text (<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200771.txt>, accessed, January 3rd 2012).

³⁹ Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, p. 25; 33.

historical context, I agree with Margaret Goscilo's claim that Forster is 'a young, closeted Edwardian author cognizant of the recent Labouchère amendment's criminalization of "gross indecency" between men but less aware of his own sexual identity'.⁴⁰ Forster's fiction is composed in the context of this multitude of discourses attempting to assert the dominance of their definitions of same-sex desire and sexual practices.

Furthermore, Forster's fiction was, equally, written against the backdrop of a variety of homosexual scandals and legislation occurring throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Forster's understanding of the debates over homosexual identity would have been considerably more complex than some critical assertions of his allegiance to single theorists of homosexuality allow.⁴¹ Indeed, as Furbank notes, Forster's conception of his first novel and short stories in 1901 rather pre-dates the first appearance of Carpenter's name in Forster's reading list in 1907, a period during which *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *The Longest Journey* were published, significant sections of *The Lucy Novels* which were later to become *A Room with a View* were drafted and five significant short stories composed whilst, as noted above, this influence hardly seems prevalent until 1913 with its undoubted influence upon the composition of *Maurice*.⁴² Furthermore, Forster's letters from this period demonstrate a close affinity with Victor James Woolley, who Mary Lago and P.N. Furbank note

⁴⁰ Goscilo, 'Forster's Italian Comedies: Que[e]rying Heterosexuality Abroad', p. 194.

⁴¹ For further details on homosexual scandals from the period c.f. Dellamora, 'Homosexual Scandal and Compulsory Heterosexuality in the 1890s' and H. Montgomery Hyde's *The Cleveland Street Scandal* (London: W.H. Allen, 1976); Deacon, *The Cambridge Apostles: A History of Cambridge University's Elite Intellectual Secret Society*, p. 35 and 36.

⁴² C.f. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 91; C.f. Forster's unpublished diary for 1907 in King's College Cambridge's Modern Archive Centre for details of Forster's reading list for the year, EMF/13/12 – Booklist April 1898 to January 1909, KCMA; as Stone notes in *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E.M. Forster*, p. 129, 'The Road from Colonus', 'The Story of a Panic', 'The Other Side of the Hedge', 'The Eternal Moment' and 'The Curate's Friend' were all produced during this period.

was a ‘student of sexology and spiritualism’, and thus suggest a more broad ranging understanding of the subject than recent criticism has allowed.⁴³ Throughout the course of the remainder of this chapter, I wish to posit that Forster was highly aware of what Alan Sinfield terms the ‘dominant, the negotiated, and the radical or oppositional’ formations of homosexuality and that these are placed, as with other social formations discussed in previous chapters, in tense dialogic relation throughout the fiction.⁴⁴

In seeking to understand Forster’s conception of sexual identity, I have no desire to belittle the importance of Carpenter upon this conception but I suggest that it needs placing within the context of a wider debate. Therefore, within the next sections of this chapter, I shall examine a variety of the many conceptions of homosexuality at play during the late Victorian and Edwardian period and will explore how the full range of Forster’s fiction incorporates them into a wholly inclusive, dialogic articulation of the problems of sexual identity.

IV Urnings, Inverts and the Struggle for Definition

Jeffrey Weeks notes that ‘For close on a hundred years the male homosexual consciousness in Britain has been dominated by the legal situation. Between 1885 and

⁴³ In a letter of 3rd October 1906 to J.M. Dent, Forster states that he ‘was up at Cambridge to lecture on Richardson. Greenwood & Woolley were up and I had a very good time’, *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster Vol. I 1879-1920*, (Eds.) Mary Lago and P.N. Furbank (London: Collins, 1983), p. 86; Furbank also notes that Forster and Woolley travelled together in Italy in 1908, after Forster’s first encounter with the works of Carpenter and that Woolley, a ‘fellow of King’s and a university demonstrator in physiology [. . .] collected books on sexology [. . .] and was regarded by his friends as a kind of wizard analyst’, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 168. Furthermore, if Forster’s comments in his *Commonplace Book* are anything to go by then the influence of Carpenter is short lived when he asserts ‘Astonishing how quick he drains away. Poems I actually copied out for myself a few years back now seem thin whistling rhetoric’, *E.M. Forster: Commonplace Book*, (ed.) P.N. Furbank (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1985), p. 52.

⁴⁴ Alan Sinfield, *Cultural Politics – Queer Reading* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 67.

1967 all male homosexual acts, whether committed in public or private, were illegal'.⁴⁵ Except for the first six and last three years of Forster's 91 year existence, this period represents his entire life. It gives reason to believe that a novelist, who stopped writing as he was frustrated that he could only write of the '“love of men for women & vice versa”', was equipped with a fairly complex understanding of the contesting formulations throughout this period which each attempted to gain dominance over the others as the arbiter of truth upon the subject.⁴⁶

1885's 'Labouchère amendment' formed the vital point at which such legislation was passed in to English law, criminalizing the actions of 'Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure by any male person of any gross act of indecency with another male person', such acts of 'gross indecency' being left to the discretion of the court.⁴⁷ This new legislation led to a significant increase in research about same-sex desire where the 'prosecution of such crimes required that the boundaries separating permitted and forbidden, 'normal' and 'abnormal' sexual practices be rigidly drawn'.⁴⁸

This is not to say that there were not accounts in place regarding pre-Labouchère notions of same-sex desire: John Addington Symonds' *A Problem in Greek Ethics* of 1883 discusses the term '*Greek Love*, understanding thereby a passionate and enthusiastic attachment subsisting between man and youth', whilst Jeffrey Weeks outlines the public prominence given to sex between men in the 1870 arrests of Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park for transvesticism and alleged male

⁴⁵ Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Moffat, *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster*, citing Forster, p. 6.

⁴⁷ An extract of Section 11 of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act (known as the Labouchère amendment after the MP who suggested Section 11, regarding male same-sex relations, in a bill predominated by legislation against female prostitution), cited in Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Angus McLaren, *Twentieth Century Sexuality: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 90.

prostitution.⁴⁹ As Lyn Pykett notes, the term homosexual had been employed by Karoly Benkert, a Hungarian psycho-sexologist, as early as 1869.⁵⁰ However, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick states that post-1885 the fundamental change occurred from:

viewing same-sex sexuality as a matter of prohibited and isolated genital *acts* (acts to which, in that view, anyone might be liable who did not have their appetites in general under close control) to viewing it as a function of stable definitions of *identity* (so that one's personality structure might mark one as *homosexual*, even, perhaps, in the absence of any genital activity at all).⁵¹

The paradigm shift appears to be that, legislated under the statute book, theorists of all kinds attempted to assert as a stable *identity* their conceptualisation of the characteristics, causes and possible cures for the perpetrator of these 'newly identified' acts. Michel Foucault's 1976 first volume of *The History of Sexuality* identifies the emergence of various contending theories of homosexuality that allowed 'the multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies' so that their inter-relation differently affected the concept of homosexuality as such ideas developed and inter-mingled.⁵² Importantly, he was the first to state that:

⁴⁹ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem In Greek Ethics* (1883) in *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality*, (ed.) Chris White (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 167; Jeffrey Weeks, 'Inverts, Perverts and Mary-Annes: Male Prostitution and the Regulation of Homosexuality in England in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, (eds.) Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: NAL Books, 1989), p. 198. Weeks does, however, go on to note that 'the only "scientific" literature to which the court had recourse was French' and that 'It is striking that as late as 1871 concepts of both homosexuality and male prostitution were extremely underdeveloped in the Metropolitan Police and in high medical and legal circles' (p. 199).

⁵⁰ Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction*, p. 19.

⁵¹ Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 83.

⁵² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1, (trans.) Robert Hurley (London and Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 100.

There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species of and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and “psychic hermaphroditism” made possible a strong advance in the social controls into this area of “perversity”; but it also made possible the formation of a “reverse” discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or “naturalness” be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories, by which it was medically disqualified.⁵³

There are affirmative articulations of same-sex desire in existence before 1885 - albeit in a highly codified and oblique fashion, as mentioned above and as presented in the works of Walter Pater and Walt Whitman. However, Foucault’s recognition of positive formulations of same-sex desire being relativised and articulated after 1885 in relation to a contending ‘multiplicity of discourses’ from legal, medical and literary communities provides a vital concept for my own understanding of the intellectual climate in which Forster came to understand and later articulate his own notion of sexual identity.⁵⁴

It is not coincidental that S.P. Rosenbaum has charted the immediate post-1885 period as that within which Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was ‘responsible for the change in the Apostles to a smaller, more intimate society’ which was ‘accompanied by an increased interest of the Apostles in homosexual relations’ and where ‘Homosexuality came more to influence the election of new brothers’.⁵⁵

Dickinson was affected by emergent pseudo-scientific notions of homosexuality to the

⁵³ Ibid., p. 101.

⁵⁴ For more on pre-1885 notions of a homoerotically motivated notions of ‘muscular aestheticism’ see below and Chapters XIV and XV of Gregory Woods’ excellent *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁵⁵ Rosenbaum, *Victorian Bloomsbury: The Early Literary History of the Bloomsbury Group*, p. 171:173.

extent that he ‘believed he had a ‘woman’s soul in a man’s body’ and also believed this to be a misfortune’.⁵⁶ It is highly likely that both this awareness of scientific models of homosexuality and Dickinson’s method of debate, of presenting, differing ‘points of view without having to resolve them’ found their way throughout this period into apostolic debate and would have provided Forster with a model via which he could articulate just this Foucauldian notion of a ‘multiplicity of discourses’ at work.⁵⁷

A complete survey of the web of emerging theories of homosexuality lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, I shall focus my examination exclusively upon four contending concepts about the nascent term ‘homosexuality’ which appear to manifest themselves consistently throughout the body of Forster’s fiction, namely: degenerative; Hellenistic; manly-socialist; and medico-apologist formulations. Having done so, the final chapter provides a demonstration of how, in the ironically dialogic fashion discussed above, Forster ironises contending world views in order to place them in tense aporetic relations rather than privileging any one theory or theorist, as previous critics have tended to assert.

V Degeneration

Degenerative models of homosexuality provide one of the earliest theories of homosexuality present within nineteenth- and early twentieth-century psycho-sexological thought. They extend Darwin’s theory of evolution, claiming that, whilst the survival of the fittest allows for the evolution of any species, the evolutionary process also requires the development of degenerative sub-species which are either atavistic and regressive or exaggeratedly eccentric in some facet of their evolution. The study of degeneration, according to one such theorist, George Romanes,

⁵⁶ Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, p. 31.

⁵⁷ Rosenbaum, *Victorian Bloomsbury: The Early Literary History of the Bloomsbury Group*, pp. 177-8.

attempted to bridge ‘the psychological distance which separates the gorilla from the gentleman’.⁵⁸ In his 1880 tract, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism* Edwin Lankester propounded that the progress of humankind took one of three forms: ‘We have as possibilities, either Balance, or Elaboration, or Degeneration’.⁵⁹ Most famously, the theory is articulated in Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* in 1893. Its English publication occurred just before the R. (Wilde) vs. Queensbury trial of 1895. It expressed the apocalyptic vision of ‘the end of an established order, which, for thousands of years has satisfied logic, fettered depravity, and in every art matured something of beauty’.⁶⁰ This apocalyptic fear, so prevalent in some accounts of modernity, is present in Dickinson’s preface to *Plato and his Dialogues*. Dickinson draws parallels between the ‘modern age’ of the early twentieth century and that of Plato’s Athens. Dickinson draws attention to the change in *Zeitgeist* from the mid-nineteenth-century:

Our age, like theirs [the Athenians], is one in which all the foundations are breaking down. It may, no doubt, be replied that that has always been so, that there is no such thing as a stable age, and I agree that in a sense that is true [. . .] But there are differences in the universality of the flow, and in retrospect some ages look almost fixed, so slow and sullen is the flood [. . .] even the mid-nineteenth-century in England.⁶¹

As I shall examine, Dickinson’s largely affirmative understanding of homosexuality was rooted in his identification of its Hellenic precedents and their allegiance to

⁵⁸ George Romanes, *Mental Evolution of Man*, (1889), cited in Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction*, p. 26.

⁵⁹ Edwin Lankester, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*, (1880), cited in Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction*, p. 25.

⁶⁰ Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton, 1895; 1993), p. 5.

⁶¹ Dickinson, *Plato and his Dialogues*, p. 14.

concepts of democracy and brotherhood. However, it is a mark of the dominance of this degenerative discourse that it touches even Dickinson's thought.

In its specific relation to homosexuality, degenerationist thought addressed itself 'not to the nature or direction of one's sexual practice but to the character of one's gender identity'; any same-sex activity or desire was conceived of in terms of a degenerative or perverse deviation from the function of the perceived 'normal' (i.e. reproductive) social gender role of one's biological gender.⁶² Thus for the degenerationist, homosexuals were one 'manifestation' of what Richard von Krafft-Ebbing termed 'functional degeneration'.⁶³ Their degeneration was theorised in both physical and mental terms. In men it could manifest itself physically in effeminacy (H.M. Stiltfield comments on the 'flabbiness and effeminacy' of the male population in an article on the degeneration of the nation's youth for *Blackwoods Magazine* in 1895) or hyper-masculinity, or mentally as either an 'intermediate' condition 'between male and female' or in terms of a heterosexual desire 'perversely misdirected' towards members of the same biological gender.⁶⁴ For Nordau, homosexuality presents one facet of degeneracy in which 'mental development' and 'physical growth' are both deviant from the supposed norm to such an extent that they

⁶² John Marshall, 'Pansies, Perverts and Macho Men: Changing Conceptions of Male Homosexuality', *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, (ed.) Kenneth Plummer (London: Hutchinson, 1981), p. 133. Plummer gives an excellent account in the first section of this essay on the supposed logical process which early degenerative theorists of homosexuality went through to reach their conception of the 'invert'.

⁶³ Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, *Psychopathia Sexualis; With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct. A Medico Forensic Study* (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 1896: 1903), p. 395.

⁶⁴ H.M. Stiltfield, 'Tommyrotics', *Blackwood's Magazine*, no. 157 (1895); Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character* (London: Heinemann, 1912), p. 5 and 7. This positing of the presence of a degenerative state of humanity conceived of as inhabiting a male physical gender and female psyche (or *vice versa*) did, as Foucault notes, lead on to the development of contending formulations of an 'intermediate sex' which in fact represents not a degenerative but superiorly evolved gender capable of interceding in the relational difficulties between men and women. This, whilst evidently related to degenerative theories and, to some extent, springing from them, is dealt with under the medico-apologist school of thought covered below and is an example of the inter-relation and shifting definitions which prevail in a highly unstable web of discursive formations.

are both either ‘completely stunted’ or ‘morbidly exaggerated’ whilst Cesare Lombroso’s *The Female Offender* (1893) and *L’Homme Criminel* (1895) chart the supposed physical manifestations of such degeneracy upon the physiognomies of alleged degenerates.⁶⁵ The prevalence of such theories saw the reactionary ‘cult of health’ rise as an attempt amongst late Victorians and Edwardians to avert society’s supposed degeneration and may be seen as a reason for the formation of regulated and professional sports and the invention of Baden-Powell’s Boy Scout movement. Such thinking certainly manifests itself from the earliest examples of Forster’s fiction as I shall examine in the next chapter.

VI Hellenism and Thereafter

As historians of homosexuality have examined, the counter-discourse of affirmative conceptualisations of homosexuality emerged contemporaneously, with ‘the classical Mediterranean [. . .] portrayed as the true spiritual home of homosexuals’ long before 1885’s criminalization of all male same-sexual activity.⁶⁶ The nature of these studies

⁶⁵ Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. 16; for a full account of the works and applications of Nordau and theories of degeneration c.f. William Greenslade’s *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) whilst Daniel Pick examines the spread of degenerative ideas throughout Europe with particular reference to Lombroso in *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848 – c. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Vernon A Rosario, ‘Inversion’s Histories/History’s Inversions: Novelizing Fin-de-Siecle Homosexuality’, *Science and Homosexualities*, (ed.) Vernon A Rosario, (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 92 recounts the supposed physical manifestations of the homosexual degenerate as including ‘sparse beard, delicate complexions, fine hair, weak constitutions, and underdeveloped genitals’.

⁶⁶ Robert Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 99. Charting the history of classically rooted affirmative notions of homosexual identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been a hallmark of much recent scholarship. The examinations conducted in the following texts represent a characteristic selection but in no way represent the full array of such studies: Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885*; Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and other Essays on Greek Love* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual*

is extensive and scholarly. A brief survey of some of these Hellenically oriented affirmative positions is illustrative before charting their articulation in Forster's fiction.

