

**THEMATIC INTEGRITY
IN FILMIC VERSIONS OF E.M. FORSTER'S NOVELS**

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the extent to which Charles Sturridge's Where Angels Fear to Tread, Merchant Ivory's Howards End, and David Lean's A Passage to India have aimed at, and succeeded in, exploring the thematic concerns of E.M. Forster's novels.

A brief introductory chapter explains the motivation behind this research, and the choice of critical methodologies used. It concludes with an outline of some of the problems confronting film-makers wishing to explore the concerns of novels.

The first chapter, which is devoted to Where Angels Fear to Tread, reveals that while Sturridge is "faithful" to Forster's novel at a superficial level, basing most of his scenes on, and taking most of his dialogue directly from, the text, he does not explore Forster's themes. The facility with which film tells stories proves to be a treacherous trap for Sturridge. His version of Where Angels Fear to Tread is totally vacuous because he failed to develop anything beyond the story -- Forster's "tapeworm" of time (Aspects of the Novel 41). The causality that Forster calls plot seemed beyond Sturridge's comprehension, leaving his film little more than an endless progression of "and then[s]" (Forster, Aspects 87). Characters are not given their full weight; symbols and leitmotifs are overlooked; the allegorical elements he did recognize, he failed to understand, and thus misplaced, so that the epiphanic moments of the novel are lost. There is no possibility of thematic concerns emerging from a film in which plot, characterization, symbol and rhythm are ignored.

Sturridge's apparent inability to understand his source is in stark contrast to Merchant Ivory's sensitivity to Howards End, and their evident familiarity

with literary criticism on the work. Chapter two explores the way in which their adaptation smooths out putative flaws in characterization and plot, and uses filmic rhythm and camera work to suggest comments made by the novel's narrator. Almost wholly successful in developing the novel's themes, Merchant Ivory's Howards End does not, however, successfully explore the spiritual dimensions of Forster's novel. Film is a medium capable of great subtlety, but its strength lies in its ability to capture the seen; the unseen tends to evade its grasp.

It is in dealing with the unseen that Lean's A Passage to India misses greatness, for in virtually every other respect his version of Forster's masterpiece is superb. Chapter three explores Lean's creative and flexible approach to adaptation, his acute sensitivity to the differing demands of film and novel, and his confident technical mastery. It also explores, however, the emptiness at the heart of his film, an emptiness that is the result of his trivialization of the spiritual concerns of Forster's novel.

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NOTE ON PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

In following the MLA's injunction to "Keep parenthetical references as brief -- and as few -- as clarity and accuracy permit" (Gibaldi 185), I have proceeded as follows:

1. In addition to abbreviations recommended by the MLA, I have used the following:

WAFTT for Where Angels Fear to Tread

HE for Howards End

APTI for A Passage to India

2. When quoting from one of Forster's novels in a chapter in this dissertation that is devoted to that novel, I have used only the relevant page number as parenthetical documentation.
3. I have followed the MLA's suggestion to cross-reference bibliographical details (Gibaldi 122).

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to compare and contrast filmic adaptations of E.M. Forster's novels with the novels themselves, and, in particular, to examine whether, and how, these adaptations have attempted to explore all, some, or none of the themes of the novels on which they are based.

My choice of dissertation topic was motivated by an interest in film studies that developed during fifteen years as a high school English teacher, and a growing concern about the number of students who imagine that watching a film version is an adequate substitute for reading a literary text. Ironically, English teachers are, I fear, largely to blame. Always under time pressure, we tend to teach a literary text then show the film version as a revisionary tool, without much comparative discussion.

I became convinced that in addition to the discrete study of novels and films that English syllabi currently require, a comparative study of film and novel should be offered to students at least once during their high school years. Such a study would, I think, be an excellent way of emphasising the differing demands, potential, and aspirations of the two media, and showing students that film versions, despite superficial similarities, are usually very different from the novels (or other literary texts) which they use as source material.

A comparative study could lead students to a heightened awareness and appreciation of both the linguistic subtleties of the novel, and the visual subtleties of film, and thus enrich their enjoyment of both art forms. While I am not naive enough to imagine that such a study would reverse the trend of favouring viewing over reading, I think it could encourage students not to abandon the written word entirely.

A comparative study could also have broader educative significance. One of the essential differences between novels and films is that a "novel which attracts a reading public of approximately 10,000 will be a modest success; a film which

reaches that number will be a financial disaster” (Outlines 56). Financial imperatives impinge on all art forms to a greater or lesser degree, but in the case of commercial cinema they assume paramount importance because, even for so-called “low-budget” movies, millions of dollars are at stake. As a result,

films which are available at any moment on screens stem from commercial decisions rather than from considerations of aesthetic quality or more detached concerns about where a society ought to be going or how to get there for philanthropy and service to the public (contrary to our popular media-reinforced myths) are not intrinsic characteristics of the business system. (Guback 340)

One of the consequences of needing to attract mass audiences is that film versions of novels tend to glamorize characters, sensationalize incidents, and cheapen ideas -- to reflect, rather than challenge, popular tastes and perceptions, and current social and moral values. A comparative study of novel and film could help students to develop a more critical awareness of the superficiality of much that is offered on the screen. I believe such an awareness to be vitally important, for one of the results of the technological explosion of this century has been that much of the information we receive about our culture is acquired second-hand from the mass media, and increasingly “movies [have] become the fictions by which we construct our memories, our self-images -- our truths” (Lacayo 43).

While I firmly believe in the intrinsic value of a comparative study of novel and film, I am conscious of an inherent irony in my choice of Forster’s works as specific subject matter, an irony which emerges from Forster’s own attitude to film. His original objections to the medium were stated in an article entitled “Diana’s Dilemma” which he wrote under the pen-name Pharos for the Egyptian Mail in 1917. Pharos is, as Martin Quinn and Safaa Hejazi point out,

defenceless against a charge of priggishness . . . [as he] wonders aloud about cinema’s mesmerizing effect on the audience “If

people took the cinema frivolously one could understand its appeal. But they take it seriously. They attend, they do not talk. They talk at plays, or concerts, or operas, but during a cinema they are quite silent, and if one looks at them in the semi-darkness one sees they are all staring wrapt at the screen.”

Theorizing that their captivity may be more physiological than psychological, Pharos concludes that the spectacle consists merely of “vacuity [gazing at] vacuity” . . . and offers a conviction that the devotees of the new art form are mistaken in their confidence that “film can be a great educational force”. (135)

Film has obviously undergone major transformations since 1917, and there was apparently some softening of Forster’s attitude to the medium, as is revealed in his essay, “India Again”. In commenting on two Indian films he saw during his 1945 visit, Forster gives evidence of quite considerable familiarity with film, commenting on cinema-house design, camera movement, photography and acting, disagreeing with his host’s claim that Humayun was superior to Olivier’s King Henry V, and offering the opinion that “a great future awaits the Indian film industry” (Two Cheers 329 - 30). Despite this apparent softening, some of Forster’s early antagonism to film seemed to have survived as is suggested by his life-long refusal to release the film rights for any of his novels. Even the distinguished Indian film-maker, Satyajit Ray, was unable to change Forster’s mind. In the 1960’s, Ray was so eager to film A Passage to India that he visited Forster in England, and arranged for the Apu Trilogy to be shown to him, in an attempt to persuade him to release film rights. Forster stubbornly resisted. His intransigence is difficult to understand, as he was quite willing to release television and stage rights, allowing Santha Rama Rau to adapt A Passage to India in both these mediums (Long 138).

Given Forster’s attitude to film in general, and film’s educative value in particular, my decision to write on his novels and their filmic counterparts might

well seem perverse. This choice was partly determined by pragmatic factors. Because the stimulus behind this dissertation was educational, I wanted to base it on currently studied novels of which recent ¹ filmic adaptations by a variety of film-makers were available. Given these parameters, Forster's work became the obvious choice. His novels (with the unsurprising exception of Maurice) are frequently set for study at high school level -- A Passage to India, for example, is a current I.E.B.² matriculation set-work -- and five of them were adapted for film within a ten year period by film-makers of some repute. Another reason is my ardent admiration of Forster's work. I believe A Passage to India is possibly the greatest English novel of this century. I also think that many of Forster's concerns are not only surprisingly "modern", but also particularly relevant to South Africans in the early years of a new political and social dispensation. Amongst these concerns I would include the sociological and psychological impact of industrialization on historically agrarian communities; the disempowerment of women, homosexuals, any anyone else considered "other"; the destructive and enfeebling effects of colonialism; the callous indifference of the rich and powerful to the poor; the inadequacy of educational models rooted in patriarchal and authoritarian principles; xenophobia; the horrors committed in the name of good by religious and other fanatics; the need for cross-cultural, religious, and racial tolerance and understanding; the importance of kindness and love; and the longing for spiritual comfort in an incomprehensible universe.

The obvious choice of a critical methodology within which to explore Forster's novels was to follow traditional methods of literary and textual analysis while giving primacy to Forster's own critical theories as expounded in Aspects of the Novel. Not only is the traditional approach generally used in schools, but virtually every major critical study of Forster's work to date has

¹ Advances in cinematographic technology and technique are beyond the scope of this thesis so I did not want these to be significant factors in any comparisons that emerged.

² The independent examination body of private schools.

followed traditional models, for Forster's writing is of a textual density that yields its secrets most readily to this method.

My choice of what Monaco calls "the native [America] strain of practical criticism" for discussing the films was largely predetermined by the decision to use traditional methods for the novel (345). This approach is also particularly suited to a comparative study for it "is not in its basic aims specific to any medium" (Bordwell 53). It is an "anti-theoretical, empirical, descriptive, pragmatic, local, and spontaneous" approach to film criticism devised mainly by American film critics in response to the complexity of the medium (Denby, Intro. xviii).

Film is an art form with an industrial base, intimately connected to the economy and banking systems, the social and political morale of individual countries; it combines many of the older arts (theatre, photography, fiction, music) and requires the collaboration of dozens of artists, craftsmen, and businessmen; it is simultaneously realism and dream, reportage and myth, narrative and image. To assimilate all these variables into a unified theoretical model would probably be impossible; and even if it were possible, the model would be so bulky that anyone using it would feel like a nature-lover crossing a meadow in a Rolls-Royce. Most of us prefer to go on foot -- we see more and have a better time. Indeed, the critic is in desperate need of all the mobility he can get. (Denby, Intro. xix).

Film critics do not occupy as neat a niche as their literary counterparts. A book reviewer is not the same as a literary critic; a film reviewer is the critic in many cases. This is particularly true of commercial or narrative film where the work of the journalist-critic "is the essential American literature on film" according to David Denby (Intro. xiii), who, as lecturer in film aesthetics and criticism at Stanford, and film reviewer for New York, is obviously qualified to judge. He defends this approach by observing that "informality is not a product of

intellectual laziness . . . working without a critical system requires independence of mind, rhetorical ingenuity, and . . . a good-humoured sense of proportion about the . . . work one is doing" (Intro. xviii).

A minor semantic problem arose out of what Forster calls "rhythm" (internal patterning created by "repetition plus variation" [Aspects 149]) and filmic rhythm (tempo created by the length of individual shots). The differences being so vast, I have prefixed the word "filmic" to all references to the latter.