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson is a central figure of this affirmative notion of homosexuality. Linda Dowling notes, of Dickinson's *The Greek View of Life*, that 'G. Lowes Dickinson's little handbook on Greece would come to serve as much as a source of information about pederastia as about hubris or helots or the agora for generations of desperately ignorant English and American young men'.⁶⁷

Throughout Dickinson's work his avowal of Hellenistic accounts of homosexual identity is a clear and protracted facet of his examination of Greek culture and society. As Dowling notes, 1896's *The Greek View of Life*, articulates the 'passionate friendships between men' which were 'amongst the Greeks [. . .] an institution'.⁶⁸ Although open emphasis is placed upon this by Dickinson, the physical is dwelt on only to the extent that it is identified but is subservient to notions of this 'Greek love' being only an expression of 'the highest reaches of their emotional experience' and capable of inspiring 'high thought and heroic action'.⁶⁹ Love between men, according to Dickinson's Hellenistic affirmation of it, should be in the truest sense of the word, Platonic, primarily the means of spiritual enlightenment through which the physical consummation of a relationship is merely a preliminary. This marginalisation of the physical is evidently an apologist trope to justify emotional

Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth-century to the Present; Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition*; Plummer (ed.), *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*; A.L. Rowse, *Homosexuals in History: A Study of Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts* (New York: Dorset Press, 1983).

⁶⁷ Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 153.

⁶⁸ Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1896: 1924), p. 178.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

same-sex attraction between men.⁷⁰ As part of an apparatus-based conception of social mechanisms and their enforcement of world views - discussed in Chapter Two - Dickinson was equally aware of the pressures exerted by the dominant world-view upon the homosexual to closet himself. In *After Two Thousand Years* the modern young man, in his dialogue with Plato, asserts that 'Those who pursue the opposite sex [in modern times] are so numerous and so strongly supported by convention and morals and law, that the others dare only creep about in society, concealing the nature they cannot abjure' (*ATTY*, 188). Of course, I do not wish to claim that Dickinson was a leading influence on society in his presentation of Hellenic concepts of homosexuality but a part of a far wider movement. However, as a part of it, and avowing it strongly at the time when his influence was strongest upon the workings of the society of Apostles, he was at the start of his influence upon Forster during a central period of the author's literary development and at a time where this Hellenistic influence was just as evident in his understanding of dialogism.

The charting of classical, and particularly Greek, literature and society as a source for the understanding and legitimisation of same-sex activity equally finds expression within the 'Terminal Essay' to *The Thousand Nights and a Night* where Richard Burton, the translator of the work, expresses that 'Amongst the Greeks of the best ages the system of boy-favourites was advocated on considerations of morals and politics' and espouses a theory of the presence of a 'sodatic zone' (which encompasses much of the Mediterranean, central and East Asia and various Polynesian territories) in which the practice of homosexuality is seen as being prevalent.⁷¹

⁷⁰As he recounts in Dickinson, *The Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson and other Unpublished Writings*, p. 11 it equally provides a sadly accurate expression of Dickinson's own sexual experience wherein he 'successfully avoided' full consummation of his desire, admitting 'the strain is often very great; and one requires perhaps an unusual measure of self-control'.

⁷¹Richard Burton, 'Terminal Essay', *The Thousand Nights and a Night* (Benares: Karmashastra Society, 1885), p. 633. Burton was far from alone in asserting the Hellenic precedent for socially legitimate homosexuality during this period. Such 'Uranian' sentiments were present within poetry of

Within the aesthetic movement, Oscar Wilde, as Linda Dowling observes, posited a positive formation of same-sex relations as ‘the most exalted type’, equating the advancement of contemporary same-sex love with ‘the ideal of male love surviving in the writings of ancient Greece’.⁷² Equally, John Addington Symonds also proves central in asserting Hellenism as central means of claiming the historical respectability of ‘the affection of a man for a man’ before embarking, as will be discussed below, on his own pseudo-scientific formulation of the psychological and physiological factors by which such desires are produced.⁷³ Furthermore, Edward Carpenter, that other key figure of affirmative homosexual self-identification, whilst explaining what he termed ‘homogenic’ love, is clear to justify it as at its most ‘enthusiastic and heroic as amongst the post-Homeric Greeks’.⁷⁴

The aesthetic movement idealised the artistic over the natural: as Gregory Woods observes, the male was seen as being more ‘artistic’ given that women were deemed too ‘natural’ due to the congruence of their menstrual cycles with lunar cycles.⁷⁵ On the basis of such suppositions Woods suggests that ‘it became possible to regard boys as being somehow less physical than women, and, *ipso facto*, more spiritual’ particularly when the gaze of the aesthete fell upon representations of male

the 1880s and early 1890s, finding expression in periodicals and collections printed and published by the small presses of the day. Edward Cracroft Lefroy’s ‘A Palaestral Study’, for example, describes ‘quivering limbs by strong muscles held / In attitudes of wonder’, bringing the classical wrestling schools of the Athenian gymnasias back to life in highly homoerotic fashion, whilst S.S. Saale’s ‘Sonnet’ published in *The Artist* in 1890 equally discusses how ‘idling boys’ become transformed in the act of bathing to ‘The youth of Greece’ who ‘burst on this latter day/ As on their lithe young bodies many a ray/ Of sunlight dallies with its blushing glow.’ C.f. Edward Cracroft Lefroy, ‘A Palaestral Study’, *Echoes from Theocritus and Other Poems*, 1885; S.S. Saale, ‘Sonnet’, *The Artist*, 1st September 1890: both in White, *Nineteenth Century Writings on Homosexuality*, p. 160.

⁷² Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, p. 3.

⁷³ John Addington Symonds, ‘The Dantesque and Platonic Ideals of Love’, *In the Key of Blue and Other Prose Essays* (London: Elkin Matthews and John Lane, 1893), p. 57.

⁷⁴ Edward Carpenter, *Homogenic Love, and its Place in a Free Society* (Manchester: Manchester Labour Society, 1894), p. 201.

⁷⁵ C.f. Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition*, Chapter XIV: Spirit versus Physique.

beauty in art, where Woods contests that same-sex physical desire could be sublimated into a consideration of the purely aesthetic appreciation and ‘the possibilities of spiritual comradeship’.⁷⁶

Renaissance art proves to be a particularly fruitful site for such constructions of male beauty providing a spiritually and aesthetically ‘pure’ form of desire. Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance* sees the passionate expression of the aesthetic as spiritually pure, expressing how one may ‘well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution of knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to let the spirit free for a moment’.⁷⁷ He cites as his examples the ‘work of the artist’s hands, or the face of one’s friend’ as inspirations for such ‘exquisite passions’, thus asserting an associative link between the aesthetic appreciation of art and of its physical manifestation in the physical beauty of ‘one’s friend’.⁷⁸

John Addington Symonds also provides an example of the affirmative employment of renaissance art in the aestheticisation of homoerotic desire in his 1878 study, *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo Buonarroti and Tommaso Campanella*, analysing Michelangelo’s homoerotic ‘loves of his youth’ as the inspiration for his sonnets, which ‘worshipped Beauty in the Platonic spirit, passing beyond its personal manifestations to the universal and impersonal’.⁷⁹ The formation provides another example, both of the affirmative link between English aestheticism, renaissance Italy and ancient Greece and of the aestheticising of same-sex desire as spiritual.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 182, p. 183.

⁷⁷ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry: The 1893 Text*, (ed.) Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 189.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ John Addington Symonds, *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Tommaso Campanella*, (1878), in White (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Writings on Homosexuality*, p. 188.

As I shall explore in the next chapter, this highly prevalent formation of homosexual identity was well known to Forster, the Cambridge classicist. At the time of his death the fellows of King's College, Cambridge catalogued Forster's books. Alongside a complete set of Lowes Dickinson's works – easily the most by any single author in his collection – come copies of both *Marius the Epicurean* and *The Renaissance* alongside works by J.A. Symonds. However, only a copy of Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* remains at the time of the author's death.⁸⁰ As I shall suggest in the next chapter, whilst far from unthinkingly accepted, the Hellenistic model of homosexuality's provenance provides a consistent model of self-identification at play throughout Forster's fiction amongst other contending constructions.

VII The Dubious Science of Homosexuality

Both contemporaneous, and partially in response, to degenerative, aesthetic and Hellenist conceptions of homosexuality, another discourse in this contending web of discursive formations of homosexual identity emerged. Championed by an ostensibly more enlightened scientific community, it sought to 'explain' rather than to pathologise the newly emerging figure of the homosexual within late nineteenth and early twentieth-century society. This discourse could be read as offering a more affirmative alternative to prevalent degenerative understandings of homosexuality, for all that its conclusions are offensive to the modern reader.

⁸⁰ A complete list of the books and copies of texts found in Forster's rooms at King's College Cambridge can be found in the King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive Centre as part of the Forster bequest. The list was compiled in 1970 immediately after Forster's death by A.N.L. Munby and can be found at classmark EMF/31/1.

Karl Heinrich Ullrichs's early work might rightly be judged to position itself within the main body of degenerationist thought. However, his early postulation of what he terms 'Urnings' as a 'third sex' is notable – albeit profoundly misguided. Ullrichs identifies 'Urnings' as congenitally differentiated from the 'norms' of sexual development yet claims their biological autonomy and asserts some legitimacy for homosexual identity.⁸¹

Rather than positing the more prevalent view of same-sex attraction as a neurological disorder acquired by active homosexuals, the notion of a congenitally differentiated, non-medicalised formation of homosexual identity truly comes to light in the works of a more consciously renovatory school of theorists. Chief amongst these were John Addington Symonds, Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis. In varying ways, they present a positive conception of congenital homosexuality, critique the legal and social constraints upon homosexuals and posit the outdoor life and naturalness, masculinity and 'comradeship' as the basis of an alternative understanding of same-sex male desire. This position, as espoused by Carpenter, Whitman and, to some extent, A.E. Housman, represents a key theme within their work.

I have already discussed John Addington Symonds's work in relation to Hellenic formulations of homosexual identity. His 1883 book, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, is, according to Jeffrey Weeks, 'the first serious work on homosexuality

⁸¹ Hubert Kennedy, 'Karl Heinrich Ullrichs: First Theorist of Homosexuality' in *Science and Homosexualities*, (ed.) Vernon A Rosario (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 29.

published in Britain'.⁸² Hellenism formed the prime means, along with the Italian renaissance, that Symonds employs to develop an affirmative source of reference for the existence of same-sex relations before degenerative discourses appeared. Symonds, however, produces a more subtle analysis of homosexual identity, asserting that condemnatory formations of homosexuality are socially ingrained due to a 'belief that sexual inversion is a crime against God, nature and the state pervades all [. . .] legislation on the subject'.⁸³ This awareness of the imposition of social institutions in the assertion of a world view as truth is similar to Forster's. One might conjecture that living a necessarily covert homosexual life in this era might make one profoundly aware of the function of such apparatuses. Symonds asserts that homosexuality is a congenital occurrence which its exponents 'possess [. . .] from their early childhood [. . .] they feel powerless to get rid of them', a facet of his theories derived from Ullrichs and which, whilst affirmative in its directions, still very much articulates itself in the vocabulary of degeneration, referencing homosexuality as one of a variety of 'abnormal sexual inclinations' which divert from a hetero-normative understanding of gender and sexuality.⁸⁴ Symonds does, however, give this conceptualisation a positive spin in his claim to Carpenter that, for the male homosexual 'the absorption of semen implies a real modification of the physique of the person who absorbs it' thus physically positing the possibility of a new form of distinct, differentiated virile masculinity from that of heterosexual men. Symonds presents a new understanding of a hyper-masculine homosexual man, albeit couched in the language of sexual inversion.⁸⁵

⁸² Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, p. 51.

⁸³ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, (1896) cited in White, *Nineteenth Century Writings on Homosexuality*, p. 63.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

Henry Havelock Ellis worked closely with Symonds in the production of *Sexual Inversion*, which ‘originally appeared under the names of both Ellis and John Addington Symonds [. . .] A second edition in 1897 cited Ellis as the sole author’ and indeed their work does share a great deal theoretically though, as Symonds himself put it, Ellis was ‘too much inclined to stick to the neuropathical theory of explanation’.⁸⁶ There is certainly evidence to suggest that Ellis does engage with degenerationist theories of acquired homosexuality in his deconstruction of its inherent hetero-normativity, claiming that ‘the argument for acquired or suggested inversion logically involves the assertion that normal sexuality is also acquired or suggested’.⁸⁷ Ellis appears progressive in his recognition of the contingency and self-serving interest of many previous models of homosexuality as ‘largely justified by the position and the attitude of the observer’.⁸⁸ However, for all his claims of progression, Ellis’s desire to reformulate notions of homosexuality are still expressed in the language of degeneration. He labels ‘inverts’ - as he terms his subjects - as ‘organically twisted’ people who ‘may be roughly compared to the congenital idiot, to the instinctive criminal’.⁸⁹ Ellis makes claims for congenital homosexuality and the sexual emancipation of women elsewhere in his work. He claims that ‘if we can enable an invert to be healthy, self-restrained, and self-respecting, we have done better than to convert him into the mere simulacrum of a normal man’, yet Ellis’s renovation of homosexuality does not move far from the models he opposes in its

⁸⁶ Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction*, p. 146; J.A. Symonds, Letter to Edward Carpenter, 29th December, 1882 in White, *Nineteenth Century Writings on Homosexuality*, p. 93.

⁸⁷ Henry Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion*, vol. II, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 1897:1995), p. 227.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 231: 232

affirmative formation.⁹⁰

The critical positioning of Forster with Edward Carpenter, discussed above, has gathered strength to the extent that Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks claim that ‘In microcosm the fiction of E.M. Forster and D.H. Lawrence carries uncanny echoes of Carpenter and his circle’.⁹¹ I have discussed the evolution of this critical position above. Carpenter’s influence, whilst important, was, I believe, neither exclusive nor especially enduring, and Forster’s writing is much more than merely the fictive articulation of Carpenter’s ideas.

Carpenter’s 1894 tract *Homogenic Love, and its Place in a Free Society* is a notable departure from the prevalent affirmative and pathologising discourses of homosexuality in contention at the time of its publication. Carpenter states that the ‘overmastering character’ of same-sex desire, which he terms ‘homogenic’ love, ‘would entitle it to rank as a grand human passion’.⁹² Whilst recognising the presence of Hellenistic portrayals of same-sex desire, Carpenter charts the presence of a more modern nineteenth-century homoerotic tradition in the writings of ‘Tennyson [. . .] and of Walt Whitman’.⁹³ He makes a point of countering degenerationist formulations, stating that ‘the epithet “morbid” will probably before long be abandoned as descriptive of the homogenic bias’.⁹⁴ There can be little doubt that the frank and unashamed admission that ‘there would be no object to ignoring [. . .] that

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 235.

⁹¹ Rowbotham and Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis*, p. 123.

⁹² Carpenter, *Homogenic Love, and its Place in a Free Society*, p. 25.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 27.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 35.

this kind of love [. . .] like others [. . .] has its physical side' would have presented an attractively forthright and different position from that of other theorists.

Carpenter is equally a socialist and this cannot be divorced from an understanding of his works and goes further in explaining his attractiveness to Dickinson and Forster, whose liberalism, as discussed in Chapter One, was more closely allied to socialism than has been regularly recognised. Carpenter's critique of degenerative models of homosexuality occurs in a socialist context. He explains the apparent nervous morbidity that degenerative models of homosexuality posit as due to 'the great strain and tension of nerves under which those persons grow up from boyhood [. . .] find their deepest and strongest instincts under the ban of society around them' and, in a developed understanding of the function of social apparatuses, castigates the dominant world view for homophobia, claiming that 'it is high time now that the modern states should recognise this in their institutions – instead of (as is done in schools and places of education) by repression and disallowance, perverting the passion into its least satisfactory channels'.⁹⁵

As Jeffrey Weeks notes, Carpenter's socialism 'took a concrete form' after reading H.W. Hyndman's summary of Marx in *England for All*.⁹⁶ Carpenter's thought is Marxist in understanding the social formation of derogatory conceptualisations of homosexuality which are enshrouded in law. Carpenter claims that 'Law represents from age to age the code of the dominant or ruling class [which may today] best be

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 43: 47.

⁹⁶ Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, p. 70.

denoted by the word respectability'.⁹⁷ This strongly corresponds to the apparatus based conception of social mechanisms at work within Dickinson's work and Forster's fiction. Carpenter avows a critique of science and law as means of limiting and excluding homosexuals, propagating false understanding of their nature. However, his work describes the 'homogenic passion' along the same hetero-normative lines albeit that the homosexual man is not 'inverted' but a member of an 'intermediate sex', inhabiting a middle ground in what he conceives of as a spectrum of sexuality.⁹⁸ Such a sex, he claims, has a noble and superior function in stopping gender conflict, able to be 'interpreters of men and women to each other' due to their shared ownership of traits of the other two genders.⁹⁹ Carpenter, whilst providing one of the most unabashedly physical of affirmative conceptions of homosexuality, still can only provide an affirmative spin upon the discourse of degeneration.

Carpenter and Symonds, furthermore, championed (and in Carpenter's case, particularly via his personal blend of socialism and homosexuality, theorised) a notion of the masculine, 'natural homosexual', homo-eroticising male comradeship, particularly between different social classes, as what Carpenter terms 'a really human and natural love'.¹⁰⁰ In expounding this idea of a masculine, rugged, outdoor homosexuality, what Hugh David terms 'the idea of the "lovely lad" and the whole notion of 'man love', Carpenter and Symonds championed Walt Whitman as the apotheosis of the poetry of comradeship.¹⁰¹ Symonds' 1893 work, *Walt Whitman: A*

⁹⁷ Edward Carpenter, *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921:15th edition), p. 53.

⁹⁸ Edward Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age: A Series of Papers on the Relations of the Sexes* (Manchester: Manchester Labour Press, 1896), p. 115.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Carpenter, *Homogenic Love, and its Place in a Free Society*, p. 27.

¹⁰¹ Hugh, *On Queer Sreet: A Social History of British Homosexuality*, p. 43.

Study, is characteristic, suggesting that:

Whitman has founded comradeship, the enthusiasm which binds man to man in fervent love upon a natural basis. Eliminating classical associations of corruption, ignoring the question of a guilty passion doomed by law and popular antipathy to failure, he begins anew with sound and primitive humanity.¹⁰²

Symonds goes further, stating that Whitman's expression of comradeship should not be viewed simply as 'a merely personal possession', rather as a 'social and political virtue' that will 'cement society' and 'render commonwealths inviolable'.¹⁰³

Carpenter's study of the 'Calamus' section of *Leaves of Grass*, in his 1898 work *Some Friends of Walt Whitman*, goes even further in his overt statement that 'Walt Whitman was before all a lover of the Male', positing that this 'manly' conception of same-sex desire, is 'a new inspiration and an extraordinary access of vitality' which 'may become [one of the] factors of future human evolution'.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Carpenter's own collection of poetry *Towards Democracy* (1883), presents a 'similarity of emotional atmosphere and intension' between himself and Whitman, manifested in vows of his 'Elder Soldier in the Brotherhood to the Younger' to 'form an indissoluble brotherhood and compact, a brotherhood unalterable', a vow expressed by the soldier in question whilst 'now at your feet, leaning on your knees, in your eyes

¹⁰² John Addington Symonds, *Walt Whitman: A Study*, in White, *Nineteenth Century Writings on Homosexuality*, p. 217.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁰⁴ Edward Carpenter, *Some Friends of Walt Whitman: A Study in Sex Psychology*, Papers of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology (1924) p. 18.

deep-looking' and which can be attained 'Through kinship with Nature'.¹⁰⁵ Gregory Woods comments on this tradition as present throughout much Anglo-American art of the period, claiming the works of Thomas Eakins provide one such site of homoeroticised male bathing scenes whilst A.E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, provides similar images of 'many a lightfoot lad' amongst 'brooks too broad for leaping'.¹⁰⁶

Richard Perceval Graves notes that Housman's relevance to Forster was especially marked, the young novelist writing to the older poet in 1907 that 'it had occurred to him that the poems [of *A Shropshire Lad*] concealed a personal experience: the author had fallen in love with a man'.¹⁰⁷ It is evident, as discussed in the next chapter, that Forster's awareness of Housman's formation of homosexual identity, one articulation of the homosexual natural man, is consistently addressed throughout the novelist's fiction.

VIII A Tangled Web

As Florence Tamagne comments, the history of homosexual identity – as opposed to homosexual activity – might be commonly accepted to have commenced at 'the end

¹⁰⁵ Edward Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1883: 1931) p. 518; 277; 278.

¹⁰⁶ Gregory Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition*, p. 163; A.E. Housman, 'With Rue My Heart is Laden', *The Collected Poems of A.E. Housman* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1896;1939) p. 208.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Perceval Graves, *A.E. Housman: The Scholar Poet*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 179) p. 238.

of the nineteenth-century, when the term ‘homosexual’ came into wider use’.¹⁰⁸ As this chapter suggests, the mid to late-nineteenth century presented a particularly complex and often clashing collection of what James Ward terms ‘waves of discourse that have impacted’ on a stable concept of homosexual identity.¹⁰⁹ This was the time of Forster’s emerging sexual identity as he self-consciously recognises in his fiction, as I shall discuss in the next chapter. At a time of discursive contest over what Kenneth Plummer terms, the ‘making of the modern homosexual’ the action of state institutions, as H.G. Cocks recognises, asserted the primacy of negative formations of the term by ‘direct intervention in the private sphere on the part of legal or state authority’ in the proscription of any same-sexual activity between men.¹¹⁰ This site of contest, particularly in the light of the Wilde trial, brought forth a plethora of contending affirmative conceptions of male same-sex desire that offered counter-discourses to those backed by the apparatuses of state that, as we seen thus far, Forster was keenly aware of as well as of their power to enshrine the dominant world view. Forster wrote his work within this complex web of discourse and counter-discourse. His membership of the Cambridge Apostles, and friendship with Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson were at the heart of his dialogic understanding and practice. Moreover, it is at the point of the emergence of the contending array of concepts of same-sex desire that Forster became a member of a society where, alongside Lytton Strachey and other apostolic brothers, he was able, as Julie Anne Taddeo claims of Strachey, to ‘find intellectual freedom [. . .] where sex and Male Love served as the weekly topics

¹⁰⁸ Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939* (New York: Algora, 2004), p. 152.

¹⁰⁹ James Ward, *Sexualities, Work and Organization: Stories by Gay Men and Women in the Workplace* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 13.

¹¹⁰ Plummer, *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*; H.G. Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the 19th Century* (London: Tauris, 2003), p. 5. Cocks offers a comprehensive survey in his opening chapter of the history of legislation against same-sexual activity.

of discussion'.¹¹¹ As I shall examine in the final chapter, whilst affirmative models of sexuality had their attractions for any homosexual man of this period, the body of Forster's fiction presents them in dialogic relation with contending understandings of the same-sex desire. In doing so, as we shall see, Forster's dialogism enacted and ironised the contest to assert a monologic sense of what it meant to be a homosexual man at the beginning of the twentieth-century.

¹¹¹ Julie Anne Taddeo, *Lytton Strachey and the Search for Modern Sexual Identity: The Last Eminent Victorian* (Binghampton: Haworth Press, 2002), p. 7.

CHAPTER SIX

DIALOGIC HOMOSEXUALITY IN FORSTER'S FICTION

I **The Ironic Presence of the Degenerate**

'The Story of a Panic', conceived in 1904, presents a character described in the language of degeneracy that had gained credence within a post-Wildean legal community to give 'objective credibility' to the notion that the 'invert' should be legislated against.¹ This facet of Forster's characterisation is a recurring trope in his fiction, one both consciously presented as a facet of a more complex understanding of dialogic homosexual identities and carefully and repeatedly ironised.

The self-consciously contingent narrator of this early story is a representative of the world-view espoused by degenerationist theorists in his ostensibly objective description of the shortcomings of Eustace, the tale's protagonist: 'his features were pale, his chest contracted, and his muscles underdeveloped. His aunts thought him delicate; what he really needed was discipline' (*CSS*, 10). The impulse to 'discipline' is an early marker of the dominant discourse's desire to employ repressive mechanisms to contain and define the subject of this labelling. Forster ironises this position in articulating his narrator's comprehension of Eustace's transformation after the 'panic' that occurs during their picnic in the Vallone Fontana Caroso. Piggford and Martin rather coyly claim this change occurs after the panic when the protagonist is newly alert to 'a world of desires unmentionable in an Edwardian context'.² The narrator expresses his disgust at Eustace's previously effeminate condition, employing

¹ Rosario, *Science and Homosexualities*, p. 115.

² Martin and Piggford, 'Introduction', *Queer Forster*, p. 4.

the vocabulary of degeneracy. The narrator espouses a belief in the protagonist's renovation, stating that 'healthy exercise' had 'begun to thaw Eustace's sluggish moods and loosen his stiffened muscles. He stepped out manfully for the first time in his life, holding his head up and taking deep draughts of air into his chest' (*CSS*, 19). The deliberate irony on Forster's part is that the effeminacy espied by the suspicious narrator at the start of the story is diagnosed as a mark of degeneracy requiring discipline and containment. As the story progresses this 'degenerative' condition transforms into what the narrator believes to be good health and yet what Forster, internally deconstructing the paradoxes of degenerationist theories, shows to be, according to such theories, merely a wild swing to the other pole of deviancy, the hyper-masculine. This swing is precipitated, moreover, by a final actualisation of the boy's homoerotic desire via the visit of the Hellenic god, Pan. That which degenerative discourses might view as the physical manifestation of a supposed genetic 'morbidity' in Forster's hands makes the protagonist so recognisably 'manly' as to be supposed virile in the view of the narrator.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the language of degeneracy is equally applied to Philip Herriton at the opening of the novel when he argues with Lilia Carella about the purpose of his trip to Monteriano, ironically to stop a marriage that has already occurred. Philip himself admits "“You despise me, perhaps, and think I'm feeble”" (*WAFTT*, 45) and is quickly mocked for his physical frailty by Lilia in counterpoint to the physical virility of her husband: '“Fra Filippo's blood's up. He shrinks from nothing. Oh take care he doesn't hurt you!” She swayed about in vulgar imitation of Philip's walk, and then, with a proud look at the square shoulders of her betrothed, flounced out of the room' (*WAFTT*, 45). Equally, whilst Herriton identifies himself self-consciously with the aesthetic movement he is, nonetheless, counterpointed by

the comments of the narrator, who details his physical appearance as ‘a tall, weakly built young man whose clothes had to be judiciously padded in order to make him pass muster’ (*WAFTT*, 70), his facial characteristics being damned to the extent that the narrator asserts that ‘those people who believe that destiny resides in the mouth and chin shook their heads at him’ (*WAFTT*, 70). Furthermore, after the death of Carella’s son and Herriton’s and Carella’s homoerotically charged grappling, Philip’s persona of genteel respectability slips. Again, he is physically described after this episode in terms of a degeneracy which reveals itself as he becomes more intimate with Carella and more open in his avowal of this intimacy: ‘In the looking glass at the end of the corridor he saw his face haggard and his shoulders pulled forward [. . .] He had seen the need for strenuous work and for righteousness. And now he saw what a very little way these things would go’ (*WAFTT*, 155).³

Rickie Elliot of *The Longest Journey* is Forster’s strongest articulation of degenerative theories, coming closest to a portrayal of what the French sexologist Dr. Laupts termed the ‘morbid causes’ of a ‘creature stricken with sexual perversion’.⁴ The opening chapter of the novel sees Agnes Pembroke arrive at Cambridge. Having packed Rickie off to find dinner for her, she surveys his room:

Then she saw her host’s shoes: he had left them lying on the sofa. Rickie was slightly deformed, and so the shoes were not the same size, and one of them had a thick heel to help him towards an even walk [. . .] ‘Ugh! Poor boy! It is

³ Interestingly, another ‘degenerate’ appears briefly but at a key moment within *WAFTT* during the episode of Harriet Herriton’s abduction of Gino Carella’s son: she is aided in her attempts by a messenger who ‘was a ghastly creature, quite bald, with trickling eyes and gray twitching nose. In any other country he would have been shut up’ (*WAFTT*, 140). This appears, once more, to be a matter of self-conscious irony by Forster in that Harriet Herriton’s actions are predicated on the belief that she is rescuing the supposedly English child of her sister-in-law, Lilia Herriton, from the degenerative clutches of a less evolved Italy, yet in the removal of the child she accepts the aid of one such representative of ‘degeneracy’.

⁴ Dr. Laupts, (pseudonym of Georges Saint-Paul), *Taints and Poisons: Sexual Perversions and Perversity*, (1896), cited in Rosario, *Science and Homosexualities*, p. 97.

too bad. Why shouldn't he be like other people? This hereditary business is too awful." She shut the door with a sigh. Then she recalled the perfect form of Gerald, his athletic walk, the poise of his shoulders, his arms stretched forward to receive her. Gradually she was comforted. (*TLJ*, 9)

As with Philip Herriton before him, Rickie is quickly juxtaposed by a figure of masculinity approved by the dominant discourse, that of the public school 'athletic marvel' (*TLJ*, 13), Gerald Croft, who Forster comments would be homosocially idolised in the reminiscences of 'elderly men' who compare their schools and school days to 'works of art' (*TLJ*, lxix). Rickie Elliot's 'deformity' is quickly compounded within the first ten pages of the novel by the reports of his bed-maker at Cambridge, Mrs. Aberdeen, who goes on to catalogue his frailties to Agnes Pembroke, gossiping to her "Oh, miss, his nose! [. . .] His nose! It poured twice with blood in the Long" (*TLJ*, 9). The 'hereditary business' of which Agnes Pembroke speaks comes back to haunt her when, despite the fact that 'her whole being rose up in revolt against' (*TLJ*, 12) the apparently degeneratively deformed Rickie, she marries him and gives birth to their child. Rickie Elliot's daughter, however, also suffers from Elliot's hereditary condition and, whilst Elliot is employed as an assistant master at Sawston School, one of the bastions of the dominant world view of Gerald Croft and Herbert Pembroke, he is urged, on discovering his daughter's illness, to 'be a man':

"What is it?" he gasped, "It's something you daren't tell me."

"Only this-" stuttered Herbert. "You mustn't mind when you see – she's lame."

Mrs. Lewin disappeared.

“Lame! But not as lame as I am?”

“Oh, my dear boy, worse. Don’t – oh, be a man in this [...]’

[...] After a short, painless illness his daughter died. But the lesson he had learnt so glibly at Cambridge should be heeded now; no child should ever be born to him again. (*TLJ*, 184)

Rickie Elliot’s daughter exists within the novel for half a page in the chronicle of her father’s prematurely curtailed life. The ironically couched ‘moral message’ of the episode is asserted strongly by the narrative voice to state that the ‘lesson’ which had been ‘glibly’ received by Rickie in his youth now must be ‘heeded’: any attempt by a degenerate to breed is doomed to morbidity. Thus Rickie Elliot, as discussed below, enters the pastoral world of homoerotically charged relations with his hyper-masculine half-brother, Stephen Wonham.

A Room with a View’s Cecil Vyse is an interesting case in respect of the presentation of discourses of degeneracy. On first appearance in the novel, he is described by the narrator as ‘not deficient physically’ (*ARWAV*, 93) and his engagement to Lucy Honeychurch does not suggest effeminacy. However, the anxiety that he feels about effeminacy interestingly articulates itself, not only in his recourse to the self-conscious pose of the aesthete but in his employment of the language of degeneration. In an utterance to Sir Harry Otway he discusses the state of the ‘masses’ (who were another target of the discourse of degeneration) when he makes the flippant comment that ‘the physique of the masses was improving at a most appalling rate’ (*ARWAV*, 110).⁵ Vyse then discusses - in a display of ‘queerness’ which ‘startled’ Lucy - his belief that he is excluded from the dominant world view’s model of masculinity, the world of muscular athleticism. He claims that ‘you [Lucy] feel

⁵ C.f. Pykett, *Engendering Fictions*, and Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses* for fuller accounts of the association of the working class ‘mass’ as the supposed locus for degeneration by various theorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

more at home with me in a room' (*ARWAV*, 113), a degenerative association made all the stronger by the fact that 'his gold pince-nez', symbols both of his effeminate aesthetic studiousness and degenerative physicality, are allowed by Forster to be 'dislodged [. . .] and flattened between' Lucy and Cecil, impeding their first kiss, and by association Vyse's route to heterosexual activity.⁶

Howards End provides two clearly differentiated characters linked by Forster to degenerative discourses: Tibbie Schlegel, the pseudo-aesthete; and Leonard Bast, the clerk who, as John Carey asserts, 'strives to educate himself' in order to rise from what were culturally perceived to be the 'masses' into the bourgeois world of the Schlegel sisters.⁷ Tibbie Schlegel is quickly introduced to us as the only permanent male representative at Wickham Place, the feminine locus of the New Women Schlegel sisters.⁸ He is associated with the physical degeneracy of effeminacy, a nervous sufferer whose 'hay fever had bothered him a great deal [. . .] His head ached, his eyes were [. . .] The only thing that made life worth living was the thought of Walter Savage Landor' (*HE*, 26). The self-consciously effeminate Tibbie Schlegel is quick to associate himself with that other self-conscious aesthete Cecil Vyse. Schlegel states that "I like Guy and Mr. Vyse the most," (*HE*, 118) to his sisters after direct confrontation about the effeminacy of Vyse as 'a rather wretched, weedy man, don't you think?' (*HE*, 117) a criticism which has already been levelled at Tibby himself by Margaret in her, ironically homoerotically charged, desire to have ' "[. . .] a real boy

⁶ Vyse, indeed, goes on to self-consciously exclude himself from the athletic world in his claims to Freddy Honeychurch that ' "[. . .] I am not athlete. As you well remarked this very morning, "There are some chaps who are no good for anything but books"; I plead guilty to being such a chap, and will not inflict myself on you.'" (*ARWAV*, 188). It is structurally important that this key episode at the end of Chapter 16 comes at just the point where George Emerson – a model of a very different form of masculinity – plays tennis with Lucy Honeychurch in his place, their match pre-figuring their romantic reconciliation. The self-conscious avowal of a lack of athletic talent is structurally constructed by Forster to pre-figure an inability to affect a heterosexual union.

⁷ Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 18.