A major problem was that dissertations share one of film's drawbacks: the accepted limits placed on length. To do justice to even one of Forster's novels, let alone five novels and five films, would be impossible given existing constraints. As three of the five films based on Forster's novels are Merchant Ivory productions, I have restricted discussion of their work, largely, to Howards End. The choice of Howards End was motivated by literary rather than filmic considerations. A Room with a View was excluded because of its similarity to Where Angels Fear to Tread in setting and theme. Maurice was excluded because it is atypical of Forster's work, the habitually ironic tone of the narrator that so informs his other novels being almost entirely absent. Furthermore, Where Angels Fear to Tread, Howards End and A Passage to India reveal a line of development through Forster's work that would not be evident were A Room with a View or Maurice chosen instead of Howards End.

The order of the following three chapters, each of which is devoted to one novel/film pair, was determined by the order in which the novels were written. As it happens, this is approximately the reverse of the order in which the films were made. A Passage to India appeared first, in 1984, and although Howards End was released somewhat later in 1992 than Where Angels Fear to Tread, its principal photography was completed before the latter's. In discussing A Passage to India and Where Angels Fear to Tread I have adopted the common practice of using the director's name as a useful synecdoche for everyone involved in the creative process, for to acknowledge the contribution of every

person involved in a single shot, let alone a whole film, is totally impractical³. In David Lean's case the convention is more appropriate than usual, for he not only directed and edited A Passage to India but also wrote the screenplay. Charles Sturridge's contribution to the screenplay of Where Angels Fear to Tread was also more significant than might appear by his listing as one of three screenwriters, for "The American Screen Writers (sic) Guild has . . . a rule that disallows screenplay credit to any director who has not contributed at least fifty percent of the dialogue" (Corliss, Notes. 221). In discussing Howards End I have again followed popular practice by using Merchant Ivory as synecdoche for everyone except the screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The Merchant, Ivory, Jhabvala partnership is unique. Cited by The Guinness Book of World Records as the longest collaboration in film history (Long 32), the working relationship of producer, director, screenwriter is so close that they all have apartments in the same building in Manhattan (Long 19). While only Jhabvala is given screen credit for her screenplays, Ivory's input is considerable, their working procedure on adaptations being as Ivory described it to Robert Long:

We decide what we want to emphasize in the script. I mark up the book, so that she knows the favourite things of mine that I wouldn't want to lose. I would want to make something of them. She usually agrees, though she doesn't always. Then she writes her script, and I never see it. . . . She comes back with this mess of papers, all scotch-taped together. Then I read it and I start shouting: "No, no, this isn't what I wanted," and, "Why have you left out such and such a thing?" and "Are you crazy?" And this will go on for an hour or

³ As Goldman, in discussing the Auteur theory claim that directors are the creators of films, points out:
 Studio executives are not stupid, and they are, believe it or not, aware of costs. If the director creates the film, why does a studio pay three thousand dollars a week for a top editor? Or four thousand for an equivalent production designer? Or ten thousand plus a percentage of the profits to the finest cinematographers?
 It's not because they're cute. And it's not because they want to. They have to. Because that's how crucial top technicians are. Crucial and creative. (101)
 Goldman has named but a few of the important contributors to a film. A comprehensive list would be vast, but other major contributors include the musical composer, music editor, sound, and sound editor, art director, set decorator, costume designer, make-up artist, hair stylist, and screenwriter.

two, and then we sort of re-do it, with me trying to push things I want, and she agreeing to some of it. And that's it, that becomes the screenplay. And then . . . it goes through another . . . metamorphosis; it alters before shooting, and then it alters during shooting" (24).

A note in passing is that it is not only in Merchant Ivory productions that the screenplay undergoes "metamorphosis . . . during shooting" -- it is common practice. As this dissertation is concerned with film only as final product, I have not referred to screenplay texts. Where dialogue is quoted, it has been transcribed from video releases of the films themselves.

I have made no attempt at comprehensive analyses of either novels or films. In each chapter I have focussed on a few issues central to the novel's themes. The extent to which the film-maker explores the novel's themes is dependent on a number of factors, the first of which is a desire to do so. Even where the desire is present, there are certain intrinsic differences between the two media that tend to inform against the film-maker's chances of success. Foremost amongst these is that while novel and film both "tell long stories with a wealth of detail . . . from the perspective of a narrator, who often interposes a resonant level of irony between the story and the observer" (Monaco 27), the presence of the narrator is much weaker in film than in novels. In film, the camera assumes the rôle of narrator, but the objective "reality" of mise-en-scene is so forceful that the ability of the narrator/camera to control point of view is limited. Thus, while film can "approximate the ironies that the novel develops in narration . . . [it] can never duplicate them" (Monaco 30). The objective "reality" of visual elements is both film's weakness and strength, for, unlike the novelist who must describe what he wants his reader to see, the film-maker can show many details in an instant. However, this ability offsets only partially film's other major limitation -- time. Novelists can afford to expand their ideas at leisure; film-makers, to remain commercially viable, must work within generally acceptable time limits. Film's strengths and weaknesses co-exist in its ability to show

action, too. Early excursions into film were simply celebrations of movement,⁴ and the delight evoked by movement remains at the heart of viewers' expectations.

Given these differences, it is perhaps surprising that any film-maker would want to adapt Forster's novels, for Forster is essentially an ironist. Furthermore, Forster's "action is minimal, limited mostly to deftly contrived psychological exploration, and . . . [his] subtle shifts in points of view are difficult to transfer to commercial cinema" (Bates 608). Beyond even these problems, Forster's themes are never simple moral equations, but emerge from his own philosophical development, revealing an increasing acknowledgement of life's perplexities and a deepening awareness of the mystery at the heart of the universe. Forster is, as Richard Schickel puts it, "not your customary movie property" (54).

How then have Sturridge, Merchant Ivory, and Lean dealt with Forster's novels? That is the question which the following chapters attempt to answer.

⁴ The importance of movement is highlighted in the many synonyms for film: movie, motion picture, and cinema (which is derived from the Greek word for movement).

CHAPTER 1

WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

At one level a comedy of manners that charts the “effect of a foreign country and a strange culture upon insular ideas and provincial personalities” (Trilling 42), Where Angels Fear to Tread, E.M. Forster’s first novel, is also “a serious study of salvation, not from a conventional religious perspective, but from the point of view of individual transfiguration and self-awareness” (Summers 27). Although not as ambitious or as complex as Howards End or A Passage to India, it is, of all Forster’s novels, “the most perfectly controlled” (Summers 25). Deemed “flawless” by Oliver Stallybrass (Intro. WAFTT 15), it reveals a “genuine harmony of form and content” (Rosecrance 51).

Both the relative simplicity and the flawless nature of Where Angels Fear to Tread suggest that it should lend itself to filmic adaptation. Charles Sturridge’s version is, however, a signal failure, not only as a reflection of Forster’s concerns but as film in its own right. This is surprising on a second count as Charles Sturridge’s adaptation of Brideshead Revised “faithfully reflected the tone of the novel” (The Listener, qtd. in Self 29), and received ecstatic critical acclaim as “a high-water mark” in period adaptations (Self 29). Admittedly, Waugh is not a novelist of Forster’s stature, and there are differences between adapting for television and for film, but nonetheless more could be expected of Sturridge than his vapid version of Where Angels Fear to Tread.

The reasons for the film’s failure are not difficult to detect, but perhaps it is easier, and kinder, and shorter, to list its positive attributes first. It “isn’t”, as Georgia Brown noted, “at all offensive. Nice shots of Tuscany” (1591). Some of the acting is excellent: Barbara Jefford as Mrs Herriton, and Helen Mirren as Lilia deliver classy performances; and Judy Davis as Harriet, “back straight, neck taut, head bobbing, goes all the way into pale, intellectual evil and never comes out of it. She is frightening” (Denby, WAFTT 1586). Apart from the

ending, Forster's text is followed fairly faithfully, and large sections of dialogue survive intact. The story is Forster's story.

This is where the positive features of Sturridge's film end, and whether the last named should be considered positive is itself a moot point. Forster was none too enamoured of the story-line, calling it "the highest factor common to all novels," but wishing it were not so, wishing that "it could be something different -- melody, or perception of the truth, not this low atavistic form. For, the more we look at the story . . . the more we disentangle it from the finer growths it supports, the less shall we find to admire" (Aspects, 40-41). The "finer growths" -- plot, character, prophecy, pattern, rhythm -- Sturridge's film seldom aspires to, indeed cannot aspire to, based as it is on an inferior screenplay further impaired by sloppy direction. And as the novel's themes are dependent on its "finer growths", there is scant opportunity for Forster's themes to emerge from Sturridge's Where Angels Fear to Tread.

Despite this, Sturridge's film is interesting in that it reveals exactly how delicate an organism a screenplay adaptation is; how slight changes, casual oversights, and inappropriate additions can destroy the balance of the original novel and reduce the resulting film to what William Goldman calls "a comic-book movie", a term he defines by a food analogy as "empty calories" (152). Certainly, Sturridge's film has all the hall-marks of comic-book movies: it displays "a lack of resonance: Like the popcorn you're munching, it's not meant to last"; it "doesn't have a great deal to do with life as it exists, as we know it to be [or as the novelist perceives it to be]. Rather, it deals with life as we would prefer it to be. Safer that way"; and "It's reference points tend to be other movies" (153).

The reason Sturridge's film "lacks resonance" is that, while it tells Forster's story, it fails to develop his ideas which have their foundation in the contrast between Sawston and Monteriano.

Sawston (even the onomatopoeic and verbal dynamic qualities of the word

itself reflect its joyless nature) is a symbol of what Forster called “the gray inhibited life” of “the English suburbs” (qtd. in Stallybrass, Intro. WAFTT 8). It represents everything that is odious in upper-middle-class Edwardian England: repressive morality, prejudice, smug self-satisfaction and complacency, and “petty unselfishness” (76). Repression of vigour, slavery to convention, and devotion to domestic trivia have resulted in a life-style that is quiet, orderly, and inexpressibly dull. Mrs Herriton is an embodiment of Sawston’s values. Petty, manipulative, and insincere, beneath her hauteur, diplomacy and genteel manner lurks a vicious, destructive temper that emerges whenever her pride is dented. She is an anti-life force -- a “useless machine” (84) whose life is meaningless. Appropriately, she is one of Forster’s flat characters for the world-view that she espouses is one that conspires to simplify character and moral choice. It might not be “jolly”, but it is “easy” (93).

In contrast, Monteriano reflects and celebrates the complexity of life. Noisy and vigorous, it encompasses “beauty, evil, charm, vulgarity, mystery” (104). Its ideal of wholeness is reflected in the “Piazza with its three great attractions -- the Palazzo Pubblico, the Collegiate Church, and the Caffè Garibaldi: the intellect, the soul, and the body” (130). Viewed from a distance, the seventeen towers of Monteriano, surrounded by a wall against which olives grow, make it look like “some fantastic ship city of a dream” (38). Yet they refute this implied insularity by offering superb views, and by being constant reminders of history. Reaching “up to heaven . . . and down to the other place,” Monteriano’s towers are, as Philip realizes, “symbol[s] of the town” (104). Encompassing both good and evil, these phallic protuberances proclaim Monteriano as pro-life, but also offer the warning that Lilia fails to heed: Monteriano finds its freedom and pleasure at the expense of women. Its patron saint, Deodata, is a symbol not only of Philip’s failure to engage with life, but also of the Italian ideal of womanhood -- utter passivity. Monteriano’s way of life is also reflected in its opera house; “done up, in the tints of the beetroot and

the tomato There is something majestic in the bad taste" it displays (107). It might be vulgar and ostentatious, but "it attains to beauty's confidence" (108), and its patrons are spontaneous and passionate in their appreciation, rejoicing "in the existence of beauty" (109). One of Forster's rhythmic devices, the distich out of Baedeker -- "Poggibonizzi, fatti in là, che Monteriano si fa città" (29) -- proclaims Poggibonsi as Monteriano's enemy. On the night of the opera, Caroline has a dream vision in which "Poggibonsi was revealed to her as . . . a joyless, straggling place, full of people who pretended. When she woke up she knew that it had been Sawston" (112).