⁸ In Chapter Two of *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction*, Lyn Pykett examines the particular links between the New Woman and degeneration as a discourse, positing that the literary manifestation of the New Woman extends well beyond the 1890s as criticism has previously asserted, and cites the Schlegel sisters as one example of an Edwardian manifestation of modernist presentations of New Women.

in the house – the kind of boy who cares for men’ (*HE*, 55).⁹

Maurice again demonstrates a view of homosexuality as degeneration away from the supposedly ‘evolved’ gender roles of heterosexual reproduction, the ideological enforcement of this world view, as discussed above, enforced from childhood by teachers wishing to assert a hetero-normative view of sexuality. This view is ironically articulated by Forster via use of the Bible to assert an evolutionary concept concerning the primacy of ‘male and female, created by God in the beginning in order that the earth might be peopled, and of the period when the male and female receive their powers’ (*M*, 18). Dr. Barry, the family G.P., has a similarly Biblically sourced understanding of homosexuality: when Maurice Hall confesses to him that “‘I’m an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort.’” (*M*, 139) He is met with a biblical repudiation of the possibility of homosexuality as a human state and the instruction to “[. . .] never let that evil hallucination, that temptation from the devil, occur to you again” (*M*, 139). The irony of the narrative intervention is, at this point, obvious to the astute reader. The apparently omniscient statement that ‘Dr. Barry [. . .] had read no scientific works on Maurice’s subject’ is a particularly ironic one when qualified by the observation that, ‘None had existed when he walked the hospitals, and any published since were in German, and therefore suspect’ (*M*, 140). Such ‘suspect’ German ideas are precisely those degenerationist ones espoused by the Germans Richard von Krafft-Ebbing and Max Nordau. Their ‘suspect’ Teutonic nature is all the more questionable in the light of the knowledge that Forster has spent a happy period in Germany in 1905, ‘as one of a long succession of tutors’ to Elizabeth von Armin in 1905 and, in his previous novel, *Howards End*, had sympathetically portrayed a

⁹ It perhaps lends some weight to my contention that Cecil Vyse, described in *A Room with a View* as ‘not deficient physically’ (*ARWAV*, 93) should have become transformed into such a ‘wretched’ and ‘weedy’ character in the intervening two years: he seems to be associated with Forster equally as an aesthete of sorts, identifiable as representative of an affirmative homosexual identity, and as a figure of the ‘scientific’ counter-discourse of degeneration, a demonstration of Forster’s inter-negating discursal irony.

family of German origin, the Schlegels.¹⁰ I am not claiming that a sympathy for German intellectual life is synonymous with an allegiance to Nordau's and Krafft-Ebbing's works, rather, I am suggesting that degenerationist theories seem to have had such a deep seated effect in this novel that Maurice Hall conceives that the comfort derived from reading a biography on Tchaikovsky (which makes veiled references to his homosexuality) leads the protagonist to believe that the biography is only useful in helping him 'backwards' (*M*, 141). Despite the apparently dubious nature of these German ideas, Maurice Hall can only conceive of homosexuality at this point in terms of evolutionary progress, from regression to evolution, from moving 'backwards' to forwards. Forster may not have allied himself to this field of thought, but he was clearly well aware of it.

Degenerationist thought finds further expression in the workings of Mr. Lasker-Jones, the hypnotist who Maurice Hall, at the suggestion of Risley, his aesthetic acquaintance, visits in Chapter 36 of the novel. This 'advanced scientific man' appears to coincide with the nascent psychoanalysis of turn-of-the-century England and Germany. Otto Weininger, for example, states in *Sex and Character* (1903) that predominant amongst the 'therapeutic remedies' available to 'combat' homosexuality was 'hypnotism', disparaging as he is of this approach.¹¹ Similarly, Freud's comments in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* summarise Freudian psychoanalysis up to the beginning of the First World War: he, equally, views homosexuality as 'neurotic' and as 'a divergence in erotic life', following broadly upon degenerationist conceptions, and he is enthusiastic in his comments on

¹⁰ P.N. Furbank describes the time spent by Forster as Countess Mary Beauchamp von Arnim's children's tutor at Nassenheide in 1905 (Chapter 7 of Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 125.) whilst Forster, of course, wrote *Howards End* about the Anglo-Germanic Schlegel sisters.

¹¹ Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 51. Weininger is, however, considerably more liberal in his own thought, believing that the law ran contrary to 'a purer state of humanity' in its legislation against homosexuality and that 'the rational treatment of homosexual inverts would be to allow them to seek and obtain what they require where they can, that is, amongst other inverts'. However, Weininger's thinking did not extend to a theory of homosexuality that identified it as anything other than a deviation from prescribed hetero-normative gender roles.

hypnotic trances as being ‘analogous’ with normal sleep, and thus useful in gaining access to the unconscious, in that the hypnotised sleeper will ‘remain in rapport’ with the hypnotist who is able to make therapeutic suggestions to the patient.¹² Mr. Lasker-Jones attempts just this in his ‘experiment to see how deeply the tendency [of homosexuality] is rooted’ (*M*, 158) and is, at least initially, pleased with the results, claiming, in another excellent example of Forster’s irony, that Maurice Hall’s predicament is encouraging as ‘you’re open to suggestion’ (*M*, 159). The irony is that Mr. Lasker-Jones’ confidence in the explicatory and curative powers of his theory is so assured that he urges Maurice to return to Penge to let the therapist’s suggestions work. However, once at Penge, Maurice finds himself far more open to the suggestions of Alec Scudder.

A Passage to India provides a considerably more complex presentation of degeneracy, particularly of its application to the colonised and the interplay between representations of colonised peoples and the homoerotic. The discourse of degeneration had long been applied to the colonised peoples of the British empire, provoking anxiety that the degeneration ‘present’ amongst the urbanised ‘masses’ would leave Britain ill-equipped with a sufficiently ‘manly’ and dominant population to gain mastery over peoples simultaneously theorised as ‘savages’ and feeble ‘effeminate’.¹³ For all the critical formations that saw Forster’s *A Passage to India* as a liberal humanist reaction against such conceptions, a desire to ‘only connect’ the colonisers and colonised, into terms of ‘personal relations’, William Greenslade notes

¹² Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, (trans.) James Strachey, (eds.) James Strachey and Angela Richards, vol. 1, *The Pelican Freud Library* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1915-17: 1974), p. 349:143. Freud, however, differed from Nordau and the first, damning wave of degenerationist thought markedly in his belief that homosexuality was part of a considerably more liminal realm of sexual experience throughout childhood and represented a sign of arrested psychological development.

¹³ C.f. Sara Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005) p. 105. Mills discusses the colonial ‘fear of miscegenation and particularly the degeneration of the race’ that caused ‘great anxiety’ in colonial populations, a means for ensuring a dominant population for the governance of the colonies.

how, in the key liberal figure of Lord Roseberry, the parliamentary Liberal party was itself 'actively moving influential opinion behind this new drive towards imperial regeneration' towards a manly British populace to master the 'degenerate' colonised races.¹⁴ Historically, the forces of traditional parliamentary Liberalism in Edwardian England appear highly allied to concepts of degeneration, thus making it all the more marked that Forster's socialistically aligned New Liberalism took him away from this school of mainstream Liberal thought and towards a desire for connection which, though never wholly realised within the novel, is different from the more traditional liberalism he is so often identified with.

Throughout *A Passage to India*, the English attempt to enforce this formulation of degeneracy upon various different bodies within the population of India. It would be incorrect to say that Forster never unwittingly reproduces the formula himself, avowing within a narration on Aziz's reflection upon the photo of his late wife, that he 'had breathed for an instant the *mortal* air that surrounds Orientals' (*API*, 75: my emphasis). However, I wish to argue that it would be highly reductive to present Forster's conceptualisation of racial and homoerotic identity as a simple reproduction of this concept of degeneracy. One might question, in the light of my examination of the distance between authorial and narrative voice in Chapter Two, whether such an equivalence of viewpoint can be intuited from this statement. That Forster presents degeneration as a key component of dominant English views of various Indians is another matter. The famous 'bridge party' scenes of Chapter V of the 'Mosque' section of the novel see apparent attempts at 'connection' between the English and Indians marred by this very formulation. Ronnie Heaslop's view of himself as an 'Aryan Brother' (*API*, 59) is steeped in the rhetoric of eugenics whilst

¹⁴ Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel, 1880-1940*, p. 184; One need only look to P.J. Cain's excellent text on the evolution of J.A. Hobson's anti-imperialism, particularly Chapter Three (*Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism and Finance 1887-1938*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) to see the alignment of New Liberal and anti-imperialist thought from one of the architects.

the admonition towards the ladies of the colonial club that “no one who’s here matters” (*API*, 59) and that all English people are “superior to everyone in India except one or two of the ranis” shows Forster demonstrating his awareness of the way that such an apparatus of the colonial world view inhibits any possibility of ‘connection’. Furthermore, as Sara Suleri Goodyear skilfully analyses the episode, Adela Quested’s gaze at the punkah-wallah during the trial scenes of the ‘Caves’ section neatly encapsulates both of the paradoxical formations of the colonised as ‘savage’ in her perception of the supreme physicality of the ‘splendidly formed’ Indian who, to her perception, possessed ‘the strength and beauty that sometimes come to flower in Indians of low birth’ (*API*, 220) whilst simultaneously perceiving this ‘strange race’ to be predominantly effeminate ‘thin-hammed, flat-chested mediocrities’.¹⁵

Aziz, is partially seen to be constrained by this discourse within the structure of the narrative to the point where, after his meeting with Fielding, Mrs. Moore, and Adela Quested in Chapter VII he ‘fell ill as he foretold – slightly ill’ (*API*, 114), a fact that is a pretence, a mark of his complicity, in attempting to ‘connect’ with the English of his acceptance of this discursive formation of their world view, which seeks to pathologise him. Aziz even shows a partial awareness of the working of this discourse upon him in his reading of Western medical texts on love. Aziz, expressing himself in the ‘bouncing narrative’, asserts that ‘Science seemed to discuss everything from the wrong end. It didn’t interpret his experiences when he found them in a German manual, because by being there they ceased to be his experiences’ (*API*, 116). Given the homoerotic encounter with Fielding which has occurred at the tea party, the incongruence of this ‘German manual’ with his own experience, both as an Indian and the potential possessor of same-sex attraction, sees him become momentarily aware of

¹⁵ C.f. Goodyear, ‘Forster’s Imperial Erotic’, pp. 154-55 for her own analysis of the punkah-wallah scene.

the workings of European medico-scientific discourses to constrain and label him.¹⁶

I do not wish to assert the exclusivity, nor indeed the primacy of degenerative discourses of homosexuality within Forster's fiction. I wish, rather, to draw attention to degeneration's presence alongside other discourses concerned with asserting exclusive explanatory notions of homosexuality. I wish to demonstrate how Forster engages these contending discourses in dialogic, inter-negating relations.

II The Hellenist and the Aesthete

In the short story, 'The Curate's Friend', the appearance of a Hellenic faun has a transformative effect upon the eponymous curate. As Wilfred Healy Stone notes, the 'faun becomes "modern" just as the classics, when taught by Wedd or Dickinson, become modern – they are felt as present experience.'¹⁷ This recognition, not only of Dickinson's influence but of the means by which the classics were employed as an affirmative vehicle for the expression of 'modern' sexuality, is a valuable one.

The faun reveals himself to those who, as the curate archly expresses, possess 'a certain quality for which truthfulness is too cold a name and animal spirits too coarse a one' (CSS, 86), allowing the curate a recognition of his own sexuality so he is able to break off the engagement from his fiancé and live the life of an ecclesiastically closeted bachelor. This recurrent figure, representative of the Hellenic inspiration for affirmative models of homosexual love, finds its articulation throughout Forster's

¹⁶ Again, a 'German manual' as with the 'German' texts discussed in *Maurice*, above, provides another Forsterian expression of his knowledge of the workings of degenerationist thought.

¹⁷ Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E.M. Forster*, p. 156.

fiction, often in profound interaction and inter-negation with the degenerationist positions discussed above.

‘Albergo Empedocle’ provides another example of the transformative powers of Hellenism on the sexuality of a young man. Harold, the tale’s protagonist, suffers from ‘the blues’, sleep troubles and headaches prior to an engagement to Mildred Peaslake, indicating depression at the realisation of his homosexuality. Homoerotic relations are asserted by the narrator in his statement that Harold is ‘the man I love most in the world’ (*LTC*, 36-7). The element of fantasy within the tale is, to Arthur Martland’s mind, merely a ‘superficially deceptive gloss’ to this very definite assertion of Forster’s own ‘secret life’.¹⁸ The fantastic unfolds when Harold and his prospective family-in-law visit Greek ruins where Arthur, troubled at night by the anxiety of his forthcoming engagement, sleeps and awakes to find himself suddenly aware of a previous life as an ancient Greek. Admitting this to his fiancé, he informs her that in his previous incarnation he has ‘“loved very differently [. . .] I loved better too”’ (*LTC*, 52). This is clearly an example of the ‘Hellenic release’ which, given the pre-existent aesthetic tradition outlined above, makes it all the more interesting that the story was originally published in *Temple Bar* magazine in December 1903, making it one of the earliest and most open avowals of Forster’s sexuality.¹⁹

Robert K. Martin makes extensive comment on the fact that the narrator of ‘Ansell’ is himself a Hellenist scholar, ‘engaged in writing about the grammar that was spoken by the Greeks in ancient times’ (*LTC*, 31). Martin insightfully sees Forster ‘as part of the larger movement which began in the nineteenth-century’

¹⁸ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p. 27.

¹⁹ Salter, ‘“That is my ticket”: The Homosexual Writings of E.M. Forster’, p. 5; Oliver Stallybrass (ed.), ‘Introduction’, *LTC*, p. 7.

equating Hellenism with affirmative notion of homoerotic desire.²⁰ Such institutionalised Hellenism, sublimated into academic study, appears similar to the Paterian aesthetic study of renaissance art and, indeed, Lowes Dickinson's need to maintain 'an intense preoccupation with intellectual [. . .] pursuits' in order to sublimate his own desires.²¹

Much has similarly been made of 'The Story of a Panic'. The appearance of the god Pan transforms the protagonist Eustace from an effeminated young man who is very much in line with degenerationist conceptions of homosexuality. Pann transforms Eustace to a more vital figure of affirmative of Hellenically aligned homosexuality, open in displaying 'promiscuous intimacy' (CSS, 22) with Gennaro, a young Italian waiter, a facet of the story William Greenslade's outlines, claiming that 'interest in Pan [. . .] was the formal acknowledgement of the power of the homoerotic'.²² However, the story also provides us with another example of Forster's presentation of the aesthetic and Hellenistic formulations of homosexuality.

In Chapter Two, I outlined Forster's critique of the use of culture as both a means of establishing a respected place in society and as a means of enforcing world views. I wish to assert that a highly critiqued form of the aesthete finds his way (with, perhaps, one exception, the characters in question are male) into much of Forster's fiction, finding an early articulation in Leyland, the artist from 'The Story of a Panic'

²⁰ Martin, 'Forster's Greek: From Optative to Present Indicative', p. 70. Martin is, however, clear to comment that 'it would certainly be simplistic to suggest that Forster meant Greek as a codeword for homosexual' (70), positing that the story is, however, a release from the strictures of academia, a move 'from scholarship to pastoral' (71) towards an Arcadian notion of Hellenistic same-sexual attraction between the narrator and Ansell.

²¹ Dennis Proctor, 'Introduction' to Dickinson, *The Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson and other Unpublished Writings*, p. 11.

²² William Greenslade, 'Pan and the Open Road: Critical Paganism in R.L. Stevenson, K. Grahame, E. Thomas & E.M. Forster', *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30*, (eds.) Lynne Hapgood and Nancy L. Paxton (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 146.

who the narrator finds ‘conceited and odious’ (CSS, 9) and who is the first personification of another contending formation of homosexual identity throughout Forster’s fiction. Leyland is particularly assertive in his espousal of the aesthetic favouring of the artistic over the natural, commenting on the view towards Ravello where the visit from Pan takes place: “‘Look, in the first place [. . .] how intolerably straight against the sky is the line of the hill [. . .] And where we are standing the whole thing is out of perspective [. . .] all the colouring is monotonous and crude [. . .] you all confuse the artistic view of Nature with the photographic” ’ (CSS, 11). Leyland is as keen to express his shame that ‘The Great God Pan is dead’ as his ecclesiastically closeted companion Mr. Sandbach, according to the narrator, abandoning himself in the aesthetic pose of ‘that mock misery in which artistic people are so fond of indulging’ (CSS, 13). However, when the appearance of Pan affects Eustace, Leyland is complicit with the narrator and clergyman in condemning Eustace’s transformation, calling it ‘“a diabolical caricature of all that was most holy and beautiful in life” ’ (CSS, 26-7), his own aestheticisation of the Panic spirit allowing its sublimation to the ‘Holy’ in his eyes. His complicity with his neighbour is so complete that when the narrator wishes to capture Eustace and keep him in a locked room, he grabs Eustace whilst ‘Leyland got hold of the other arm’ (CSS, 30). The pseudo-aesthete is as responsible as the conservative narrator for the attempt to physically ‘closet’ the Hellenically transformed Eustace.