As Mrs Herriton is to Sawston, so Gino is to Monteriano. A round character, he defies simple categorization. Vulgar, dirty, and capable of immense cruelty, he is also affectionate, charming, honest and capable of immense love. His fiscal opportunism and his infidelity are deplorable, but his passionate love for his child exceeds any simple definition of good; his understanding "that physical and spiritual life may stream out of him for ever" connects him to the gods; when he lifts "his son to his lips [he becomes] majestic . . . a part of Nature" (125).

Nature is of central importance in Forster's novel, particularly the little wood on the road to Monteriano which functions thematically and structurally. The first description of the wood occurs during Philip's first rescue mission:

The trees of the wood were small and leafless, but noticeable for this -- that their stems stood in violets as rocks stand in the summer sea. There are such violets in England, but not so many. Nor are there so many in art, for no painter has the courage. The cart-ruts were channels, the hollows lagoons; even the dry white margin of the road was splashed, like a causeway soon to be submerged under the advancing tide of spring. Philip paid no attention at the time; he was thinking what to say next. But his eyes had registered the beauty, and next March he did not forget that the road to Monteriano must traverse

innumerable flowers. (36)

The violets pay tribute to the beauty and abundance of nature. Nature's redemptive potential is reflected in Philip's unconscious recognition, and later memory, of the splendour. But it is in this same wood that Gino's baby dies. Spring has given way to summer, day to night, and the torrential rain has turned the wood into a nightmarish mud pit. Nature reflects not only life's joy, but also death's sorrow; not only "beauty", but also "evil" (104). Gino's quotation from Dante's *Inferno* proves indeed "more apt than he supposed" (41), for the metaphoric "selva oscura" in which Dante wakes to find the right road wholly lost and gone becomes literally the dark wood in which Gino's baby dies because Philip has metaphorically taken the wrong path in life.

Nature's contrasts, and redemptive potential, are explored in other symbols, too. The heavens contribute to the impact of the opera. Philip and Caroline are enchanted by the "really purple sky and really silver stars" and the "warm sweet air" which is full of "magic" (112). The same sky can be "terrific blue", pouring heat onto a "whitened plain which gripped life tighter than a frost", yet even then Philip is aware that there is "solid enchantment . . . behind . . . the dust" (91). Even shallow Lilia is affected by nature. The "vast slopes of olives and vineyards" (60) both disappoint and disconcert her:

"I don't call this country," she would say. "Why, it's not as wild as Sawston Park!" And indeed, there was scarcely a touch of wildness in it -- some of those slopes had been under cultivation for two thousand years. But it was terrible and mysterious all the same, and its continued presence made Lilia so uncomfortable that she forgot her nature and began to reflect. (60)

The above passage invites comparison to Sawston: the contrast Forster offers is Mrs Herriton planting peas. The straight regimented rows of evenly spaced peas that she trickles into a furrow made by a pointed stick contain nothing that is "mysterious", and are "terrible" only in that they offer a symbolic reflection of

the shallow, narrow-minded, constrained values of Mrs Herriton and Sawston. But even Mrs Herriton cannot control everything. Faced with Mrs Theobald's letter announcing Lilia's engagement (the first indication of her own slipping control) Mrs Herriton forgets to cover up the peas, and nature, instinctive and unruly, in the form of sparrows, eats every one. The peas are gone, but the ground is left bestrewn with the torn fragments of Mrs Theobald's letter. Testament to Mrs Herriton's ugly rage and loss of control, the fragments reveal her as a despoiler of all that is natural; the bare ground on which they rest is her sterile legacy. In Forster's novel, the pea-planting episode is the closest Sawston ever comes to nature.

The differences between Sawston and Monteriano are vital to Forster's ideas, for the spiritual journey that Philip and Caroline make is dependent on their recognition of Sawston's limitations as revealed by their increasing awareness of the complexity of life that Monteriano displays. Sturridge fails to explore Forster's ideas because he does not develop the Sawston/Monteriano contrast. He often gets one half of the contrast right, but that becomes pointless without the other half. Mrs Herriton, for example, is excellently portrayed as a symbol of Sawston's values. The stiffness of Barbara Jefford's posture and corsetry, her immaculately but severely coiffured hair, her habitually supercilious expression, and her crisp articulation form superb symbolic codes for deciphering her character. In addition, the screenplay introduces original incidents and dialogue that effectively contribute to the physical impression made by Barbara Jefford. Mrs Herriton's line, "Harriet, tell cook I expect lunch to be served at one o'clock, precisely," suggests the punctilious inflexibility and dull domestic routine of Sawston, and reveals Mrs Herriton's imperious command of her adult children. The map of Italy with flagged pins marking the towns Lilia and Caroline have visited works effectively not only as montage controlling time but as a symbol of Mrs Herriton's clinical, methodical mind. It also provides Barbara Jefford with the line, "I've got glue all over my fingers,"

her delivery of which reveals a finicky distaste for anything messy.

However astute Sturridge's portrait of Mrs Herriton might be, as a vehicle for Forster's ideas it becomes a meaningless exercise without the development of a contrasting Monteriano and Gino. Sturridge uses a soft-filter lens shot of Monteriano in the distance which effectively suggests the "fantastic ship city of a dream" (38), but no closer shots establish the thrusting, phallic nature of its towers, their capacity to link heaven and hell, or the views they offer. Of their history, no mention is made. The church of Santa Deodata is shown, but her legend is not told. The architecture of mind, body and soul around the Piazza is eschewed, as is the Poggibonzi distich and Caroline's dream vision. The patrons of the opera are enthusiastic and appreciative, but the opera house itself is tasteful and elegant. And Gino is thoroughly white-washed. In Forster's novel, our first impressions of Gino, although filtered through the perception of Philip's social snobbery (which is in stark contrast to his theoretical appreciation of Italians), are not favourable. Although "very good looking", he is "short and broad" (36). His hands,

which were not particularly clean . . . did not get cleaner by fidgeting amongst the shining slabs of hair. His starched cuffs were not clean either, and as for his suit, it had obviously been bought for the occasion as something really English -- a gigantic check, which did not even fit.

His handkerchief he had forgotten, but never missed it (sic). (40)

He is brutal with the cat, and spits on the floor (42). The only similarity between Gino in the film and Gino in Forster's novel is the large check suit, but even that fits with Saville Row perfection. Giovanni Guidelli is not particularly short, and certainly not broad. He is, in fact, exceptionally beautiful. His hair was not greased for the film, he does not sniff or spit, and is particularly gentle to the cat. The collar and cuffs of his costume are so immaculately white that one film critic remarked that Where Angels Fear to Tread, "A story about fine ironies and 'fine' behaviour becomes a genre exercise in fine acting and even

finer linen" (Walker 1298). The laxity of Gino's domestic arrangements, his indifference to time -- Perfetta does not know when Gino will be home (98), Gino suddenly remembers "that Perfetta had heated water an hour ago" (124) -- are not included in Sturridge's film. Gino's living room which in Forster's text has "Food, bedclothes, patent-leather boots, dirty plates and knives, . . . strewn over a large table and on the floor" (115), is in Sturridge's film relatively tidy. A few crumpled shirts (apparently spotlessly clean) are all that is evident of Forster's "shocking mess" (115).

It is not only in areas that invite direct contrast to Mrs Herriton that Gino is falsified. Virtually every aspect of his character that invites disapprobation is expunged from Sturridge's film, thus reducing the moral complexity of Monteriano that is so central to Forster's novel. Gino's cupidity, revealed in his first interview with Philip, is transformed into good humour in Sturridge's film. In Forster's novel, Gino experiences a range of emotions: "avarice . . . insolence . . . politeness . . . cunning" (46) before he is overcome by laughter. Sturridge has him laughing from Philip's first mention of a reward: he continues to laugh as Philip increases the amount offered. Gino is thus seen as playing an amusing game, rather than regretting missed opportunities. Other financial details are expurgated too. Sturridge does not show Gino becoming "terribly depressed" about the lawyer's letter ordering Lilia to "disgorge a large sum of money for Irma" (51), neither is any allusion made to the narrator's claim that "all Gino cared about . . . was idleness and pocket money" (53). The edge is taken off Italy's male chauvinism because Gino and Spiridione's conversation about Lilia is played in Italian. Forster uses it to reveal that in Italy a wife is considered a "possession" (53) whose most important attributes are wealth, blonde hair, and youth. Even the fight scene is softened in Sturridge's film. Gino tries to kill Philip, but his sadistic torture -- alternating his attacks between Philip's broken arm and windpipe to deny him even the release of fainting -- is not shown.

Gino's character is flattened not only because unflattering details are omitted,

but also because his passionate love of his baby is not fully explored. This is particularly apparent in the scene of Caroline's visit "to try for the baby" (114). Sturridge includes virtually all Forster's dialogue, except the details of Gino's devotion: "when he [the baby] was ill I dare not let her [Perfetta] touch him. When he has to be washed . . . who does it? I. I feed him . . . I sleep with him and comfort him when he is unhappy in the night. No one talks, no one may sing to him but I" (122). Sturridge also uses virtually all of Forster's actions, except the moment "when Gino lifted his son to his lips", an action which the narrator notes was "something too remote from the prettiness of the nursery. The man was majestic; he was a part of Nature; in no ordinary love scene could he ever be so great" (125). Forster stresses the elemental and spiritual qualities of Gino's love for his child in a tableau that associates Gino with nature, and uses as image the iconography of Italian Renaissance art.

There she [Caroline] sat, with twenty miles of view behind her, and he [Gino] placed the dripping baby on her knee. It shone now with health and beauty; it seemed to reflect light, like a copper vessel. Just such a baby Bellini sets languid on his mother's lap, or Signorelli flings wriggling on pavements of marble, or Lorenzo di Credi, more reverent but less divine, lays carefully among flowers, with his head upon a wisp of golden straw. For a time Gino contemplated them standing. Then, to get a better view, he knelt by the side of the chair, with his hands before him.

So they were when Philip entered, and saw, to all intents and purposes, the Virgin and Child, with Donor. (126)

Sturridge, inexplicably, has turned the scene into one of sentimental domesticity. It is not even enacted on the loggia -- a loggia, one is forced to observe, that has a perfectly fine twenty mile, Renaissance look-alike view. Instead of a view, Sturridge provides a Welsh dresser full of domestic utensils. The baby is lying, wrapped, on a table. Miss Abbott is reduced to kitchy-cooing, while Gino grins

on, inanely.

The exclusion of the view in this scene is indicative of Sturridge's general failure to give nature the symbolic weight accorded it by Forster. Some of the novel's natural images are filmed, but no connections or comparisons are made. The violent storm in the wood is exploited for its Gothic effect, but the violets are never shown. Olive groves and vineyards are carefully included, but Mrs Herriton does not plant peas. The sky is ignored. The final blow to the contrast between Sawston and Monteriano is Sturridge's inclusion of totally unjustified shots of lush, verdant English countryside, and a wonderful weathered-stone church complete with Gothic arches, set amidst ancient trees. Forster deliberately confined Sawston to interior scenes, deliberately avoided anything that spoke of history or art, deliberately mentioned details only of the depressingly ugly St James's in order to emphasise the differences between Sawston and Monteriano. Sturridge couldn't resist including anything that would make his film prettier. And very pretty it is, too -- a perfect example of what The Guardian Weekly called "Laura Ashley lookalike movies" (Feb. 26 - March 4, 1993).

Sturridge's Where Angels Fear to Tread "lacks resonance" because Sturridge failed to explore the complexities of Forster's ideas. It resembles "life as we would prefer it to be" because Sturridge failed to explore the complexities of Forster's plot. In a 1905 letter to Trevelyan, Forster claimed that Where Angels Fear to Tread was about "the improvement of Philip" (Appendix, WAFTT 161). This improvement is the result of an intricate combination of emotions and events, and is convincingly portrayed by Forster as a series of advances and partial retreats, rather than a linear progression. The series begins before the events of the novel and will, the narrator implies, continue after the novel's conclusion.

Philip, innately intelligent and blessed with both a sense of beauty and a sense of humour, is nonetheless a victim of Mrs Herriton's upbringing and has

absorbed Sawston's snobbery, hypocrisy, and simplistic morality. He has a voyeuristic tendency to observe life without engaging in it: his aesthetic springs from the head, not the heart, incorporating "olive-trees, blue sky, frescoes, country-inns, saints, peasants, mosaics, statues, beggars" (70). The anticlimactic inclusion of "beggars" reveals its unrealistic absurdity. Based as it is on a spurious notion of Romance, Philip's improvement, after his first trip to Italy at twenty-two, suffers a rapid set-back. Having returned with "the air of a prophet who would either remodel Sawston or reject it", he soon recognizes that "Nothing had happened either in Sawston or within himself" (70). His enthusiasm for Italy remains intact until he is forced by Lilia's marriage to recognize the dichotomy that exists between his theoretical love of Italians and his willingness to embrace them as relatives. Although Philip believes that Italy "was ruined for him" (71), the narrator reveals that Philip's first rescue mission has had positive effects: the redemptive power of nature has begun to work its magic -- Philip will remember the violets in the little wood; and the "spurious sentiment" (37), which Philip had mistaken for Romance, begins leaving him when he is told that Gino's father is a dentist. Philip is unaware of the improvement: Lilia's death fills him "with pangs of final disillusion" (71). It is indeed the last time he will be disillusioned by Italy, but it is not his "final" disillusion for, while Philip's spurious love of Italy has been destroyed to allow genuine love to develop, his spurious rebellion against Sawston remains, and it too must go before his real improvement can progress. Philip's final disillusion occurs when his mother uses her insincerity against him, and in one moment "an impenetrable barrier [is] erected between them" (83). The blow to his vanity enables him to see her for what she is, a "well-ordered, active, useless machine" (84). Thus freed of both spurious love and spurious hatred, Philip sets out on his second rescue mission believing that though he "might be a puppet's puppet . . . he knew exactly the disposition of the strings" (90). It turns out that he does not know exactly the disposition of the strings, for Harriet has been sent to

see that Philip obeys his mother's orders. This further blow to his vanity leads directly to his realization of the "solid enchantment" of Italy, awaiting only "a little influx into him of virtue" (91). Mrs Herriton has been responsible for two blows to Philip's vanity: Gino's apology, relayed by Caroline, appeases it (103). Philip, his face "suffused with pleasure" feels that "romance had come back to Italy; there were no cads in her; she was beautiful, courteous, lovable, as of old" (103). But his sentiments are not quite the "old" ones; now he feels Italy's romance, not Romance. And if the "admirable change in Philip proceeds from nothing admirable," the narrator advises that "angels and other practical people will accept it reverently, and write it down as good" (103). Philip's improvement proceeds apace. The enchantment of the opera, and Gino's spontaneous affection bring Philip to a realization that in England he has behaved like an ass (112). The "access of joy" that the theatre brings makes him "more anxious than heretofore to be charitable towards the world" (130). When he sees Caroline, Gino and the baby as the Virgin and Child with Donor, an unwanted humility descends upon him: he realizes that "some strange thing had happened which he could not presume to understand" (126). His conversation with Caroline in Santa Deodata's leads him to acknowledge Caroline's spiritual superiority: he becomes content to "profit by her tenderness and wisdom" (132). After the death of Gino's baby he recognizes that, morally, he is the major culprit, that the tragedy occurred because he was "cowardly and idle" (148). When Caroline intervenes to save his life he is inspired to "an earnest desire to be good through the example of this good woman. He would try henceforward to be worthy of the things she had revealed. Quietly, without hysterical prayers or banging of drums, he underwent conversion. He was saved" (152).

By the end of the novel, however, Philip has, once again, partially retreated: "Life was greater than he supposed, but it was even less complete. He had seen the need for strenuous work and for righteousness. And now he saw what a

very little way those things would go" (155). That Philip has reverted to viewing life as a spectator is emphasised by the verbs "seen" and "saw". When Caroline confesses her love for Gino, Philip believes that "the thing was even greater than she imagined. Nobody but himself would ever see round it now. And to see round it he was standing at an immense distance" (160). When she insists that he is not to blame; that her love for Gino is rooted in sexual passion, Philip believes that "Out of this wreck there was revealed to him something indestructible -- something which she, who had given it, could never take away" (160). Again the verbs "see", "saw", and "revealed" insist on his rôle as spectator. Although Philip's improvement has been followed by a partial retreat, the seeds of future improvement have been planted. He has decided to live in London, away from the negative influences of his mother and Sawston; he will correspond with Caroline; he will visit Italy regularly. The narrator reveals that each time he goes to Italy, Gino will "turn [his life] inside out, remodel it" (153). The pathos of the novel's conclusion is Forster's "homage to the complexity of life" (104): there are no simple solutions, no pat endings. Life is "even greater than . . . imagined" (160).

Sturridge is so busy telling the story that he misses the main point of it. And once again, his knack for getting things half-right is evident in his treatment of Philip. There are a number of references in the screenplay to Philip's previous infatuation with Italy, but none to his initial rebellion against Sawston. The scene in which it would most naturally have been revealed -- the train trip to London -- is one of the worst in the film. It is inexplicably translocated to before Lilia's death. The compartment in which Philip and Caroline sit is crowded with other passengers. Philip, far from being "delighted" (76) to discover that Caroline shares his contempt for Sawston, is evidently embarrassed, and tries in vain to discourage her chatter by pretending to read. The disparity between Philip's avowed love of Italians and his reaction to Gino is shown, but by white-washing Gino the humour of Forster's account is lost.

Philip gives no “cry of personal disgust and pain”, when Caroline reveals that Gino’s father is a dentist (37), nor is there any chance of Rupert Graves’s face revealing that Philip’s spurious Romanticism is beginning to leave him because the camera is focussed on the countryside while the disclosure is made. When the camera should be focussed on the countryside to show a wood full of violets, it is fixed firmly on Philip and Caroline’s faces. Of the improvements prompted by Philip’s wounded vanity, Sturridge shows only one. After the opera, Philip acknowledges that he has behaved like an ass, and that Gino is perfectly charming. Unfortunately, Philip is drunk, so his improvement seems induced by alcohol rather than the magic of the opera and Gino’s spontaneous affection. Philip never recognizes how shallow his mother is, and although Harriet does say that she is accompanying Philip to see that he does his duty, she does not add Forster’s, “So mother told me” (91), so its force is lost. Philip is seen to respond with pleasure to Caroline’s account of Gino’s apology, but Sturridge deflects interest from any improvement of Philip’s by concluding the incident with a shot of Caroline smirking in amused triumph at having exposed Philip’s inconsistency.

Sturridge evidently recognized the spiritual dimension of Where Angels Fear to Tread. He attempts to establish Caroline as the novel’s spiritual emblem by seating her in Santa Deodata’s in front of a bank of votive candles which cast a halo of shimmering light around her. In one of the film’s best moments, Harriet, sneering and shaking her head with disgust, removes a framed picture of the Virgin and Child from the wall of her room in the Stella d’Italia and shoves it under the bed, thus revealing her fanatical religious intolerance, and marking her as an anti-life force. What Sturridge fails to do is use Forster’s religious images to mark the critical epiphanic moments in Philip’s spiritual journey. The Virgin and Child with Donor tableau is reduced to mundane domesticity more apt to Sawston, and Gino and Caroline do not form a Pieta after Caroline stops the fight. Philip clearly improves in Sturridge’s film: his snobbery evaporates;

he becomes less pretentious, more tolerant; he acknowledges responsibility for the death of Gino's baby. Why he has improved is less clear for the important milestones have not been marked. There is also no indication of his regression to spectator. Sturridge's final scene, which shows Philip and Caroline embracing fervently, reveals exactly how insensitive Sturridge is to Forster's subtleties. The length of the embrace, which continues despite the arrival of Mrs Herriton, suggests that there not only can, but probably will, be a happy-ever-after; that despite Caroline's declaration of love for Gino, she and Philip will eventually find emotional and physical fulfilment in each other. Not only does this embrace do injustice to Forster's portrayal of Philip by making him an active participant, it also falsifies Caroline's position. Forster reveals that Philip's tragedy is Caroline's, too. The novel's final vision of her is as the moon goddess, repining for the love of Endymion whom she can embrace only in sleep. For Caroline, dreams of Gino will be the closest she comes to realizing her sexual potential: her only lasting connection to Monteriano will be her similarity to its patron saint in her capacity for passive endurance. Sturridge cannot accept Forster's bleak vision of Caroline's future, so he substitutes a "life as we would prefer it to be" one.

Sturridge does not accept Forster's view of Harriet either. In Forster's novel, Harriet like Philip and Caroline, is both a product and a victim of Sawston, but, devoid of either Caroline's sensitivity or Philip's humour and aesthetic sense, she is a caricature of the worst that Sawston can produce. Forster uses her as a vehicle for his social satire: she is the butt of much of his narratorial wit, her conversation reflecting her meagre intellectual, imaginative, and emotional equipment. Forster has most fun with her in Chapter 5. "Harriet was always unfortunate" (110), the narrator declares, as a bouquet of flowers strikes her in the chest during the opera. It is a marvellous understatement. On the journey to Monteriano, Harriet loses her crochet (106), and misplaces her sponge-bag. She twice gets a smut in her eye; her sketch book is stolen; the bottle of

ammonia in her suitcase bursts over her prayerbook which then stains all her clothes with purple splotches; and the train journey from Bologna to Florence is undertaken in the company of a train-sick child and a fat lady who sweats profusely (90). In the course of a twenty-four hour rest-stop in Bologna, children blow "bladder whistles night and day" in celebration of a religious festival; the room she is given in a smelly hotel is directly opposite a belfry "which saluted her slumbering form every quarter of an hour", and two puppies sleep on her bed (90). Amidst this riot of humour virtually every unpleasant facet of her character is revealed. Convinced of her moral superiority (Gino "must be loathsome", Caroline "has learnt her lesson" [89]), Harriet is sanctimonious (travelling to Monteriano "upsets one's plans terribly . . . but obviously it is my duty"), sectarian ("What a religion!" [90]), xenophobic ("Foreigners are a filthy nation" [90]), and given to delivering smug platitudes as if they were holy truths (infidelity is the "supreme test. The man who is unchivalrous to a woman -- " [93]). Totally devoid of humour, she adopts an air of martyrdom when faced with anything she does not understand ("I'm not clever, Philip. I don't go in for it, as you know. But I know what's rude. And I know what's wrong" [96]). She creates an embarrassing scene at the Stella d'Italia during which her rudeness and bad temper are displayed: "'Leave me alone,' said Harriet, snarling round at them. 'I don't care for the lot of you. I'm English'" (96). A chauvinistic philistine, she resigns herself to going to the opera only because Philip mentions Sir Walter Scott, then does her best to ruin everyone else's enjoyment. She is also grasping and materialistic ("try . . . to get poor Lilia's silver bangles . . . And there is an inlaid box I lent her -- lent, not gave" [106]). There is nothing in Forster's description of her that suggests a single redeeming feature, except bravery, and that is linked to qualities which are frightening: "her eyes glowed with anger and resolution. For she was a straight brave woman, as well as a peevish one" (93). Listed baldly, Harriet's character flaws are a catalogue of terror. Forster's light satirical tone initially

deflects attention from the terror, but as “comedy modulates . . . [into] nightmare” (Stallybrass, Intro. WAFIT), Harriet is revealed for what she is: a “bony prophetess” (142). Like Deborah she is a patriotic woman, like Judith or Jael, she is a slayer of men (Brenner, 111 - 13). Explicitly contrasted to Caroline and the Virgin Mary (142), she neither nurtures, loves, nor redeems, for she is a loveless religious fanatic. Capable of performing an act of immense evil under the guise of righteousness, she is incapable of recognizing her own sin. Harriet, fuelled by “ill-temper . . . fortified by her religion” (146), steals Gino’s baby. The baby’s death causes her only a brief “paroxysm of illness and remorse” (155) during which she speaks “more of the inlaid box that she had lent Lilia -- lent, not given -- than of recent troubles” (146). She quickly returns to normal. “She had been ‘thoroughly upset’, as she phrased it but Already she spoke of ‘this unlucky accident’ and ‘the mysterious frustration of one’s attempts to make things better’. . . . Harriet . . . considered the affair as settled” (155 - 56).