Philip Herriton and Cecil Vyse in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View* respectively represent aestheticism. In early comments on Philip Herriton’s adolescence and rise to manhood, as already noted, narratorial observations on his physiognomy are steeped in the language of degeneracy. However, as Glen Cavaliero observes, ‘Philip, like Mr. Bons [of ‘The Celestial Omnibus’] is a pseudo

aesthete'.²³ Forster's narrator outlines the transformation of Philip so that the world 'made a niche for him' (*WAFTT*, 70). We learn that, in response to being 'keenly conscious' of a sense of physical inadequacy, Philip Herriton began 'at the age of twenty two to wear parti-coloured ties and a squashy hat, to be late for dinner on account of the sunset, and to catch art from Burne-Jones and Praxiteles' (*WAFTT*, 70). Herriton visits Italy, a place which, according to Margaret Goscilo, Forster had 'already constructed [. . .] as a site of fulfilment' homoerotically, and here Herriton transforms all of his observations of life 'into one aesthetic' (*WAFTT*, 70) which on returning to Sawston, leads him to be disenchanted with the restrictions of life and a need to aestheticise his feelings into a bearable, humorous beauty: 'If he could not reform the world, he could at least laugh at it, thus attaining at least an intellectual superiority' (*WAFTT*, 71).

Cecil Vyse is equally conscious of his construction of an aesthetic persona within *A Room with a View*: his pose of decorous indolence is evident from his first appearance in the novel when, in response to the questioning of Mr. Beebe about his employment, he replies 'I have no profession [. . .] It is another example of my decadence. My attitude - quite an indefensible one - is that so long as I am no trouble to anyone I have a right to do as I like' (*ARWAV*, 97). The intellectual pose that Vyse affects, and which the narrator terms 'Cecil's pretentiousness', appears from the first moments of his description, reflecting a dandification of himself along the lines of the self-effeminisation of the Wildean aesthete, so tellingly described by Linda Dowling, and which gives turn to camp, pseudo-aesthetic phrasings.²⁴ These are, again, revealed within Forster's bouncing narrative just three pages after Vyse's first

²³ Cavaliero, *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, p. 63. As I shall demonstrate below, I would question Cavaliero's statement that 'it is by his [Philip Herriton's] physical responses that he is saved' (63): I shall contend that the opposite is true though the blame for this can hardly be put at the door of his physical responses, rather of his explicatory system for them.

²⁴ C.f. Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, Chapter 1: Aesthete and Effeminatus.

appearance in the narrative when ‘he lit another cigarette, which did not seem quite so divine as the first’ (ARWAV, 96). This modernist use of intertextual reference seems all too obvious an illusion to one of Lord Henry Wotton’s famous epigrams (that ‘A cigarette is the perfect type of perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want?’) from Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, one of the key sites for the formation of just this effeminate aestheticism.²⁵ Vyse appears able to articulate homoerotic motivation in a contained and open fashion via his aesthetic pose whilst remaining safe under the protection of his engagement. Interestingly, he goes as far as to couch this self-conscious pose in reference to the vocabulary of degeneration, having expounded his decorous indolence to Mr. Beebe, stating that ‘“...I daren’t face the healthy person”’ (ARWAV, 98). In the cases of both Cecil Vyse and Philip Herriton, the identification with aestheticism is a self-conscious formation which Forster treats in a particularly ironic, damning fashion not levelled quite as excoriatingly at other exponents of Hellenistic, rather than explicitly aesthetic formations of identity. However, as I shall explore below, *A Room with a View* and *The Longest Journey* present more affirmative homoerotic characters but in ironic alignment with other conceptualisations of homosexual identity.

The Longest Journey positively portrays the Hellenic discourse, in the figures of Rickie Elliot and Mr. Jackson, his colleague at Sawston School. Mr. Jackson, Herbert Pembroke’s rival at Sawston, and thus the antithesis to his repressive conservatism, is allied to the political liberalism that Forster espouses, contradicting the stance taken by Herbert Pembroke that ‘ “[. . .] the Conservatives, rather than the Liberals, stand for progress” ’ (TLJ, 162). The liberal Jackson is allied to affirmative Hellenistic notions of homosexuality within the novel with Rickie Elliot explaining his view whilst avowing that ‘ “He’s a type that suits me” ’ (TLJ, 174) : ‘ “[. . .]He tries to express all modern life in the terms of Greek mythology, because the Greeks

²⁵ Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 89.

looked very straight at things, and Demeter and Aphrodite are thinner veils than ‘The survival of the fittest’ or ‘A marriage has been arranged’, and other draperies of modern journalese” ’ (TLJ, 174). When one combines with this the appraisal of Widdrington, Ansell’s fellow scholar, that Jackson is his ‘queer cousin’ and is ‘so excited over sub-Hellenic things’ (TLJ, 178) then another affirmative figure of Hellenistic formulations of homosexual identity appears.²⁶

The employment of Demeter of Cnidus proves offers an important route in understanding the use of Hellenic references within the novel, as discussed by Arthur Martland in his scholarly examination of its Greek sources.²⁷ Stephen Wonham is frequently identified as possessing ‘the candour of the Greek’ (TLJ, 267) and has ‘only one picture – the Demeter of Cnidus’ (TLJ, 118) that appears to represent the fruition that Demeter symbolises mythologically as Forster tells us in his essay on her from *Abinger Harvest*, describing the Demeter as the giver ‘of corn and tears’ (AH, 192). Forster closely links Wonham and, by association, the Demeter to the lands of Wiltshire throughout the novel. However, Forster is also clear in his essay, of 1904, to demonstrate an alternative symbolic link with the Demeter of the British museum, that Ansell sees in Chapter 20 of *The Longest Journey*. Forster views the statue as a symbol of homoerotic desire, receiving ‘idolatry from suffering men as well as suffering women’ these ‘suffering’ people being linked heavily with a pathologised discourse of degeneration ‘weak-chested and anaemic and feeble-kneed’ and idolising the Demeter as a figure who ‘has transcended sex’ (AH, 192). She is, for Forster an ultimate symbol of what he terms ‘the effete mythology of Greece (AH, 193) and is

²⁶ Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885*, p. 3 notes that ‘E.M. Forster discreetly gave this epithet [the word ‘queer’] a homophile inflection’.

²⁷ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, pp. 75-82. Martland posits a fascinating theory that Demeter as mythological symbol of the fraternal and homoerotic link between Stephen Wonham and Rickie Elliot provides a major explanatory symbol of the novel’s sexual tensions. Whilst well researched and highly valid in its own right as an explanation of the homoerotic theme evidently present within the novel I would contend that this doesn’t reflect accurately enough the underlying neo-Socratic methodology which underpins all of the works.

recognised by P.N. Furbank to be important for Forster as a symbol of 'the reconciliation of the male and the female in his own nature'.²⁸

Rickie Elliot reveals within the opening pages of the novel that he is an admirer of 'Theocritus, whom he believed to be the greatest of Greek poets' (*TLJ*, 5), Theocritus being the author of the *Idylls* and 'father of this type of poetry' the pastoral.²⁹ Thus, the author of the collection of highly self-referential stories 'Pan Pipes', which 'all centre around a nature theme' including the transformation of a young woman into a reed, sees in the Demeter myth, a pastoral theme which he can ally to the pastoral moods of Theocritus which, as Arthur Martland notes, were highly homoerotic in some of their directions.³⁰ Indeed, when out riding together in a scene examined for its own homoerotic tension in more detail below, Stephen Wonham and Rickie Elliot encounter a soldier to whom Stephen recounts a 'sordid village scandal [. . . that] sprang from certain defects in human nature, with which he was theoretically acquainted' (*TLJ*, 112) an occurrence which Rickie is able to explain as 'having a parallel in a beautiful idyll of Theocritus' (*TLJ*, 112). Rickie appears to identify Wonham with Theocritus's shepherds. Whilst Rickie maintains the homosociality of their fraternal relations, underlying this is a homoerotically charged Hellenic symbolism of Wonham, with Elliot sublimating his desire in this aesthetic symbolism in order that he does not become the next 'sordid village scandal' himself rather, in the sacrifice of his life attaining the 'high thought and heroic action' that Dickinson espoused as the masculine ideal presented in Greek same-sex relations.³¹

²⁸ Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 1, p. 102. As I shall go on to contend, I would disagree with Furbank in this respect that Forster's understanding of sexual identity was so mono-perspectival as to extend only to an 'inverted' model of homosexuality.

²⁹ Paul Harvey, *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937: 1990), p. 425.

³⁰ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p. 79 cites Theocritus' *Idylls* 5,7, 29 & 30 as particular examples of idylls pertaining to homoerotic relations between shepherd boys.

³¹ Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, p. 106.

Howards End's Tibbie Schlegel is another example of the pseudo-aesthete. From the start of the novel Tibbie Schlegel's aestheticism is well pronounced, his hay-fever on his first appearance in the narrative action being cured by Walter Savage Landor, the 'only thing that made life bearable' (*HE*, 26) as the bouncing narrative narrates in his voice. It is little surprise that 'Auntie Tibby' (*HE*, 55) as Helen effeminises him, should make his way to the home of the self-consciously effeminate aesthetic movement, Oxford, where 'sensitive to beauty' (*HE*, 113) he begins to aestheticise the city as his ideal locus of desire. Forster's treatment of aestheticism is rather disparaging: when discussing Tibbie's transformation by Oxford the narrator states 'Oxford is – Oxford; not a mere receptacle of youth, like Cambridge. Perhaps it wants its inmates to love it rather than to love one another; such at all events was to be its effects on Tibby' (*HE*, 113-4). This seems to be counterpointed greatly by Forster's own concept of Cambridge, expressed in a reminiscence of 1940 in *Two Cheers for Democracy* as the place 'where I have made my best friends' (*TCD*, 351), a place he characterises as understated in contrast to 'Oxford, her swollen sister' (*TCD*, 352). Cambridge is the subject of his apostolic dedication to *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson*, 'FRATRUM SOCIETATI', referring to their shared membership of the Apostles. Cambridge is, moreover, metonymised for Forster in the Apostolic Socratic debates, their free exchange of differing world views and the homosocial equality that goes with them (an ideal presented in the debate which opens *The Longest Journey*'s first chapter). This is opposed in Forster's fiction to a sterile Oxford in which desire is aestheticised, beauty being more important than the pursuit, if not the capture, of truth. Tibbie Schlegel appears on the cusp of one or other of these ways of life when, in what Arthur Martland describes as 'one of the most obvious homoerotic passages from his work prior to publication', an early draft, later

excised from *Howards End* describes Tibby as a ‘developing boy’ who: ‘sees, say, a book with a <pink> \green/ cover and <takes it up> liking the colour, takes it up. The book <<is about <Greece or> adventure or philosophy or Greece>> [. . .] from that moment the boy expands’.³² The ‘expansion’ of Tibby under the guidance of books about Greece appears to be complete by the time of his return from Oxford for a vacation when he is seen in conversation with his sister, Helen, in an attempt to resolve the heterosexual scandal of Henry Wilcox’s affair with Jacky Bast:

Just as some people cease to attend when books are mentioned, so Tibby’s attention wandered when ‘personal relations’ came under discussion. Ought Margaret to know what Helen knew the Basts to know? Similar questions had vexed him from infancy, and at Oxford he had learnt to say that the importance of human beings has been vastly overrated by the specialists. The epigram, with its faint whiff of the ‘eighties, meant nothing. But he might have let it off now if his sister had not been ceaselessly beautiful. (*HE*, 250)

The ‘salvation’ of Tibby from having to deal with the problems of ‘personal relations’ that so preoccupied Forster throughout his fiction, is via sublimation, despite the fact these problems ‘vexed him from his infancy’. Forster portrays Tibby’s Oxford aestheticism, with its ‘faint whiff of the eighties’ as an evasion of the problems of connection via the sublimation of any form of desire into an aesthetic which reduces

³² Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p. 129; E.M.Forster, *The Manuscripts of Howards End*, (ed.) Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, Abinger Edition, 1973), p. 101. The symbolic code employed is that used by the Abinger Edition in annotating the textual variations of the various MSS of the text produced by Forster: for a full list of these symbols please consult the edition in question.

its meaning to the dichotomy of being either beautiful or not.³³

Maurice presents two contending formations of Hellenistic and aesthetic conceptualisations of homosexuality in the figures of Clive Durham, the classical scholar, and Risley, the aesthete. To claim that either of these conceptualisations is particularly favoured throughout the novel would be to ignore the presence of ‘Edward Carpenter and his translation of the ideas of Walt Whitman’.³⁴ However, it is necessary to note the presence of Hellenistic and aesthetic formations of ‘a much cherished Platonism’ and the aesthetic injunction ‘to escape the body’ within the text.³⁵

Risley represents what C. Rising terms ‘those art-for-art’s-sake aesthetes’ present in much of Forster’s work; he is a man who, when Maurice Hall encounters him, leaves him to wonder ‘how he could see this queer fish again’ (*M*, 36).³⁶ Risley presents the archetypal figure of this trope of ‘queerness’ the aesthete, ‘dark, tall and affected’, a user of ‘exaggerated gesture’ who ‘when he spoke, which was continually, [. . .] used strong yet unmanly superlatives’ (*M*, 32). The ‘art for art’s sake’ doctrine is espoused by Risley within a page of his introduction into the novel’s action when, objecting to a supposed statement that deeds are greater than words, he asks ‘“What is the difference? Words *are* deeds [. . .] Will you *ever* forget you met me for instance?’ ” (*M*, 33). The presence of the medium of art as a means, an action

³³ Of course, I do not for a moment wish to claim that this represents the sole level of complexity prevalent in the aesthetes’ thought, merely that, in his own disparaging view, this is how Forster presents them.

³⁴ Robert K. Martin, ‘Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of *Maurice*’, *Journal Of Homosexuality*, vol. 8, nos. 3-4 (1983), p. 36.

³⁵ Raschke, ‘Breaking the Engagement with Philosophy: Re-envisioning Hetero/Homo Relations in *Maurice*’, p. 155:154. In the final section of this chapter I shall complete my questioning of the primacy of Carpenter as a model for Forster’s understanding of homosexuality.

³⁶ C. Rising, ‘E.M. Forster’s *Maurice*: A Summing Up’, *Texas Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 1, (Spring 1974), p. 87.

in itself, coupled to Risley's statements that "[. . .] It is the only thing I care about, conversation.'" (M, 33) are enough to link him strongly to Wildean notions that 'Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art' and he is, as such, recognised by Clive Durham as "[. . .] in the aesthetic push [. . .]" (M, 38).³⁷

It is not accidental that Risley, whilst perhaps not the most important character in the novel, is highly influential in his structural function throughout its course. He is an example of what Vladimir Propp would term a 'helper' in his proposed helper vs. opponent dichotomy of the structure of literary character types.³⁸ It is whilst searching for Risley at Trinity in Chapter 6 of *Maurice* that Maurice Hall encounters Clive Durham, with whom he begins the first of his two major affairs. Furthermore, it is through Risley's information concerning their mutual acquaintance Cornwallis's hypnotism in Chapter 32 that Maurice Hall is prompted to consult Mr. Lasker-Jones, another such hypnotist who insists Maurice returns to Penge after treatment, whereupon he spends his first night with Alec Scudder. In both instances Risley is the structural cause for the main narrative action of the novel.

Risley is the agent who prompts Maurice Hall's inadvertent encounters with Clive Durham, significantly borrowing a copy of Tchaikovsky's "The March of the Pathétique" (M, 38) in Risley's rooms at Trinity. Durham represents a progression, as Forster views it, from the general aesthetic languidity of Risley to a more

³⁷ Oscar Wilde, 'Preface', *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (ed.) Peter Ackroyd (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1891:1985), p. 3.

³⁸ C.f. Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, (trans.) Lawrence Scott (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1968) especially Chapter Two, 'The Functions of the Dramatis Personae' for its articulation of the structural function of character types.

developed notion of Hellenically affirmed, positive Platonic male friendship that Durham espouses and represents.³⁹

In a college where the Dean, Mr. Cornwallis instructs his students ‘ “Omit: a reference to the unspeakable vice of the Greeks” ’ (*M*, 50), Durham employs Athenian pederasty as a means of legitimating his own same-sex desires stating ‘ “The Greeks [. . .] were that way inclined, and to omit it is to omit the mainstay of Athenian society” ’ (*M*, 50). For Durham Hellenism becomes a codification for his search ‘to pursue the elusive project of discovering, and changing, who’ he is sexually.⁴⁰ His attempted coming out to Maurice Hall can only be articulated through reference to the classics:

‘I knew you read the *Symposium* in the vac,’ he said in a low voice.

Maurice felt uneasy.

‘Then you understand - without me saying more -’ (*M*, 56)

Durham’s identification with the Hellenic concept of sexuality is so complete that employment of Greek literature becomes the replacement for any other expression of his desires. The progression from aestheticism to the avowal of Hellenically conceptualised same-sex relations appears clear to Forster in the characterisation of Durham, the character avowing, when he believes his affair with Maurice Hall is doomed to failure in Chapter 11, that ‘ “I had no right to move out of my books and

³⁹ It is, I believe, a mark of the structural importance of Risely that he encounters Maurice Hall again after a performance of the same piece of music and here mentions the possibility of hypnosis as a treatment for homosexuality, thus prompting Maurice’s treatment, return to Penge and liaison with Alec Scudder. The choice of Tchaikovsky is, of course, also pertinent, Maurice Hall obtaining ‘a life of Tchaikovsky out of the library’ during his burgeoning awareness of his sexuality.