Sturridge manages well with flat characters: his depiction of Harriet is excellent -- until the end of the film. For Sturridge would prefer good to be rewarded and evil to be punished, so he forces Forster’s novel to meet his preferences. The first and final view of Harriet after the death of Gino’s baby is on the platform at Sawston station. She is a Harriet transformed by remorse. Broken, humbled, and ill, she refuses Philip’s offer of something warm to drink in a flat monotone, never lifting her eyes from her lap. She has to be supported to the waiting carriage, and almost collapses as she reaches it.

By implying that Caroline and Philip will be rewarded, and that Harriet has been punished and transformed, Sturridge destroys the pathos of Forster’s conclusion and reveals himself as much a victim of spurious Romanticism as ever Philip was.

The third hall-mark of comic-book movies -- their dependence on other films -- is particularly apparent in Sturridge’s Where Angels Fear to Tread. What

follows is the Sturridge recipe for turning a “flawless” novel into a “comic-book movie”.

Step 1. Assemble the ingredients. Cast in the major rôles performers who have experience in Forsterian adaptations: Helena Bonham Carter from Merchant Ivory’s A Room with a View, Maurice and Howards End as Caroline; Judy Davis from Lean’s A Passage to India as Harriet; Rupert Graves from Merchant Ivory’s A Room with a View and Maurice as Philip. (Ignore the fact that Graves has neither Philip’s weedy height nor weak chin.) Hope that any lack of directorial effort will be compensated for by these performers’ experience.

This gamble nearly paid off. Certainly Sturridge’s Where Angels Fear to Tread would have been considerably worse than it is without the solid performances of its experienced cast. But even experienced performers are not infallible, and when mis-delivered lines go unnoticed, it is fair to impute directorial negligence. There are two significant examples of this in Sturridge’s film. When Caroline sees Gino’s baby, Bonham Carter instead of saying, “Five months, no, six. Of course . . . six”, interchanges the numbers: “Six months, no, five. Of course . . . five. Still, a remarkably fine child for his age.” There can be no chance of her “condescension” (119) emerging when the lines do not even make logical sense. The second instance occurs when Philip tells Caroline of his intention to visit Gino the following spring. Graves transposes the words “wife’s” and “new” to add a puzzling distraction to the dialogue: “Perhaps we shall paint the town red with some of his wife’s new money.”

Step 2. Mash a novel. This can be roughly done. As long as the story-line remains intact, there is no need to worry about silly details like plot, characterization or theme. Hope that if the cinematography is lush enough, viewers will be glazed enough not to notice any inconsistencies.

A sad miscalculation, this. The inconsistencies are so startling that not even a doughnut, that most glazed of articles, could miss them. To list them all would

be tedious: a few must suffice to suggest the range. Sturridge carefully establishes the existence of Mr Kingcroft and Mrs Theobald in the opening scene, then abandons them. Apart from Mrs Theobald's letter announcing Lilia's engagement, they are never heard of again. This is dissatisfying because the viewer is left with puzzling questions: why does Mrs Theobald not rescue her daughter, or take an interest in her grandson? Who is Mr Kingcroft? Of Forster's manifold uses for these characters, Sturridge takes no account. Forster uses details of Lilia's amorous fling with Mr Kingcroft to prepare the reader for her sudden engagement to Gino by revealing her longing for romantic attachment. Lilia's desperate letter to Mr Kingcroft begging him to rescue her, its interception and destruction by the postman, at Gino's request, serve to emphasize her increasing isolation, explain her resignation, and add a further dimension to the male chauvinism of Italian society. Mrs Herriton's comment that Mrs Theobald "is breaking up very quickly. She doesn't even see Mr Kingcroft now. He, thank goodness, has at last consoled himself with someone else" (72), explains why neither of them help Lilia. Mrs Herriton's knowledge of Mrs Theobald's ill-health reveals her hypocrisy when she attempts to exonerate herself from responsibility once the news of Lilia's baby leaks out: "Possibly his grandmother may be doing something" (81). She tries to fob off Caroline by saying that "Any initiative would naturally come from Mrs Theobald", a ploy that Caroline sees through immediately: "But does not Mrs Theobald always take any initiative from you?" (81). Sturridge uses none of these references. While Mr Kingcroft's presence at the station might be argued to be simply contributing to the "whirl" (19) of leave-taking, Mrs Theobald's cannot be explained so easily as Sturridge is at pains to identify her fully, even to the point of including dialogue not in Forster's text: Lilia is given the lines: "Goodbye, mother. Don't cry. I'll only be gone for three months. I'll write every week, I promise." There is an uneasy sense that plans to use the characters more fully were dropped, but that care was not taken to rework the

opening scene to obviate the resultant problem. The inconsistency in this case arises from inclusion, in the case of Harriet's attitude to Caroline it arises from exclusion.

Sturridge excluded Harriet's vacation in the Tirol, which, in Forster's text, takes place immediately after the arrival of Gino's postcard to Irma. Harriet is thus absent when Irma breaks her vow of secrecy, and Harriet's knowledge of Caroline's manipulations is filtered through the insincerity of Mrs Herriton's letters in which she claims that "Caroline Abbott has been wonderful" (89). It is thus perfectly natural that Harriet should be delighted to find Caroline at the Stella d'Italia. In the film, however, Harriet's enthusiastic embrace of Caroline is totally inexplicable for it is inconceivable that Harriet, in Sawston, could have had no knowledge of Caroline's true part in initiating the second rescue mission.

A third inconsistency arises from transferred dialogue. In both novel and film, when Irma receives a postcard from her "lital brother" (78) there is a scuffle for possession between Harriet and Irma. In the novel Irma begins shouting: "Who is my little brother? Why have I never heard of him before? Grandmamma! Grandmamma! Who is my little brother? Who is my -- " (78). At this point Mrs Herriton sweeps into the room, saying: "Come with me, dear, and I will tell you. Now it is time for you to know" (78). In the film, Mrs Herriton sweeps into the room, saying: "Irma. Come with me, dear. So, whose team are you on this week? Miss Ethel or Miss May's?" Mrs Herriton's question is borrowed from earlier in the novel when, after receiving the engagement letter, she sends Harriet off to the bank: "Go, dear, at once; do not talk. I see Irma coming back . . . Well, Irma, dear, and whose team are you in this afternoon, Miss Edith's or Miss May's?" (28) In its original context the question is unremarkable. Its transference to the postcard scene is absurd. Not even a nine year old would fall for such an obvious diversional ploy after hearing for the first time that she has a baby brother.

Sturridge's screenplay is about as sloppy as a screenplay can get, and no

amount of lush cinematography can disguise it.

Step 3. Half-bake, in someone else's oven.

The oven Sturridge chose was Merchant Ivory's; it is not only cast that he culled from their successful Forsterian adaptations. Virtually every facet of his film echoes Merchant Ivory's approach, from "Leisurely pace . . . [to] picturesque appearance" (Sterritt 1583), but like most copies it is never more than a second-rate imitation.

CHAPTER II

HOWARDS END

In bringing Howards End to the screen, Merchant Ivory faced a far greater challenge than that faced by Sturridge, for Howards End is far more complex than Where Angels Fear to Tread.

Forster stated in a letter to Forrest Reid that in writing Howards End he was “exhaustingly” “trying to connect up and use all the fragments [he] was born with” (qtd. in Das x). Indeed, although the themes of Howards End can be summarized by its famous epigraph, “only connect . . .”, the immensity of Forster's undertaking is revealed as soon as the list of what is to be connected is considered. “Only connect . . .” is a plea to reconcile not only “the prose and the passion, the seen and the unseen, the practical mind and the intellectual, the outer life and the inner” (Stallybrass, Intro. HE 10) but also male and female, Germany and England, rich and poor.

Although relative importance is difficult to quantify, it is probably true to say that the most important of these concerns, both in terms of the novel's design and its achievement, is the unseen. From a film-maker's perspective this is, obviously, unfortunate. Film is a superb medium for seeing, the unseen tends to evade its grasp. Yet, for Forster's ideas to be realized, Howards End -- both the title and central symbol of Forster's text -- must become more than a charming country house. It must become a spiritual place where the soul finds a home. Howards End is England in microcosm. The inheritance of Howards End, the major concern of the plot, is the central question of the novel: “Who shall inherit England?”

While the spiritual dimensions of the novel present the greatest challenge to a film-maker, the difficulties of filming Howards End extend beyond even this, for Howards End, unique in the Fosterian canon in that it alone “grapples head-on with the claims of the ‘outer world’, confronting problems of economics and

social class in a society transformed by industrial growth and shadowed by approaching war" (Rosecrance 111), is also pivotal in giving final expression to thematic concerns of the earlier novels and looking forward to ideas that were more fully developed in A Passage to India.

As a result, Howards End is pervaded by a tension generated by the contending claims of a belief in the values of liberal humanism, and a growing pessimism about approaching "cosmopolitanism . . . [under which] we shall receive no help from the earth" (256-57). It is a pessimism which for Forster evoked a vision of negation that rendered liberal humanism inadequate, human effort futile, and language impotent. The tension thus generated is displayed in a "disjunction between Forster's avowed purpose of reconciliation and its accomplishment in the action" (Rosecrance 114).

Critics have not been slow to point to the effects of this disjunction, citing Helen's affair, Margaret's marriage, Leonard's death, Ruth Wilcox's character, and an unsatisfactory conclusion ⁵ as examples of the subordination of "plausible action and psychology to an ideological pattern" (Hardy, qtd. in Conradi 437). Considering the plethora of putative flaws ascribed to Howards End, it is, perhaps, astonishing that it should be considered by many readers, following Trilling ⁶, Forster's best work ⁷, and by virtually every other his second best. That it should be so, is testament to the success of the novel's spiritual dimension, and Forster's skill as omniscient narrator.

In none of Forster's novels is the narrator exactly self-effacing, but the narrator in Howards End is intrusive, personal, and self-conscious to a degree

⁵ This is by no means a comprehensive list, merely an indication of the problems most commonly identified, and the ones to which I will confine the discussion that follows.

⁶ Trilling later changed his mind: In a letter to Oliver Stallybrass dated 3 June 1973, he acknowledged A Passage to India as Forster's finest novel (Stallybrass, Intro. HE 16).