⁴⁰ David M Halperin, ‘Two Views of Greek Love: Harald Patzer and Michel Foucault’, in Halperin (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, p. 71.

music, which was what I had when I met you” ’ (*M*, 62). This attitude seems to mirror Dickinson’s decision to move from the ‘asceticism’ of a purely sublimated homosexuality in aestheticism towards a more Platonically oriented male friendship as he outlines his relations with Ferdinand Schiller in his own autobiography.⁴¹

As difficulties begin to appear within the Durham/Hall relationship, Durham increasingly seeks solace in the Greek classics as a means of affirming and understanding his desire just as it appears to be waning. His Hellenic enthusiasm is not shared by Maurice Hall who believes that Durham has been misled ‘with that rotten Plato’ (*M*, 85), not minding as it has led Hall towards - if not to - the consummation of his desires. For Durham, however, physical consummation is never a serious possibility, the Platonic ideal becoming the means by which he idealises his physical desires as he comes, increasingly, to question them: ‘The love that Socrates bore Phaedo now lay within his reach, love passionate but temperate, such as only finer natures can understand, and he found in Maurice a nature that was not indeed fine, but charmingly willing’ (*M*, 91). Maurice Hall does not embody the ‘fine’ nature of Platonic friendship that Clive Durham wishes for; rather, he is a ‘willing’ companion in the desire for physical intimacy that he wishes to sublimate. Forster, as I shall explore below, thoroughly ironises the resultant trip to Greece that Durham hopes will help allow an actualisation of his Hellenic desires for Maurice Hall.

Having identified such strong strands of Hellenic and aesthetic conceptions running throughout the majority of Forster’s fiction, it would be unwise to overstress the presence of this particular strand of affirmative homosexual conceptualisation

⁴¹ Dickinson, *The Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson and other Unpublished Writings*, p. 105.

within *A Passage to India*. Arthur Martland's work on the concomitance existing between the characterisation of the Indian peasants and sun around the visit to the Marabar Caves and the trial scenes with the Greek god Apollo, whilst ingenious and well researched, seems to my mind scantily supported by the text itself.⁴² That such a conceptualisation of homosexuality exists within Forster's work more generally, however, appears unquestionable. But to suggest that such a formulation is privileged is not the purpose of this chapter. Rather I would argue that it is one amongst a web of contending formulations at play throughout Forster's work.

III The Homosexual Man of Nature

The final figure in an examination of contending formulations of same-sex desire is that of the 'natural homosexual', the man of nature whose 'brotherhood' with other men extends into the erotic realm and amongst whose champions one might number Edward Carpenter and Walt Whitman.

The prevalence of representatives of this affirmative understanding of homosexual identity are striking, as other critics have observed. 'Ansell's eponymous hero from *The Life to Come* collection provides a very different figure from the Dickinsonian intellectual of *The Longest Journey*. A game keeper in the Alec Scudder

⁴² Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, pp. 201-205 posits the notion that the description of the sun at Marabar during Aziz's party's visit is redolent of the Greek descriptions of the sun god Apollo, a deity linked with Dorian pederastic activity, going on to link the punkah-wallah, discussed above, as another Apollonian figure within the text. My disagreement with this line of analysis stems from the very fact that Forster, a writer, as seen above, not unwilling to make mention of an understanding of Greek influences throughout the rest of his work, makes virtually not a mention of them within *A Passage to India*.

mould, Ansell is described as ‘a large-boned person’ possessing a ‘total freedom from self-consciousness’ and whose strength means that, at their first meeting, he left the narrator’s ‘fingers squeezed together like macaroni’ (*LTC*, 27). He inhabits the ‘valleys [. . .] thick with rabbits [. . .] the new barn [. . .] and the cowhouse’ (*LTC*, 33) and describes, in detail reminiscent of Thomas Eakins’ pictures, ‘a deep bathing pool, always shaded from the sun, always sheltered from the wind’ (*LTC*, 34). This bathing pool pre-dates the later bathing scene of *A Room with a View*, Ansell becoming one of the first in a long line of ‘men of other classes’ in whom George Piggford and Robert K. Martin see ‘Forster’s sexual desires’ residing.⁴³

‘The Story of a Siren’ anticipates the affirmative homo-eroticism in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Forster, as Robert Aldrich notes, articulates ‘the lure of the south with paeans to athleticism’ in a manner comparable to the ‘life-warm lips’ kissed by the ‘blue waves’ of Carpenter’s ‘A Rivederci’, when he describes the Italian boat man standing ‘naked in the brilliant sun [who] raised his hands above his head and dived’ (*CSS*, 180) into the Mediterranean grotto in which the siren of the title resides.⁴⁴ This Mediterranean location of the athletic natural homosexual finds its first prolonged articulation in the figure of Gino Carella of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Alan Wilde sees Carella as a figure of naturality, counterpointed to the aesthetic Philip Herriton in his straightforward ‘kinship with all things that spring up and grow in a natural manner’, whilst for Jeffrey Meyers the relationship between the two characters is viewed as a ‘sado-masochistic connection’ based upon June Perry Levine’s dichotomy of the tame hunting the savage, Gino wishing to assert his

⁴³ Martin and Piggford, ‘Introduction’, *Queer Forster*, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy*, p. 106; Carpenter, ‘A Rivederci’, *Towards Democracy*, p. 284.

masculinity over the weaker Philip Herriton, Herriton wishing just the same.⁴⁵ Philip Herriton's aesthetic pose and the description of degenerative 'illness' that underpins it have been discussed above but it gains contrast when placed next to the 'handsome and well made' (*WAFTT*, 40) Gino Carella, possessor of 'square shoulders' (*WAFTT*, 45) and 'the charm of all who are born on that soil' (*WAFTT*, 41). Throughout the novel Carella, in just this Carpenterian fashion, appears to be linked strongly to his surroundings by the other characters of the novel, their changing attitudes to Italy reflected in their changing attitudes to Carella. Caroline Abbot, the third partner in what Robert K. Martin sees as 'a homosocial triangle of desire' between Abbot, Herriton and Carella, quickly moves from viewing the latter as 'her adversary' (*WAFTT*, 115) to seeing him as 'majestic; he was a part of nature' (*WAFTT*, 125).⁴⁶

The Longest Journey's Stephen Wonham shares much with Gino Carella in terms of their common identification with a natural homo-eroticism along the lines of the tradition of Carpenter, Whitman and Housman outlined above. Indeed, as Tony Brown notes, in an original plan of *The Longest Journey*, from 17th July 1904, Humphrey, the Rickie Elliot figure of the novel, was due to discover that his half-brother was Pasquale, an 'Italian like Gino Carella', a mark of their similarity.⁴⁷ As Tariq Rahman notes, Stephen Wonham 'is like one of the young men described as an ideal by Carpenter in *Towards Democracy*'.⁴⁸ He appears in the novel for the first time as almost a rugged masculine ideal with 'unshaven cheeks [. . .] hair [. . .] so wet that it seemed worked upon his scalp in bronze [. . .] a powerful boy of twenty,

⁴⁵ Wilde, 'The Aesthetic View of Life: *Where Angels Fear to Tread*', p. 210; Jeffrey Meyers, 'The Paintings in Forster's Italian Novels', *London Magazine*, vol. 13 (February-March 1974), p. 51; C.f. June Perry Levine's 'The Tame in Pursuit of the Savage: The Posthumous Fiction of E.M. Forster', *PMLA*, vol. 99, no.1, pp. 72-88.

⁴⁶ Robert K Martin, 'It Must Have Been the Umbrella: Forster's Queer Begetting', Martin and Piggford, *Queer Forster*, p. 256.

⁴⁷ Tony Brown, 'E.M. Forster's *Parsifal*: A Reading of *The Longest Journey*', *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 12 (1982), p. 42; for details of the original plot of *The Longest Journey*, contained within the Forster Archive at King's College, Cambridge's Modern Archive Centre, the best print source remains Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol.1, p. 118.

⁴⁸ Rahman, 'Edward Carpenter and E.M. Forster', p. 63.

admirably muscular' having been 'in the wet keeping the sheep' amidst the countryside of Wiltshire where he resides. Perhaps the most famous incidence of Wonham's Carpenetarian naturality comes in the excised chapter of the novel which, as Forster comments in his introduction to the novel, 'occurs near Chapter 12 in the book' (*TLJ*, lxix) and in which, Arthur Martland notes, Forster 'Under the influence of Edward Carpenter [. . .] attempted to show the 'intermediate' state of homosexuality [as . . .] a progressive development of the process of evolution itself'.⁴⁹ The chapter sees Wonham bathing in a 'pool swollen by rains' after a blow to the head which leaves him walking naked through the greenwood of the Wiltshire countryside, in which his masculinity is so pronounced that he is described as 'being himself a god'.⁵⁰

During the riding scene of Chapter 11 we encounter the virile, natural Stephen in conversation with a soldier, during his ride to Salisbury with Rickie Elliot. As noted above, the presence of Stephen's comments about a 'village scandal' are accompanied by an explanation that these are the result of 'certain defects in the human nature' with which Wonham is 'theoretically acquainted' (*TLJ*, 112). Indeed, from his first appearance in the novel, Wonham is linked to populist theories of evolution, reading 'a pile of *Clarion*' which are described within the bouncing narrative of the novel as the work of the 'bearded apostles of humanity' who presents theories that are 'Darwin without the modesty' (*TLJ*, 89). However, the same Stephen Wonham initiates this conversation with the soldier and accompanies this with 'a straightening of the eyebrows and a quick glance at the other's body' (*TLJ*, 113). This is reminiscent of the physical admiration present within Carpenter's 'The Elder Soldier to the Younger' or 'A Military Band' from *Towards Democracy*.⁵¹ As Arthur Martland notes, despite Wonham's overt masculinity, albeit not of a conventional kind, 'societal gender norms do not constrain him'. Martland claims that Wonham's

⁴⁹ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p. 82.

⁵⁰ E.M. Forster, *The Longest Journey* (London: Edward Arnold, Abinger Edition, 1984), p. 335; 226.

⁵¹ Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, p. 272; 195.

centrally placed picture of the Demeter of Cnidus links him also to femininity.⁵² Thus, with this mixture of the feminine and a particular type of masculinity linked to nature, Wonham's thoughts at the end of the novel, that he 'believed that he guided the future of our race, and that century after century, his thoughts and his passions would triumph in England' (*TLJ*, 289), appear to have a distinct correlation with Carpenter's, Ellis' and Symonds' notions of what Carpenter terms an 'intermediate sex', which is liminal in its place between the two traditionally proscribed gender roles and the translating intermediary between the sexes.

George Emerson of *A Room with a View* fulfils many of the same characteristics of the 'natural homosexual', a feature both of Carpenter's work and of much homoerotic literature of the period, despite his seeming function as the centre of a plot of heterosexual romance. Like George Merrill, Edward Carpenter's partner, and like so many of the characters within Carpenter's works, George Emerson is working class, or, like Leonard Bast, 'at the extreme verge of gentility' (*HE*, 58). We learn very early in the novel that his father, like Carpenter, is a socialist, the 'son of a labourer', and George himself works as a clerk on the railways, leading the snobbish Rev. Eager to wonder 'what his education and inherited qualities may have made him' (*ARWAV*, 74). Indeed, Tony Brown is clear to align the Emersons with 'Carpenter's arguments and imagery in *Towards Democracy*'.⁵³

At the end of Chapter Six of the novel, the first kiss between Lucy Honeychurch and George Emerson sees Emerson identified by the Italian driver as the 'buoni huomini' who Lucy demands when she seeks Rev. Beebe. The Italian, as Lionel Trilling comments, has 'his own notion of what a good man is'.⁵⁴ We learn at the beginning of Chapter Seven, after Charlotte Bartlett's discovery of Lucy Honeychurch's and George Emerson's liaison, that 'Phaethon [the driver] had lost the

⁵² Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, pp. 76-7.

⁵³ Brown, 'Edward Carpenter, Forster and the Evolution of *A Room with a View*', p. 287.

⁵⁴ Trilling, *E.M. Forster*, p. 88.

game' and that 'Pan had been amongst them' (ARWAV, 90), the very Pan that represents 'uncontrolled sexuality' throughout Forster's fiction.⁵⁵ Phaethon, thinking George a good man, appears to be keen to engage in a homosocial triangle with George. Robert K. Martin sees a similar triangle operating between Gino Carella, Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbot in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.⁵⁶ George Emerson, the subject of same-sex attraction, is certainly linked to highly natural symbolism of his overt masculinity when he is viewed atop a highly phallic promontory from which:

the violets ran down in rivulets and streams and cataracts, irrigating the hillside with blue, eddying round the tree stems, collecting into pools in the hollows, covering the grass with spots of azure foam [. . .] this was the well-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth.

(ARWAV, 89)

The symbolism is ejaculatory, an image clearly missed by Zoreh T. Sullivan who only notes in the vaguest of terms the 'almost explicit' nature of the 'sexual connotations' when Lucy Honeychurch encounters a 'tower of the palace' at Santa Croce which becomes 'like a pillar of roughened gold [. . .] some unattainable treasure throbbing in the tranquil sky' (ARWAV, 62), before encountering the stabbing of the young Italian in the Piazza Signoria of Chapter Four.⁵⁷

The first versions of *A Room with a View* emphasise the natural homo-eroticisation of the early George Emerson figure 'Arthur' in the *Old Lucy* draft in a

⁵⁵ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p. 79.

⁵⁶ Martin, 'It Must Have Been the Umbrella: Forster's Queer Begetting', p. 256.

⁵⁷ Zoreh T. Sullivan, 'Forster's Symbolism: *A Room with a View*, Fourth Chapter', *Journal of Narrative Technique*, vol. 6 (1976), p. 218.

scene directly comparable to this one, again featuring the stabbing of an Italian youth of the working classes:

The great square was already in shadow but [. . .] high above the wonderful tower of the Palazzo Vecchio was in full sunlight, rising out of the gloom like a pillar of rough gold [. . .] Arthur hurried to the Fountain of Neptune [. . .] On the rim lay a young man of twenty, stripped almost naked. Blood was dripping off him into the water and the people who held him were bathing him and making frantic efforts to stop the flow. He was one of those handsome Italians of the lower classes who may be seen by the dozen in any Tuscan town. He was magnificently made and his splendid chest swelled and contracted with every spurt of blood, while his brown sunburnt arms played idly upon the fountain rim. Presently his arms stopped playing and he blinked at the sunlit Palazzo tower which rose straight above him into the tranquil sky.⁵⁸

Just as for Lucy Honeychurch in the final version of the novel, the stabbing at the Piazza Signoria symbolises the ‘important message’ (ARWAV, 62) that the stabbed man with blood running from his unshaven chin carries. It represents her fears and desires concerning her own sexual awakening. In the figure of this ‘magnificently made’, ‘almost naked’ working class Italian man, we see an early glimpse of the socialist George Emerson, attracted to the working class youth of Italy.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ E.M. Forster, ‘Old Lucy’, *The Lucy Novels*, (ed.) Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, Abinger Edition, 1977), pp. 35-36.

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that, with the absence of a mother, Mr. Emerson fulfils the roles of both mother and father for his son in this respect, thus, whilst ostensibly encouraging the heterosexual alliance of Lucy Honeychurch and his son as a means of effecting an ideological ‘conversion’, still subtly representing another facet of Carpenter’s theory by becoming, in parental terms, an ‘intermediate sex’ in relation to his son.

The presence of affirmative representations of the natural homosexual do not end here within *A Room with a View*, however. The self-conscious intertextuality, discussed in the previous chapter, of the Emersons' nomination is, of course, an immediate reference to the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, a writer closely akin to Whitman in thought and expression. Furthermore, references to homoerotically linked pasteurality do occur early in the novel with Mr. Emerson's employment of A.E. Housman's poem number 32 from *A Shropshire Lad* in support of his world view. Oliver Stallybrass notes that 'Forster had been introduced [to the poems] as an undergraduate' and that they 'were much in his mind after a few days which he spent in Housman country in 1907' (*ARWAV*, 240-1). Forster was certainly aware of the homoerotic sub-text of Housman's poetry, describing the writer as 'usually with erotic intent' in his *Commonplace Book*.⁶⁰ Chapter Twelve's bathing scene at the 'sacred lake' is a much analysed example of Forster's attempts at 'representing homoeroticism in unobjectionable relation to [. . .] heterosexist taste' and can again be placed within the context of these affirmative formations of homosexuality. On entering the 'Cissie Villa' (itself an interestingly 'intermediate' conjunction of the masculine Emersons residing within the effeminately named villa originally intended for Spinsteres), Mr. Beebe and Freddie Honeychurch immediately encounter the Emersons' bookshelves, next to a collection of Byron, finding *A Shropshire Lad*, a totem of exactly this affirmative formation. This, combined with the edict from Thoreau to ' "Mistrust all enterprises that require new clothes" ' (*ARWAV*, 144), provides not only a foreshadowing of the nudity to come but places it within a tradition of the homosocial celebration of nature, and, with a quote from *Walden*, further asserts a transcendentalist bathing motif which only further goes to underline the Whitmanesque bathing which occurs next. A closer look at Beebe's examination of the bookshelf proves illuminating:

⁶⁰ Forster, *Commonplace Book*, p. 84.

The sitting room was itself blocked with books.

“Are these people great readers?” Freddy whispered. “Are they that sort?”

“I fancy they know how to read—a rare accomplishment. What have they got? Byron. Exactly. *A Shropshire Lad*. Never heard of it. The *Way of All Flesh*. Never heard of it. Gibbon. Hullo! George reads German. Um-um- Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and so we go on. Well I suppose your generation knows its own business Honeychurch.”

“Mr. Beebe, look at that,” said Freddy in awestruck tones.

On the cornice of the wardrobe the hand of an amateur had painted this inscription: ‘Mistrust all enterprises that require new clothes.’

“I know. Isn’t it jolly? I like that. I’m certain that’s the old man’s doing.” (ARWAV, 143-44)

In addition to *A Shropshire Lad*, the proximity of Housman to Byron’s sporadically homo-erotic poetry is again ironic. That *The Way of All Flesh* is present may appear as an anomaly unless one considers that Mr. Emerson, as discussed in Chapter Two, may consciously use such texts for their ostensibly emancipatory function as a way of helping him enforce his own libertarian discourse. Given that Mr. Emerson appears blind to the homo-eroticism of Housman and Byron, he would hardly be likely to differentiate these authors’ texts from Samuel Butler’s work. However, one could forge the link between George Emerson’s reading of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and the misogynistic leanings of these works. The singular presence of the father figure within George Emerson’s life and Mr. Emerson’s enforcement of his world view upon him, could be open to further examination, especially in allegiance with George’s

earlier espoused pessimism that “things won’t fit” (47). However, the presence of the quote from Thoreau (a homosexual writer closely related to Mr. Emerson’s politically, if not sexually, libertarian views) is revealing. The quote, from *Walden*, is inscribed upon the wardrobe. That “the hand of an amateur had painted this inscription” is a telling comment by Forster. One could read this as Forster’s self-conscious revelation of Mr. Emerson’s rather one-dimensional use of Thoreau to support his own perspective.

It is only pages after this revelation of Mr. Emerson’s ironically loaded sources that the most overt homo-erotic incident of *A Room with a View* occurs, the bathing scene at the “sacred lake”. An examination of this scene is revealing:

Mr. Beebe, who was hot, and who always acquiesced where possible, looked around him. He could detect no parishioners except the pine trees, rising up steeply on all sides and gesturing to each other against the blue. How glorious it was! The world of motor-cars and Rural Deans receded illimitably. Water, sky, evergreens a wind - these things not even the seasons can touch and surely they lie beyond the intrusion of man? [. . .] The three gentlemen rotated in the pool breast high, after the fashion of nymphs in the *Götterdämmerung* [. . .] for some reason or other a change came on them and they forgot Italy and Botany and Fate. They began to play. (ARWAV, 149)

One only needs to view the second verse of Whitman’s “Song of Myself” to encounter another, very similar bathing scene which describes “The sniff of green

leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and dark coloured sea rocks and of the hay in the barn/[. . .] A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching round of arms”.⁶¹ Much of the naturalness and vitality that Tony Brown notes in Carpenter’s work is here in the bathing scene. The influences of Whitman and Carpenter are not, as Forster himself stated, mutually exclusive.⁶² Thus, once more, we encounter the presence of a natural, highly masculine homoeroticism, which Pykett terms the “hypermasculine, the Whitmanesque manly comrade”, although, as discussed below, this is far from a single or uncomplicated discourse within this scene or the novel at large.⁶³

For all the pastorality of *Howards End*, its relationship to pastorally affirmative formations of homosexuality is complicated. Arthur Martland’s claim that Leonard Bast is related to ‘Housman’s ideal rustic male [. . .] now debased by urban living’ is an interesting one.⁶⁴ Bast is indeed mentioned in relation to ‘the shepherd or the ploughboy’ (*HE*, 122), as the possessor of the last vestiges of ‘robustness’ and ‘more than a hint of primitive good looks’ (*HE*, 122) but he has given ‘up the glory of the animal for a tailcoat and a couple of ideas’ upon his move to the city, as mentioned above, becoming degenerate when he might have become just the Whitmanesque figure he tries to copy. Bast claims that he ‘wanted to get back to the earth’ (*HE*, 124) during his midnight walk, described in Chapter XIV of the novel.

⁶¹ Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself: A Sourcebook and Critical Edition*, (ed.) Ezra Greenspan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 143.

⁶² C.f. Brown, ‘Edward Carpenter, Forster and the Evolution of *A Room with a View*’ for Brown’s elucidation of Carpenter’s influence on Forster; Forster’s comments in his essay ‘Edward Carpenter’ that Carpenter’s poetry is ‘in the style and in the spirit of Walt Whitman’ perhaps demonstrates the genealogy of this influence (*TCD*, 217).

⁶³ Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: Reading Early Twentieth Century Fiction*, p. 18.

⁶⁴ Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p.133. However, Martland goes on to claim that Bast would have been the recipient of a much happier end had he stayed in Lincolnshire as his forebears had done, ‘no doubt becoming friends with a Stephen Wonham-like companion’ (133). As I contended in previous chapters, my own view of *Howards End* is considerably less certain in its avowal of a conservatively Arcadian ‘retreat from the modern’, a factor, as I shall argue below, which complicates the relationship between pastoral and degenerative theories of homosexuality and is made questionable by the lack of any real homo-eroticising of Bast.

I shall suggest, however, that Leonard Bast's relationship within the contending web of discourses concerning homosexual identity is rather more complex than has been supposed. Within the text another, rather critical example of homosocial bathing amidst nature appears in Chapter XXVI with the bathing of Charles and Albert Fussell. The homosociality of this scene is so exclusive that when Margaret Schlegel would have gone walking at dawn she hesitates for at this time 'the day was still sacred to men'. However, far from the Whitmanesque natural spontaneity of *A Room with a View*'s bathing scene, 'these athletes seemed paralysed' without the key to their bathing shed and the correct adjustment of a springboard. The bourgeois accoutrements of athletic organisation appear to have denuded the vitality of the ruling class to the point where, ironically reversing the discourse of degeneration, Forster's ironic narrator, 'bounced' into by Margaret Schlegel, states:

[. . .] if a clerk desired adventure, he took a walk in the dark [. . .] They could not bathe without their appliances, though the morning sun was calling and the last mists were rising from the dimpling stream. Had they found the life of the body after all? Could not the men whom they despised as milksops beat them, even on their own ground? (*HE*, 217)

The apparently 'evolved' muscular Christian ethic, so clearly espoused by the narrator of 'The Story of a Panic', is questioned as creating more effeminacy than the Whitmanesque discourse which it attempts to renovate, making the latter more masculine. We discover about Margaret Schlegel that 'She thought of the bathing arrangements as they should be in her day – no worrying of servants, no appliances, beyond good sense' (*HE*, 217). We are placed in a complex position where those

supposed to be the servants of empire and capital are judged, when we employ a discourse of natural masculinity, to be deeply connected to the homoerotic and are effeminate in their relation to it. Forster employs affirmative discourses of homoerotic masculinity to cast an effeminised light upon homosocial activity, one further example of the complex relation of conceptualisations of masculinity and sexual identity at play throughout the novel and, more widely, his whole body of fiction.

A considerably less complex appearance of the natural homosexual emerges in *Maurice*'s Alex Scudder. Robert K. Martin sees Scudder as 'pure Carpenter – and, in turn, pure Whitman'; whilst Forster himself comments gleefully that Scudder possesses 'Shades of Edward Carpenter!' when he disavows Lytton Strachey's criticism of the novel in his 'Terminal Note' (*M*, 219).⁶⁵ The first appearance of Scudder seems more akin to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* with the 'gamekeeper dallying with two of the maids' (*M*, 145). However, Scudder is cast in a distinctly more pastorally homo-erotic light at the beginning of Chapter 37 when Maurice Hall encounters him amidst the 'out of doors, amongst the robins and bats' (*M*, 161) and feels that he has no 'right to criticize anyone who lived in the open air' (*M*, 162). Scudder is a man who Hall sees as equally a part of nature as the 'grass of the park, and the tree trunks' (*M*, 167).

After their liaison, Scudder becomes the representative of a highly Carpenterian working class, natural hero, battling 'the four guardians of society – the school master, the doctor, the scientist and the priest', as Glen Cavaliero views the representatives of the repressive social apparatuses at play throughout the novel.⁶⁶ Robert K. Martin in turn sees 'the fundamental class structure of England' troubled by the same-sex, inter-class liaison of Scudder and Maurice Hall, which is only re-established at the cricket match.⁶⁷ This is an interesting analysis, and one which is

⁶⁵ Martin, 'Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of Maurice', p. 37.

⁶⁶ Cavaliero, *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, p. 137.

⁶⁷ Martin, 'Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of Maurice', p. 36.

justified by the fact that Scudder retires from the match, seeing it ‘only fit and proper that the squire should bat at once’ (*M*, 177). Martin’s account, however, omits the fact that Alec Scudder, a representative of the Carpenterian natural homosexual, is vital enough a figure of masculinity that whilst we learn that he is not enough of a ‘gentleman’ that he chooses to open the batting himself, nonetheless, he is so much more adept than his team mates that he is still at the crease when Maurice Hall enters the batting line-up at ‘about eighth’ (*M*, 175) and then proceeds to dismantle Mr. Borenius’s bowling attack so fully that ‘he swiped the ball into the fern [. . .] Lost Ball. Next ball he hit a boundary. He was untrained but had the cricketing build, and the game took on some semblance of reality’ (*M*, 176). Far from being the mere tool of the ruling class, Carpenter’s naturally virile homosexual uses the vehicle of athletics, an apparatus of the dominant world view, and employs it in a more virile fashion than the genteel residents of Penge, whose world view it is supposed to support.

I would not wish to overlay the presence of Carpenter within *A Passage to India* but, as Arthur Martland comments, there is a remarkable congruence between Fielding’s ‘little college at Chandrapore’ (*API*, 79) and the Anglo-Indian college described by Carpenter at Aligurh in his *From Adam’s Peak to Elephanta*.⁶⁸ Fielding’s desire for social equality between classes and races through education appears Carpenterian. Fielding teaches ‘public-school boys, mental defectives and policemen’, a fact made all the more Carpenterian in its intermingling with his homoerotically charged ‘going to the bad’ in England and subsequent flight to India where, in the phallically charged borrowing of a shirt stud from Aziz Sara Suleri Goodyear sees ‘the most notoriously oblique exchange in the literature of English India’.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ C.f. Martland, *E.M. Forster: Passion and Prose*, p.193. Martland goes on to trace the links between homosexuality and the college in Aligurh at which Syeed Ross Masood, Forster’s Indian lover later became Vice-Chancellor and which was run by many other Cambridge educated men of the period.

⁶⁹ Goodyear, ‘Forster’s Imperial Erotic’, p. 157.

The intermingling of socially progressive education and homoeroticism, equally seen in Maurice Hall's visits 'to play football with the youths of the College Settlement in South London and his Wednesday evenings in order to teach boxing to them' (*M*, 126-7) could certainly be argued to be as much a part of the theories of the 'sex radical' Edward Carpenter as of such socially progressive Liberal projects as Toynbee Hall, discussed in Chapter 1. Social intervention was, indeed, espoused in Dickinson's *Independent Review*, in the pages of which Edward Carpenter was also a 'notable contributor' and in which Joseph Bristow speculates that 'Forster [may well have] first encountered Carpenter's work'.⁷⁰ Equally, despite what I believe to be the more convincing argument for positioning the Indian punka-wallah of the court scenes within the discourse of degeneration, it is interesting to note that June Perry Levine is confident in asserting his alignment with Carpentarian homo-eroticised working class men.⁷¹

Throughout a wide range of Forster's fictional output the presence of another discourse of affirmative, natural homosexuality abounds, a formation which spans the socialism of Carpenter's belief in the spirituality of the working man in Fielding's Anglo-Indian college, the feyness of Housman's lads in Mr. Emerson's ironic use of *A Shropshire Lad*, the Whitmanesque bathing of George Emerson and the pseudo-progressive belief in congenital homosexuality which Mr. Lasker-Jones expresses, reflecting Havelock Ellis's theories as well as their degenerative source. However, as I have illustrated above, this is only one amongst a variety of differing discourses of homosexual identity present throughout Forster's fiction.

⁷⁰ Joseph Bristow, 'Fratrum Societati: Forster's Apostolic Dedications', in Martin and Piggford, *Queer Forster*, p. 113.

⁷¹ Levine, 'The Tame in Pursuit of the Savage: The Posthumous Fiction of E.M. Forster', p. 81.

IV The Aporetic Web

Forster's fiction presents a clearly interacting set of contending ideas about the very nature of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sexuality and masculinity. As I have outlined throughout this chapter and the previous one, the nature of these emergent discourses is clear and differentiated; it is part of what James Eli Adams terms 'the energies and anxieties of masculine self-legitimation' in his excellent work on the nature of these emerging formations.⁷² Forster clearly articulates these emerging affirmative identities, the attendant, pathologising, pseudo-scientific discourses that oppose them and sublimatory Hellenic and repressive ecclesiastical closeting of same-sex desire. The question remains of whether any one position among the 'complex realities of male friendship, love and sexuality', which Richard Dellamora identifies as being in operation as early as Tennyson's time in the Society of Apostles, is privileged within the even more complex period of Forster's literary career.⁷³

The absence of any dominant position amongst the contending positions is clear. The relationship between Aziz and Fielding in *A Passage to India* is clearly the erotic potential that Sarah Suleri Goodyear rightly identifies as sub-textually articulated in Part I at the novel's closure. The 'half kissing' consummation of a relationship between the closeted man of culture and the aesthete that Fielding and Aziz respectively represent is clearly symbolically denied when their horses are described as having 'swerved apart' and the sky – the recurrent symbol of a

⁷² James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 1.

⁷³ Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 19.

humanistic connection throughout the novel – speaks the final denial of any connection in its judgement that the relationship could not occur ‘yet’ or ‘there’ (all *API*, 316).

Equally, *A Room with a View*, one of the many ostensible heterosexual romances of Forster’s early career, enacts a similar negation of tense oppositions. The Rev. Beebe’s petulant avowal at the moment of the apparent romantic denouement that George Emerson ‘no longer interests me’ (*ARWAV*, 217) is telling. Where George Emerson is a Carpentarian natural man and Rev. Beebe a figure of ecclesiastical closeting with shades of Cecil Vyse’s aestheticism, the otherwise puzzlingly callous refusal to engage with Lucy Honeychurch’s engagement is made less so by a recognition that Beebe’s ‘interest’ in the hero is lost when they cannot share in the same liminal pastoral world of the ‘sacred lake’, the most overtly homoerotic moment of the novel where the various contending masculine identities become, literally, more fluid. Beebe states his lack of interest at precisely the moment that Lucy Honeychurch joins George Emerson in wholly succumbing to his father’s hegemony. The ensuing erotic potential of the meeting of two contending masculinities is denied by the apparent heterosexual closure of the novel. However, Forster’s meaning was so clearly misunderstood that, around the time he was still questioning the closure of his last published novel, *Maurice*, he was moved to write a coda to *A Room with a View*, entitled ‘A View without a Room’. Here, for all the seeming shared ground of their union, Forster reveals that George ‘did not remain chaste’ when, like Forster, he visited north Africa. Moreover, the titular ‘room’ that symbolises the space where the couple share the ‘view’ forced upon them by Mr. Emerson is destroyed when George searches for it: ‘all is changed’, a clear hint that even in this seemingly happy closure,

the nature of ‘connection’ is misunderstood and, for all the residual fondness that the couple feel, there is no understanding. Just as with the contending versions of masculinity at play within the novel, there is no final resolution and, in making a statement fifty years after the work was first published, Forster clearly calls into doubt the one seemingly happy heterosexual relationship in his fiction.

Critical opinion is divided over which theorist or formation of homosexuality might be privileged as the major source of inspiration behind Forster’s understanding of masculinity. Edward Carpenter is the leading contender. He is championed in particular by Tariq Rahman and Tony Brown.⁷⁴ *Maurice*, by Forster’s own admission inspired by a visit to Carpenter’s home, Millthorpe, is cited by Rahman as the prime source of this inspiration, the closure of the novel seeing the elopement of Maurice Hall together with Alec Scudder into ‘some eternal Cambridge’ (*M*, 215) at least from the free indirect discourse of Clive Durham’s perspective leaving only a ‘little pile of the petals of the evening primrose’ to mark Hall’s disappearance into the ‘greenwood’ that marks the novel’s closure.