⁷ In 1958, at least, Forster shared this view, writing in The Commonplace Book: "Howards End my best novel and approaching a good novel." Forster did, however, change his mind, giving the honours to The Longest Journey in 1960, and seeming to give equal weight to Howards End and A Passage to India in his diary entry of 6 June 1965 (qtd. in Stallybrass, Intro. HE 16). Howards End is, interestingly, Ruth Jhabvala's favourite Forster novel (Annan 3).

remarkable even in Forster's work. By turns lyrical, didactic, philosophic, witty, ironic, argumentative, intimate, sly, coy, cajoling, and chatty, the narrator in Howards End is also extraordinary in his insistence on eroding the boundaries between fiction and reality by implying a life for his characters beyond the confines of the fictional construct, and suggesting the potential for relationships between characters and reader. The versatility and intensity of the narrator suggests that Forster, aware of "disjunction", tries "to bridge the gap . . . by the insistence of his presence, to cover his inconsistencies . . . by the sheer weight of his rhetoric as narrator" (Rosecrance 134). The popularity of Howards End attests to his success.

From a film-maker's point of view, however, Peter Bates's comment that Howards End seems "difficult to transfer to commercial cinema" (608) must be considered an understatement of note. What is a film-maker to do with a thematically ambitious novel that has flawed characters, and an implausible plot and sub-plot held together by the voice of an intrusive narrator?

What Merchant Ivory do with it is to reverse what Forster did. Putative flaws of plot and characterization are smoothed out; philosophic comments and rhetoric, even where included in dialogue in Forster's text, are largely eschewed, and, ironically, considering that film as a medium so easily suggests the existence of "real" life beyond the confines of the screen, they have insisted that they are dealing with a construct.

This seems an astonishing decision, especially given that "Adapting a good novel to the screen is usually a no-win proposition. If the adaptors are 'unfaithful' to the text, they are branded illiterates, and if deemed too literal, they are condemned for neglecting the aesthetic imperatives of the motion picture medium" (Sarris, Room 1177). Interestingly, however, Merchant Ivory's achievement is also virtually a reversal of Forster's achievement. Plot, character and action become highly convincing vehicles through which Forster's themes are explored; all except the spiritual. Forster's most brilliant success is

Merchant Ivory's major failure.

In examining how this happens, "one may as well begin" (19), as Forster did, with Helen, for the problem most frequently identified by Forster's critics is the inconceivability (the pun is too delicious to resist) of Helen's pregnancy.

Objection to it was most memorably articulated by Katherine Mansfield who wondered "whether Helen was got with child by Leonard Bast or by his fatal forgotten umbrella. All things considered, I think it must have been the umbrella" (qtd. in Colmer, E.M. Forster 108). Forster's publishers, Edward Arnold, were, however, the first to express dissatisfaction. Forster seemed to concur, replying in writing, "I am afraid I agree with you about Helen" (Stallybrass, Intro. HE 12), but he did not change the draft. In a 1950 interview, he explained this decision:

INTERVIEWERS (sic). I have also never felt comfortable about Leonard Bast's seduction of Helen in Howards End. It is such a sudden affair. It seems as though we are not told enough about it for it to be convincing. One might say that it came off allegorically but not realistically.

FORSTER. I think you might be right. I did it like that out of a wish to have surprises. It has to be a surprise for Margaret, and this was best done by making it a surprise for the reader too. Too much may have been sacrificed to this. (qtd. in Stallybrass, Intro. HE 14)

Forster is, I believe, incorrect in suggesting that the surprise element is the root of the problem, for he prepared the ground very thoroughly. Helen's impulsiveness, and her propensity for being attracted to men totally different from herself, is evidenced in her brief liaison with Paul. The ease with which Henry undermines her convictions about suffrage and equality, and her adolescent enjoinders to burn her letters, reveals an immaturity that does not, however, preclude a measure of self-awareness; she is correct in telling Margaret that she "can only entice and be enticed" (195), but cannot form an

equal partnership with a man. Helen's eventual explanation of the affair is also psychologically convincing. Her desire to exact revenge on Henry Wilcox, her pity for Leonard, her enthusiasm for justice, her own loneliness, the intimacy of night, and her anger over Paul's treatment of her (304-305) provide motives enough for her moment of madness. Helen's interview with Tibby after the seduction also provides a clutch of clues about what has happened. Even the obtuse Tibby recognizes that "his sister had altered", that she has "the look of a sailor who has lost everything at sea" (247). She appears to him "ceaselessly beautiful" (250). When Tibby asks her "whether anything had gone wrong at Evie's wedding", she replies, "Not there," and starts crying (248). Tibby notes that her tears are not the tears of her normal hysteria, but "something unusual . . . such as music" (248). That the major crisis in Helen's life is neither Henry's adultery nor Leonard's unemployment is further emphasised when Tibby walks Helen to the station: "she retold the crisis in a meditative way which might have made other men curious. She was seeing whether it would hold" (252). In the continuation of this paragraph, the implications become insistent:

He asked her once why she had taken the Basts right into the heart of Evie's wedding. She stopped like a frightened animal and said, "Does that seem to you so odd?" Her eyes, the hand laid on the mouth, quite haunted him, until they were absorbed into the figure of St Mary the Virgin, before whom he paused for a moment on the walk home. (252)

The image of Mary not only anticipates the discovery of Helen's pregnancy, it also prepares for the redemptive rôle assigned to Helen's son at the close of the novel.

Helen's pregnancy might be a surprise to Margaret; it should not be a surprise to the attentive reader, yet it is. Two factors mitigate against the clues Forster provided. Of prime importance is the person and personality of Leonard Bast. It is very difficult to imagine Helen being sexually attracted to him, however fleetingly. The second is the setting. The George denies the possibility of sex

occurring in a spontaneous moment, and offers no romantic ambience to arouse the senses. Connected to this is a lack of emotional probability, for the conversation in which they are engaged in the coffee-room is more likely to have a castrating effect on Leonard, than arouse him. Helen snubs him (233), patronizes him (234), and finally preaches philosophy to him (236-237) which he cannot understand and which leaves him feeling stupid (237).

Ruth Jhabvala cancels the surprise element by addressing both these factors in the screenplay. She overcomes the problems of physical and emotional probability by introducing a daylight boating scene. Helen and Leonard, instead of staying in the coffee-room "listening to the murmurings of the river" (237), row down a sleepy river whose thickly vegetated banks provide a dense screen. An establishing shot shows Jacky (in her particularly unlovely undergarments) at the window of her room at the George, watching Leonard and Helen row out of sight. Jhabvala's dialogue for the river scene, while retaining the sense of Helen's passionate belief in the individual, and the value of personal relationships, is remarkably different from Forster's, particularly in the extent to which philosophical ideas are simplified and concretized. Gone are the abstract musings about 'I' in the centre of the head, and the relationship between love and death. In their place is the following:

LEONARD. I didn't have to marry her but I did. My family wouldn't have anything to do with us; they tried to stop me. But I married her all the same . . . because I promised. If I hadn't, where would she be today after the Mr Wilcoxes of this world had finished with her?

HELEN. It would never, never, not in a thousand years, enter that man's mind that he had done anything wrong. Because there's nothing here (pointing to her head), and nothing here (pointing to her heart). And you're the opposite. You believe in personal responsibility and personal everything.

LEONARD. Very nice. What good am I to myself, or to Jacky, marrying

her only to pull her down with me so we can starve together?

HELEN. You'll find another position somewhere; surely you will?

LEONARD. You don't know what you're talking about. If rich people fail at one profession they can try another. But with us, once a man over twenty loses his own particular job, he's done for.

HELEN. I'd do anything in the world to help you.

LEONARD. Well, help me row then. I'm tired.

(Helen moves next to Leonard and begins rowing.)

LEONARD. You're the one person who has ever helped me.

HELEN. You mean by passing on false information to make you give up your job.

LEONARD. I mean by being the sort of person you are. I didn't think people like you existed except in books, and books aren't real.

HELEN. Books are more real than anything. When people fail you, there's still music and meaning.

LEONARD. That's for rich people, to make them feel good after their dinner.

HELEN. Everything's got spoiled for you, hasn't it. (She releases her hold on the oar, and touches Leonard's face as she says this. They embrace.)

The romantic river setting provides a physical context which heightens the possibility of sex occurring. This possibility is further heightened by action, asynchronic sound, and dialogue. As Helen moves to take her place at the oars, the music swells into melody. Leonard, moving to make place for her beside him, retains his hold on both oars so that as Helen slips into the seat his arm encircles her until she takes the oar from him. Their first physical contact is thus presented as completely natural. Leonard is less likely to feel emasculated because the intellectual gulf separating him from Helen is underplayed in Jhabvala's dialogue. By focussing on Leonard's marital and professional plight;

the dialogue emphasises Helen's feelings of guilt and pity. Pity is so often akin to love that the embrace with which the scene ends seems natural, as does the subsequent coupling -- not shown, but hinted at as the boat carrying the embracing pair drifts, and disappears, into a thickly overgrown bank as the music once again swells, and rallentandos.

More important than the boating scene, however, is Jhabvala and Ivory's treatment of Leonard's character, which is divested of the flaws that mark it in Forster's novel. Forster does not applaud Leonard's attempt to gain culture. This is not because Forster is unsympathetic to the plight of the poor. Mary Lago has pointed to an essay entitled "The Beauty of Life" that Forster wrote for The Working Men's College Journal in 1911. In it, Forster states that "scraps are a perfectly good way to approach beauty," and suggests that a workman should "Choose what appeals most and pursue that subject with all [his] mind and heart", but never "force [himself] on a subject that has become only a chore" (qtd. in Lago 23). "Forster has described perfectly the dilemma of Leonard Bast . . . who slogs along at Ruskin because he has heard somewhere that Ruskin will tell him how to recognize beauty. He grabs at scraps of beauty but does so joylessly and therefore despairs of attaining the aesthetic sense" (Lago 23). In Merchant Ivory's film, however, Leonard's attempts to acquire culture are romanticized. His surreptitious perusal of star charts during office hours, and the way in which he is imaginatively transported to an idealized countryside through his reading, suggest that his approach is passionate. Gone are the arid ploddings through Ruskin (on architecture) to whom Leonard, in Forster's novel, listens "with reverence" and by whom he believes "he was being done good to" (62). Gone is Leonard's utilitarian approach to literature: "Could he introduce [this fine sentence], with modifications, when he next wrote a letter to his brother, the lay-preacher?" (62) Gone is his pathetic self-aggrandisement:

I'll tell you another thing too. I care a good deal about improving

myself by means of Literature and Art, and so getting a wider outlook. For instance, when you came in I was reading Ruskin's Stones of Venice. I don't say this to boast, but just to show you the kind of man I am. I can tell you, I enjoyed that classical concert this afternoon.

(66)

Forster's dialogue is superb at catching character. Nothing is more certain than that the disclaimer, "I don't say this to boast," will be followed by boasting. "I'll tell you" and "I can tell you" are the words of one who believes himself superior to his auditor. The need to assert his enjoyment of the concert reveals his intellectual dishonesty. Leonard's "half-baked mind" (62) is even more clearly evidenced in his thoughts. His inability to interpret the tone of Margaret's conversation after the Beethoven concert is comically revealed in a series of deflatory one-liners: "Evidently these sisters quarrelled," and "An unhappy family, if talented" (52). Not only the inaccuracy of these moralistic conclusions, but also their expression in simple sentences, reflects Leonard's limited intellectual apparatus. Merchant Ivory don't take us into Leonard's mind, and leave out much of his conversation with Jacky. He is a much nicer character for it, for Forster is not sentimental about the poor. He sympathizes with the Leonard Basts of the world, those who stand "at the extreme verge of gentility" (58), but he acknowledges the full extent of their impoverishment. Leonard, we are told "knew that he was poor, and would admit it; he would have died sooner than confess any inferiority to the rich. This may be splendid of him. But he was inferior to most rich people, there is not the least doubt of it. He was not as courteous as the average rich man, nor as intelligent, nor as healthy, nor as loveable" (58). Merchant Ivory's Leonard is a lot less unloveable than Forster's, and this makes his affair with Helen a lot less improbable.

Although it has received less critical attention than Helen's pregnancy, Margaret's marriage is of more fundamental importance to both text and film

because of the thematic weight it bears. Margaret is Forster's "approved missionary of connection She and Henry Wilcox, the energetic imperialist whom she marries, are terms in the hypothesis that the action tests: can the values of personal relations and connection be made to operate within the context of social reality?" (Rosecrance 112) F.R. Leavis's comment is representative of the criticism the marriage has attracted:

The Wilcoxes have built the empire; they represent the 'short-haired executive type' -- obtuse, egotistic, unscrupulous, cowards spiritually, self-deceiving, successful. They are shown . . . as having hardly a redeeming characteristic, except that they are successful. Yet Margaret, the elder of the Schlegel sisters and the more mature intelligence, marries Mr Wilcox, the head of the clan; does it coolly, with open eyes, and we are meant to sympathize and approve Nothing in the exhibition of Margaret's or Henry Wilcox's character makes the marriage credible or acceptable We are driven to protest. (qtd. in Born 153)

Essentially, Leavis is right. Henry is repulsive. This in itself is not a problem. Many women marry repulsive men. It is a fact of life. The problem in Margaret's case is that we are asked to believe that she loves one. Admittedly, when she tells Helen about Henry's proposal she says that she does not love him, but she hastens to add that not only will she grow to love him, but she has already begun to love him (176). And from that moment on we are told she does love him: "She loved him . . . whether he droned trivialities . . . or sprang kisses on her in the twilight" (219). Even after she finds out about Jacky, we are told: "She still loved Henry. His actions, not his disposition, had disappointed her" (246). Now this is just a bit much to swallow, for Henry is disposed to spiritual dishonesty, selfish materialism, fear of emotion, and lack of sympathy. And this is not my description of him; it is Margaret's (177). Our incredulity arises because we cannot believe that Margaret can love Henry.

Forster does his best to shore up this incredible fact by offering numerous extenuating reasons why Margaret should want to marry Henry. Margaret is experiencing "the pressure of virginity" (164); "She saw . . . the vessel of life itself, slipping past her" (155); she thinks she is becoming "old-maidish" (163), and fears she will become like the "poor, silly, unattractive . . . deluded" spinster who imagined that every man she met was in love with her (164). The only other men who have proposed to Margaret were "ninnies" (118), so Henry represents her, to date, only, and probably last, chance of experiencing life in the flesh. She becomes conscious of Henry's interest in her when she is at her lowest ebb, having "a strong . . . conviction of her own futility" (156). She is flattered by his attention because she is "not young or very rich" and he is "a man of standing" (169). Her vanity is touched because "he had always preferred her to Helen -- unlike most men" (160). Henry's jealousy of Leonard "warmed her curiously" (156). She conceives of Henry as "a real man" (176). (Now that is a scary thought.) Henry's proposal comes at a time when she is sleepless with worry about finding a new home (154), and the imminent destruction of Wickham Place has left her feeling "horribly" lonely (165). Henry makes her feel safe (111) when her sense of security has been seriously shaken by Jacky's visit: "Mrs Lanoline had risen out of the abyss, like a faint smell, a goblin footfall" (122), and "She feared, fantastically, that her own little flock might be moving in turmoil and squalor into nearer contacts with such episodes as these" (121-22).

But no matter how much shoring up Forster does, we come back to Margaret. Margaret is one of the pillars of Forster's "inner life", a life that involves "years of self-scrutiny, conducted for no ulterior motive" (196). Margaret must, thus, be aware of all these extenuating factors. Yet she never offers a single one of them, even as a secondary reason, for marrying Henry. Margaret loves Henry. It is incredible.

The only reason apart from love, that Margaret does offer, is equally

unacceptable. When Helen exclaims, "You must be mad" (177), Margaret attempts to justify her decision to marry Henry thus: "More and more do I refuse to draw my income and sneer at those who guarantee it" (178). The sentiment is, in its own right, an honourable one, but when offered as a justification for marriage, we baulk. Apart from D.H. Lawrence who, incredibly, thought that Forster was in danger of "glorifying . . . those ghastly business people" (qtd. in Crews 108-109), virtually every reader has recognised that Forster's attempts to credit the Wilcoxes with some redeeming features are a failure; that "both Margaret and Forster struggle unconvincingly to remind themselves of the Wilcox virtues" (Crews 108). Both Forster and Margaret want the Wilcoxes to have virtues, because, as small private investors, both are concerned about the morality of money, concerned that, as Forster himself stated, "poverty has been caused by wealth" (qtd. in Stone 71); concerned about the hypocrisy of drawing an income while "sneer[ing] at those who guarantee it" (178). Forster tried to assuage his liberal guilt by selling his shares in "South African mining stock and in Imperial Chemicals, since these companies were in his opinion either sweating labour or contributing to war preparations" (Stone 72). Helen tries to assuage her liberal guilt by bedding Leonard then offering him money. Margaret tries to assuage her liberal guilt by marrying Henry. That Forster should use Margaret and Henry as "terms in the hypothesis that the action tests" is understandable; that Margaret should, is highly disconcerting. "We are driven to protest."

Faced with the problem of having to retain the contrast between Schlegel and Wilcox values for thematic reasons, yet needing to make Margaret's love for Henry credible, Merchant Ivory came up with an interesting solution: Charles's faults are maximized, Henry's are minimized, at least until after his marriage to Margaret.

The deterioration of Charles's character is achieved through additions to Forster's text. The improvement of Henry's character is achieved through

omissions, minor alterations, and shifts of emphasis.

A significant addition to Forster's characterization of Charles is Jhabvala's depiction of him as a snoop. He spies on Margaret and Henry when Margaret first visits the Imperial and West African Rubber Company. He deliberately eavesdrops, then sneaks away, when Margaret asks Henry to find a job for Leonard. He eavesdrops again when Margaret and Tibby seek Henry's advice about Helen. Another interesting addition is a very short scene at the Oniton wedding. Jacky is eating cake at one of the wedding tables. Dolly, horrified, points her out to Charles who, pulling on his pipe, struts over to confront her.

CHARLES. Charles Wilcox. How do you do?

(Cut to front view of Charles as he leans in towards Jacky across the table, wagging his pipe from side to side interrogatively.)

CHARLES. Bride or groom?

(Cut to over the shoulder view of Jacky, staring at Charles, transfixed, spoon halfway up to mouth. Cut to Charles who places a finger behind his ear, waiting for a reply. Long pause. Charles nods knowingly.)

CHARLES. (haughtily.) Ver' pleased to have made your acquaintance. Charles does not ask Jacky to leave. Had he done so, the confrontation would have been understandable, though unpleasant. Charles confronts Jacky for the malicious enjoyment of watching her discomfiture. He embarrasses Jacky to enhance his self-importance.

On informal occasions Charles wears riding boots, but the only thing he is ever seen "riding" is a car. The importance of their function as symbolic code is emphasised by the frequent use of low camera angles which draw attention to them. Charles is a bully by nature, and by choice. James Wilby's performance -- swaggering walk, sneering expression, exaggerated gesture -- draws constant attention to Charles's faults. By comparison, Henry seems charming.

Henry is also made more charming in his own right. The contrast between novel and film's depiction of Henry and Evie's chance encounter with Ruth and

Margaret at King's Cross reveals how Jhabvala has used minor alterations for maximum effect. In Forster's text, Ruth, after recovering from her initial surprise, remembers Margaret:

"Oh, Henry dear! -- here's a lovely surprise -- but let me introduce -- but I think you know Miss Schlegel."

"Oh yes," he replied, not greatly interested. "But how's yourself, Ruth?" (96).

That is the only acknowledgement Henry makes of Margaret's presence. Selfish and self-involved, he is shown by Forster as lacking even common courtesy. The film version also begins with excited exclamations until Ruth remembers Margaret:

RUTH. (to Henry.) Do you remember Miss Schlegel?

HENRY. Miss Schl. . . ? Oh yes. Hello, Miss Schlegel, hello. (He continues with his excited and garbled account of cars, and horses and carts as he shakes Margaret's hand.)

MARGARET. How do you do. How do you do.

HENRY. (to Evie.) We must go home. (to Ruth.) You can't go to . . .
Howards End not . . . It's ten to five.

RUTH. Miss Schlegel, I'm afraid our little outing is going to have to
be . . .

MARGARET. (interrupting.) Oh yes.

RUTH. . . . another day.

MARGARET. (handing Ruth's suitcase to Henry.) Oh, before I forget.

HENRY. There's a German expression for that I believe.

(Margaret obligingly supplies it.)

HENRY. Yes -- not cancelled, but postponed.

MARGARET. Postponed.

HENRY. Come home with us.

MARGARET. No, no . . . please . . . goodbye.

EVIE. Goodbye.

HENRY. Goodbye.

MARGARET. (to Ruth.) Till later.

In the film version, although just as excited about seeing Ruth and telling his news, Henry is gracious to Margaret. He greets her by name, shakes her hand, and invites her to accompany them home. This meets our expectations for normal common courtesy. But Henry goes beyond this. The brief exchange about a German expression reveals that Henry has really remembered Margaret, and the fact that she has German ancestry. This suggests a genuine interest in others. Henry's knowledge of German also implies broad-mindedness. Both these attributes are far cries from Forster's Henry, but do make Margaret's interest in him less implausible.

Henry's character is also improved by omissions, most importantly those pertaining to Margaret's view of him. In Merchant Ivory's film, she does not "know all Mr Wilcox's faults" (177), neither does she evince any need or desire to "make him a better man" (240), "set his soul in order" (219), "point out the salvation that was latent in his own soul" (188), or help "him to the building of the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion" (187). In addition, Margaret does not articulate her "refusal to sneer" reason for marrying Henry (178). These omissions not only make her love for Henry more credible, they also, by default, deflect our attention from Henry's short-comings.