Stuart Christie’s insightful analysis of the nature of pastoral within the novel is tellingly astute: ‘the “greenwood” presents both an ideal solution and an intractable problem for the negotiation of alterity: the radical removal of Forster’s better, happier England underscores the necessity to find an environment where homosexuality will not be persecuted [. . .] the “greenwood” remains a structure of absence, the metaphor

⁷⁴ C.f. Rahman, ‘Edward Carpenter and E.M. Forster’, and Brown, ‘Edward Carpenter, Forster and the Evolution of *A Room with a View*’, for accounts of their convergent claims of Carpenter’s influence over Forster’s work, and, in Rahman’s case, of *Maurice* in particular.

of wholesale disengagement from the material world".⁷⁵ Just as for George Emerson and Rev. Beebe, who are able to sport in the 'greenwood' before reverting to positions society forces upon them, so the retreat into the greenwood of *Maurice* is self-consciously contrived and contingent. However, whilst I greatly admire Christie's reading of the novel, it places less emphasis than I suggest might be necessary on the ending of the novel. As I shall examine, the history of the other possible endings to the narrative explain why such an idealistic and contingent meaning was deliberately and evasively ironic. Wendy Moffat notes Forster's desire that the novel should not end tragically, claiming that the novel's 'idealism still seemed right' despite, as P.N. Furbank, describes, Forster's constant revision of the ending until 1958, in his 79th year, 'adding a passage in which Maurice is brought safely to Alec's arms'.⁷⁶

George Paizis outlines the function of the traditional closure of romance fiction in his seminal study of the genre: 'In romances, the denouement, the point of convergence and unravelling of the textual threads, is the last scene between the heroine and hero. As such it brings together and resolves the elements of the narrative that went towards creating the drama [. . .] The final scene also confirms the overcoming of obstacles'.⁷⁷ It is precisely this 'overcoming of obstacles' which is self-consciously absent from the final draft of the novel that Wendy Moffat recounts Forster having sent to Christopher Isherwood and John Lehman in 1960 for posthumous publication.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Stuart Christie, *Worldling Forster: The Passage from Pastoral* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 16.

⁷⁶ Moffat, *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster*, p. 168; Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, vol. 2, p. 304.

⁷⁷ Paizis, *Love and the Novel: the Poetics and Politics of Romantic Fiction*, p. 148.

⁷⁸ C.f. Wendy Moffat's preface to *A Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster* for an account of Isherwood's receipt of the final manuscript of *Maurice* and the author's instructions for its publication.

Examining the ending that Forster excised sheds light upon the intentions of the final published ending. What might have been remains in the King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive Centre. It is a much more recognisably favourable Carpenterian perspective, where Forster allows Maurice Hall and Alec Scudder to live in north Yorkshire as agricultural working men who are 'Couched in a shed near their work', where they whisper in 'review the events of the day before falling asleep' together.⁷⁹ It is in this position that Maurice Hall's sister finds them in the epilogue, Hall an outcast from society but 'a new man' who 'throbbed – tougher, more centralised, in as good form as ever, but formed in a fresh mould, where muscles and sunburn proceed from inward health'.⁸⁰ Forster is much clearer in this excised chapter in asserting the seeming moral truth of the narrative, that Hall's and Scudder's relationship, even from the free indirect discourse of the former's sister, 'did not seem a disgusting situation nor one that society should have outlawed'.⁸¹ Clearly, this version of the narrative's closure suggests strong sympathy for Carpenter's vision of working class manly love and stands in line with Tariq Rahman's reading of the novel. However, just as Forster was appraising and clarifying the end of another, apparently happy resolution to *A Room with a View* and problematizing it in 1958, so when the final version of the text was sent to Isherwood in 1960, he consciously chose to retain an ambivalence which denied the absolute primacy of any one model of male love. In this last of his literary choices, Forster elucidates the method of contingency, evasion and obliquity so common throughout his fiction more generally: the

⁷⁹ Epilogue to Copy A of the manuscript of *Maurice*, King's College Cambridge Modern Archive Centre, classification EMF/1/5/2 p. 5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

examination of a variety of contending positions without the absolute privileging of any one.

CONCLUSION

In recent studies David Medalie, Brian May and David Bradshaw have provided a reconsideration of the nature of Forster's maxim from *Howards End* to 'only connect the prose and the passion'. The very nature of connection presented within Forster's fiction has long been a fraught one that a preceding generation of critics has taken to be a liberal humanist desire for true communication between free individuals, connected by their liberty and shared humanity. Amongst others, Medalie's, May's and Bradshaw's studies seek to interrogate this position and to present a picture of a novelist who is more elusive, complex and contingent in his appreciation of the relations between individuals and their places in society. Far from being a transitional modernist, Forster, as Jay Dickson astutely observes, 'recognises his own legacy from the Victorian novel by admitting both what has died and what yet survives'.⁸² New considerations of Forster's work present a man more profoundly aware of both the legacy of the age that preceded him and his problematic place in relation to its crumbling certainties.

I believe that the direction of new considerations of Forster's fiction is correct and represents a more accurate appraisal of the writer's place in relation to the development of early twentieth century liberal politics, to innovations in the narrative practice of literary modernism and to debates about gender and sexuality. Where this thesis seeks to tread new ground lies particularly in a consideration of the importance of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson as an influence on Forster's work and, more widely, on how this influence suffuses a unified philosophical schema that I believe underpins Forster's writing from its beginnings to the posthumously published fiction.

⁸² Jay Dickson, 'E.M. Forster's *The Longest Journey* and the Legacy of Sentiment' in *Troubled Legacies: Narrative and Inheritance*, (ed.) Allan Hepburn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 186.

It is clear that modern re-appraisals of the evolution of political liberalism have seen new appreciations of its divergence from what might more generally be termed a ‘liberal humanist’ tradition with which Forster has been too conveniently aligned. Modern political historians refer to J.A Hobson and L.T. Hobhouse, the architects of this ‘New Liberalism’, as having ‘many affinities with socialism’ and, in effect, as having embraced socialist thought ‘so long as it did not unduly curtail liberty’.⁸³ As I have charted in Chapters One and Two, Dickinson’s part in the evolution of New Liberal thought was significant. It was in the pages of its most notable journal, *The Independent Review*, that Forster’s first fiction was published in the same pages as many of the ideologues of this new movement, including Dickinson, Hobhouse and Hobson.

Forster employs the new onus on the socially transformative action of political institutions to explore precisely the curtailing of liberty and imposition of world views that Hobson and Hobhouse found questionable within socialist ideology. From the earliest fiction, Forster presents an understanding both of the potentially transformative power of social intervention and institutions to aid individual liberty and a more pessimistic appraisal of their potentially coercive forces. This understanding, I believe, springs directly from the influence of Dickinson’s political works. It evolved at a time when he was a close influence on Forster after the latter’s election to the Society of Apostles and in the years after leaving Cambridge, during the main period of Forster’s fictional production.

One only needs to closely examine *A Room with a View*’s narrative closure to

⁸³ George Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 269; 270.

see the nature of Forster's political understanding at work. The nature of the 'view' is, of course, a symbolic one. As John Beer attests, it is 'more than a temporary resting place'; it is, rather, a central symbol of the occupation of a viewpoint.⁸⁴ Beer, however, misses the central irony of the novel, namely, that it is Mr Emerson's room that Lucy Honeychurch transfers to at the beginning of the novel rather than his son's and that within the text's climactic scene, it is Mr Emerson rather than his son who asserts the 'Truth' (*ARWAV*, 225) of his position against that of Lucy's own family's conservatism. As I have examined in Chapter Three, Forster is clear in ironising the ideological battle between the bourgeois conservatism of Rev. Eager and Mr Emerson's socialism, the site of contest occurring over the meaning of Giotto's 'The Ascension of St. John'. Art is employed as one institution that different ideologies contest as a means of affirming their respective positions.

Forster's understanding of social institutions, I believe, was derived directly from Dickinson's work. However, even if this understanding of social mechanics is derived from socialism, it is clear that Forster was to some degree sceptical about it. In Mr Emerson, socialism is just as much a target for his critique as any other political viewpoint. The irony lies in the fact that it is Mr Emerson who effects the couple's conversion to his viewpoint. His 'kiss' at the end of the penultimate chapter is more successful in securing the 'Truth' (*ARWAV*, 226) of his position as a means of understanding the world than any his son has been able to give Lucy Honeychurch. Indeed, Forster attempts in the fabric of the final chapter to make this point clear. It is through a shared ideological allegiance that, ostensibly, the novel reaches a happy closure when both characters accede to the ideological dominance of Mr Emerson. Forster highlights this explicitly in showing George Emerson's lack of ideological self-consciousness when 'George said it was his old room' (*ARWAV*, 226) that the couple inhabit on their return to the Pension Bertolini in Chapter Twenty to

⁸⁴ Beer, *The Achievement of E.M. Forster*, p. 81.

honeymoon. This is a mark of the younger Emerson's misguided belief in his emancipation and individuality but Forster is clear, through Lucy Honeychurch, to identify that the room he occupies is his 'father's room' (*ARWAV*, 226) and, by extension, that he is still overly influenced by his father's viewpoint. That the irony of this seemingly romantic closure missed the reading public is so marked that, fifty years later, Forster was moved to write a postscript, 'A View without a Room', in which the unhappiness of Lucy's and George's shared imprisonment is revealed as Forster charts the latter's infidelity, undermining the seeming romantic closure and making the reader aware of the sub-text to this one seeming moment of successful 'connection' throughout his fiction.

If Forster learned his understanding of social mechanisms and the nature of ideological contest from Dickinson then this went in hand in hand with his understanding of how to express this dialogue between contesting ideologies. As I have tried to show, following David Medalie's and May's excellent work on Forster's modernism, I believe that Forster's dialogism was first practiced at the Society of Apostles alongside Dickinson, and it was profoundly influenced by his appreciation of Dickinson's dialogic method and its self-conscious re-motivation of Socratic method in a modern political context.

Throughout this thesis I have argued for the lasting nature of this influence on Forster's writing. We can, I believe, gauge its relative strength in comparison to the other influences claimed for Forster. Forster first met Dickinson as an undergraduate at the end of the nineteenth century; gained his first publications in a journal for which Dickinson was on the editorial board; remained for many years in a secret conversational society alongside him; he published his biography in 1934; and he

possessed a larger collection of Dickinson's work than that of any other comparable author at the time of Forster's death. Claims are made for the importance of other influences, particularly Edward Carpenter, and these are also significant and longstanding. However, I have endeavoured to demonstrate that no influence has been more decisive and all-encompassing with regard to Forster's fiction.

The dialogic method exemplified by Dickinson and its relation to an aporetic contention of differing world views is engrained in the very fabric of Forster's fiction. As I have tried to argue, this method is especially visible in his translation of Dickinson's dialogic method into prose, using free indirect discourse and the subversion of third-person narratorial authority as his chief weapons. It is by means of a new understanding of the function of Forster's narratorial personae and the subversion of their authority by his characters that I believe we can gain a valuable new view of Forster's narrative method. I have argued that Forster's characters significantly and consistently invade a self-consciously ironic and sententious narratorial voice throughout the novels, thereby undermining the carefully constructed and moralistic authoritative statements made by the persona. This process of undermining becomes part of 'an increasingly experimental development of free indirect discourse' as the 'means of exfoliating subjectivity' which then makes the reader aware of the constructed and artificial nature of mimetic texts.⁸⁵ If, as Marko Juvan claims, 'the chief modernist works [. . .] are perfect examples of dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia', then Forster's writing can be identified as modernist

⁸⁵ Gregory Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 222.

without any claims of marginality previously assigned to him by earlier critics.⁸⁶

The consistent dialogism of Forster's fiction, as I have examined in Chapter Three, is, moreover, part of a more far-reaching self-reflexivity in existence throughout the full range of his fiction. This self-reflexivity reveals in many of 'the textual forms of self-consciousness' that are at play more widely throughout modernist fiction.⁸⁷ I have charted a self-reflexive modernism that has a number of recurring tactics all of which combine to express considerable literary self-awareness. Chief amongst these is the presence of numerous writers within the fiction whose work allows Forster to address an awareness of 'the social process of operating communication and generating meaning', which Astradur Eysteinnsson sees as a fundamental preoccupation of modernist writing.⁸⁸ Forster is fully aware of the self-revelatory nature of these tactics. This awareness is visible, for example, in the 'Prank' of Joseph Emory Prank's nomination as Eleanor Lavish's pseudonym in *A Room with A View*, for example, or in the way the relationship between a writer's lived experience and the status of characters within their fiction is questioned via the anagrammatic transformation of Eleanor Lavish's perception of Lucy Honeychurch into her fictional character Leonora in *Under a Loggia*, *A Room with a View*'s novel within a novel.

This consistent revelation of the nature of literary production is deeply related

⁸⁶ Marko Juvan, *History and Poetics of Intertextuality* (trans.) Timothy Pagačar (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 93.

⁸⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Meta-fictional Paradox* (Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith Ltd., 1980), p. 4.

⁸⁸ Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 113.

to a wide-reaching interrogation of linguistic referentiality. This is as true in ‘The Story of a Panic’, which describes the text’s inability ‘to describe coherently what happened’ (CSS, 14) as in the ‘Boum’ [. . .] as far as the human alphabet can express it’ (API, 159) so frequently examined in *A Passage to India*. It is, I would argue, another facet of the ‘linguistic crisis [. . .] paradigmatic for the entire modernist generation’ of which Forster was a part.⁸⁹

Whilst Forster’s dialogism is searchingly political in direction, it finds its most detailed articulation in his examination of sexual and gender identity, an issue which was as close to his own life as it was for his mentor Dickinson. Unlike Dickinson, however, Forster sought to articulate the forces seeking to define the homosexual subject within his fiction, taking Dickinson’s model of dialogism and using different characters within his fiction to represent contending models of homosexual identity. In doing so, Forster sought to self-consciously reveal ‘how the different voices and documents in a text are a composite of other discourses’, examining and ironically inter-negating these voices through their dialogic relation to one another so that no one amongst the contending clamour of theories of same-sex desire ever comes wholly to prominence.⁹⁰

This is never more compelling than in the case of the posthumously published *Maurice*, whose closure Forster laboured over long after he had finished writing any

⁸⁹ Richard Sheppard, *Modernism – Dada – Postmodernism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000), p. 118

⁹⁰ Bernard Duyfhuizen, *Narratives of Transmission* (London: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 40.

other fiction. As I have examined, Forster initially attempted to privilege a realistic account of the ‘natural homosexual’ in the epilogue to a draft of the novel, imagining Maurice Hall and Alec Scudder engaged in an impoverished happiness as itinerant foresters, very much in line with the model of affirmative homosexual identity expressed by Edward Carpenter. However, it is in the self-conscious final ending of the novel, with Scudder and Hall consigned to a literary greenwood, metaphorically in the ‘closing of a book’ (*M*, 213) that no one account of homosexuality is given preference. Instead, the writer, like the reader, must negotiate a dialogue between these contending discourses, no final closure to the debate of contending claims for the truth of homosexual identity being possible outside of the self-consciously literary realm. Indeed, upon pondering the fate of Scudder and Hall, Clive Durham returns ‘to correct his proofs’ (*M*, 215) in an attempt to hide the nature of Scudder’s and Hall’s liaison, just as Forster’s final articulation of homosexual desire, uttered wilfully from beyond the grave, is intensely modernist, self-conscious and elusive.

It is this dialogism, playfulness and the wish to undermine what might be considered the most yearned for connection of both Forster’s personal and literary life that characterises the wider fictional practice of a fascinating writer. In conducting this revaluation of Forster’s fiction, his final utterance speaks tellingly of his longstanding fictional method that, to my mind, bears reconsideration as the work of a master modernist writer.

The implications of my work suggest that both new liberalism and, in particular, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson’s influence are areas where Forster

scholarship could continue to explore the writing of an intriguing novelist. It would be wonderful to see the emergence of a modern scholarly biography of Dickinson, a resource that would further reveal the late-nineteenth-century Cambridge world that he inhabited and its effects on a wide range of modernist thinkers. Further work on Forster's relations with other members of the Society of Apostles would also be fascinating. This is an area of research that has necessarily been limited by the secretive workings of the society. I hope, furthermore, that my work has suggested that Forster possessed a more complex and nuanced understanding of homosexuality than the scope of this thesis has fully been able to reveal. I believe that further work in this area would be fruitful.

If, as this this thesis suggests, Forster should be accorded a more secure place within the leagues of modernist writers, this perhaps suggests a reappraisal of the nature of modernism. Following other modern Forster critics and, in the light of reappraisals of the history of liberalism, I believe that a more wide-ranging examination of liberal modernists would prove enlightening. It would be fascinating to see an examination of those writers who seek to examine the mechanics of social intervention within their fiction and to probe the boundaries between socialism as an emerging political discourse and Liberalism as a dying political force seeking to reinvigorate itself. I hope that, however tentatively, this thesis might have contributed to this line of thought.

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I have been profoundly grateful to the Provost and Scholars of King's College, Cambridge for permission to consult the E.M. Forster, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and Society of Apostles papers, held at the King's College, Cambridge Modern Archive.

Within the body of the text of this thesis, citation has included the Modern Archive's class marks for the various collections. A full catalogue of the Modern Archive can be found online at: <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/modern-archives/>

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