For Henry's short-comings are revealed; they are just treated lightly, until after his marriage to Margaret, by shifts of emphasis. An excellent example of this is the scene between Margaret and Henry at Oniton after the disclosure of his affair with Jacky. Forster's black comedy scene shows Henry "expelled from his old fortress . . . building a new one" (241). In the process, Forster reveals Henry's male chauvinism: Margaret's "eyes gazed too straight; they had read books that are suitable for men only" (241); his posturing: he "swaggered up to [the bell] tragically" (242); his dishonesty: "I have been through hell" (243); his

moral obtuseness: "his faithlessness to Mrs Wilcox . . . never seemed to strike him" (243); his shrewd calculation: "If necessary he would deny that he had ever known Mrs Bast, and prosecute her for libel" (245). Forster also shows Margaret pandering to Henry: "she chose her words carefully, and so saved him from panic. She played the girl . . ." (243). In the film, none of these flaws in Henry's character is revealed. Jhabvala's scene is almost pure comedy. It is divided into four sequences, each marked by a fade to black, and linked by the ticking of a clock which continues through the fades. This suggests that the action drags on for a considerable length of time, but we are shown only snippets. Margaret's rôle is greatly attenuated. Emotionally exhausted, her sole interest, once she has established that the affair occurred well before her own involvement with Henry, is to have done with it. Henry, the power of confession upon him, won't stop talking. These conflicting impulses are played for comic effect. Each of the first three subsections ends with what Margaret (and the viewer) thinks is closure. Each time expectation is overthrown as the fade to black gives way to Henry in full verbal flight. Jhabvala also achieves a comic tone by emphasising the physical manifestations of Henry's recovery. After the confrontation with Jacky on the lawns at Oniton, Henry literally runs away from Margaret. In this scene his physical avoidance diminishes as his confidence grows. The first subsection opens with Henry keeping his back turned to Margaret. He then slumps into a chair, shielding his face with his hand. In the second, he walks around the room, compulsively fiddling with ornaments. In the third, his eyes are fixed on the globe he is spinning at first, but by the end he has accepted Margaret's outstretched hand. When the fourth section begins, Margaret is sitting on a sofa and Henry is perched on the armrest with his arm around her. Both the structuring and emphasis of Jhabvala's version invite laughter, while Henry's literal inability to face Margaret suggests that his shame is sincere. This interpretation is further encouraged by omissions from, and changes to, Henry's dialogue. Although Henry offers the same

“excuses”, he does not indulge in self-pity or phony self-deprecation such as, “My game’s up” (242), and, “I am unworthy of you” (241), nor does he quote Biblical passages in his defence (243). He doesn’t presume to insult Margaret as Forster’s Henry does: “At all events, you mustn’t worry, this is a man’s business. On no account mention it to anybody” (245). More significantly, Jhabvala’s Henry does not impute fault in Margaret’s willingness to forgive, nor does he place Margaret in a position where she has to argue to salvage their engagement. In Forster’s novel Henry is insistent that he has released Margaret from her engagement, and he never asks for forgiveness: he makes statements that Margaret has to counter: “I have told you too much already for you to forgive me now” (243). In the film, Jhabvala’s Henry chooses linguistic options that place Margaret in the position of power: “You can never forgive me, can you?” and : “You can really bring yourself to forgive me?” The change from statement to question is a subtle shift, but its impact is great. In Forster’s novel, Margaret’s astute psychological evaluation of Henry is the major focus of the Oniton scene. In Merchant Ivory’s film, Margaret is not allowed to recognize the fundamental flaws in Henry’s character until it is too late.

Merchant Ivory make Margaret’s marriage credible not only by improving Henry’s character, but by carefully establishing an historical framework in which to place the “pressure of virginity” that Margaret feels. The plight of an Edwardian spinster is symbolically conveyed by camera, direction and music in the short scene depicting the women’s discussion group to which Margaret and Helen belong. The first shot reveals the group of women viewed through a lighted window. The window is small and placed high in the screen; the foreground is dominated by a black iron fence. The framing creates a visual image of constraint and claustrophobia, while the fence symbolizes the barriers of societal mores which limit women’s freedom. The unnaturally shrill pitch of the women’s voices implies their latent hysteria.

In this context, Margaret's long sigh as she watches Henry lean over to kiss Ruth (outlined against a window in the flat opposite Wickham Place) expresses not only the inconvenience that the Wilcox presence might cause Helen, but also Margaret's desire for the physical intimacy to be found in marriage. It is also within this context that Helen's explanation, that her own bitterness is the result of being an old maid, takes meaning. In her subsequent hurried flight from Margaret, Helena Bonham Carter's awkward, tense movement vividly suggests the distortion that repression causes.

The potential liberation, at least from the "pressure of virginity", that a man offers is emphasised by the score which breaks into a tango when Henry intercepts Margaret and Helen on their walk home from their discussion group. Dance, and dance music are used on two other occasions to suggest both the passion ignited in Margaret and the "liberating spontaneity" that the prospect of life in the flesh has on the psyche (Bates 609). When Margaret asks Henry about a date for the wedding, the couple break into a jig in Henry's office. In Simpson's, a tango once again provides asynchronic sound.

The importance of the luncheon at Simpson's as a significant point in the development of the relationship between Margaret and Henry is also stressed by some rather unusual camera-work. The first shot inside Simpson's establishes the seating arrangement around a square table with Henry placing Margaret on his right, Evie on his left, and Cahill opposite him. All four are in view as a waiter moves around the table handing out menus. The camera then cuts to show Margaret and Henry. The places previously occupied by Evie and Cahill are empty, even Evie's handbag and gloves are gone from the table-top. The camera cuts to Evie and Cahill; Evie's bag and gloves are back. It seems to be a continuity error, but the sequence is repeated. It is only then that we realize that the camera has opted for psychological "realism". Margaret and Henry are so engrossed in each other that at a psychological level Evie and Cahill disappear. Once Margaret starts talking about *Howards End*, the magic pairing

is broken and the camera cuts to each of the four individually, to suggest their isolation at this point. Evie is startled and guilty, Percy Cahill uninterested, Margaret innocent, Henry smooth and self-deceptive. The scene ends with Henry offering to help Margaret find a house:

MARGARET. I warn you, it's no fun helping the Schlegels.

HENRY. Fun? No. But it will be a pleasure and a privilege to help Miss Margaret Schlegel in any way I can.

The intensity with which Anthony Hopkins both delivers this line, and holds Emma Thompson's gaze is sexually charged; Thompson's blushing response is a clear index of the extent to which the shaft has found its mark. The major difference between the novel and film's depiction of Margaret's desire to escape the "old maid" syndrome, is that Forster's is apersonal while Merchant Ivory's is directed at the person of Henry and is seen to blossom into passion, as is asserted by the tango music of Robbins's score. Margaret's passion is credible because Henry has been changed for the better, not only morally but also physically. Henry, in Forster's novel, is described by Mrs Munt as having a "copper-coloured face" (71), by Helen as having "brandy-ball" eyes (165), and the narrator as having a "thatched lip" (219). Margaret's more charitable interpretation of a "robust" (165) complexion, with eyes which "had an agreeable menace in them" (165), fails to convince because it lacks the trenchant vigour of the other descriptions. The casting of Anthony Hopkins was a stroke of genius. Old enough to be convincingly older than Emma Thompson, just portly enough to suggest the successful businessman, yet energetic in movement (the sportsman), Hopkins exudes a sexual potency that is rivetting. We feel the force of Henry's personality as he charms Margaret; puts Charles in his place; and exerts his power over family, servants, and waiters. Of his moral paucity we are shown only enough before the wedding to enable us to sympathize with Tibby and Helen's objections to the marriage, but not enough to make Margaret's decision to marry him implausible.

In identifying and removing from the screenplay the sources of textual implausibility, Jhabvala reveals how astute a script-writer she is, for the success of narrative film is as much dependent on the suspension of disbelief as drama is. Jhabvala is equally astute at recognizing what will not be problematic on celluloid. Many critics have argued that Leonard's death is unconvincing: "Brought down by the Schlegel sword and engulfed by their books, he seems killed more by symbol than by accident. . . . Leonard's death, literally, figuratively, and emotionally, is one of the most bloodless in English literature" (Thomson 134). The symbolic resonance of sword and books in Forster's novel might well jar with their literal application as instruments of death, but on film, sword and books, while they retain symbolic significance, are seen to be "real" objects, so Leonard's death "reads" more "naturally". Charles looks around for something with which to strike Leonard. He grabs the sword hanging over the fire-place. It is perfectly natural. There is no other possible object in the room he could use. He strikes Leonard. Leonard is standing in front of the bookcase. It is natural that he should grab at it to break his fall. It is just as natural, if horrible, that it should tilt onto him. Ivory's use of slow-motion is also perfect. Margaret has tried to stop Charles, but been flung off. The action presents itself in that nightmarish slow-motion that we all experience when watching some disaster we are unable to prevent. Ivory has one other clever trick. Leonard's death is not "bloodless" on film. He shows the dull glimmer of blood beginning to seep out of Leonard's ear.

Similar to criticism voiced about Leonard's death is criticism of Ruth Wilcox's character -- too symbolic -- but while the "realism" of film works for the film-makers in the case of Leonard's death, it works against them in the case of Ruth's character.

Claude Summers (amongst others) suggests that Ruth Wilcox is insufficiently realized, being "more a symbol than a person" (111). I don't agree, but that, in this case, is beside the point, for while Forster's challenge was to clothe a

spiritual emblem in flesh and blood, Merchant Ivory's challenge was to invest a flesh and blood character/actress with spiritual resonance. For Ruth Wilcox must assume symbolic significance if the film is to reflect Forster's themes. She, and the house she loves so passionately, represent the redemptive potential of nature to connect man to the divine. Howards End and Ruth are symbols of England's past; of rural peace, and the yeomen who drew instinctive wisdom and an apprehension of the numinous from it. Ruth's presence must be felt after her death for she is Margaret's spiritual guide, leading her from words to things, to acceptance, and to "the peace of the present, which passes understanding" (307). Margaret, moreover, must be seen to adopt Ruth Wilcox's mantle, to become a worthy inheritor of her spiritual legacy as embodied in Howards End. This is a pretty tall order for a medium whose strength is visual "reality". Merchant Ivory accept the challenge, and almost pull it off. Almost, but not quite. We are left not knowing that Ruth "worshipped the past, and that the instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow had descended upon her -- that wisdom to which we give the clumsy name of aristocracy" (36). Somehow, despite using virtually every trick in the film-maker's arsenal, Ruth's "greatness" eludes Merchant Ivory (86).

The film starts promisingly. The opening credits roll against a scene showing Ruth outside Howards End in the dusk. The first shot of the film shows only her dress, from below the knees down, trailing through the grass. It takes a few moments to identify what is being shown as the colour of the taffeta matches the shadows and the ruched train seems to have its own organic life. The camera slowly tilts to reveal a back view of Ruth wandering through her garden, holding a spray of white flowers and flanked by a great bank of them reflected hauntingly in the moonlight. From the back she looks like a young girl, and it is thus something of a surprise to see an old face when she turns around. The sequence is astonishingly effective, suggesting that Ruth is in some mysterious way connected to the earth, and has transcended the limits of time.

Her timelessness is further suggested by filmic rhythm. Filmic rhythm is created by the length of individual shots. As Stephenson and Debrix have noted, it is a psychological rhythm that is both culture and period specific, determined by the film-maker's assessment of the length a shot can be held before the viewer's attention wanders: old films often seem boring because of their slow rhythm (132). Changes in the basic tempo of a film's rhythm are used for dramatic effect. Merchant Ivory are noted for employing a slower filmic rhythm than modern audiences have come to expect, a technique which helps create the period "feel" of their films. At this point in Howards End, (the titles are still rolling), no base filmic rhythm has been established, but the rhythm of this sequence is very much slower than normally expected, even for a Merchant Ivory film. Ruth moves around her house for over two and a quarter minutes. In that time the camera cuts only twice. As Ruth continues to move around her house we are shown her family, framed by a brightly lit window, involved in a boisterous game of dice. The framing, once again, suggests their limitations, while their occupation, and noise, and the bright artificial light surrounding them emphasise how different Ruth is. She is literally and metaphorically the outsider: "her family . . . are her alien corn" (Trilling 89).

Our view of Ruth the following morning re-inforces how different she is to the rest of her family. Henry and Charles are rushing off, Ruth wants them to wait to taste cherries. It also establishes her connection to Miss Avery -- they are sitting together de-stalking cherries. At Howards End, Ruth is bouncing with enthusiasm and laughter. When next seen in London, she is old and sad, racked with pain. The impression is that, cut off from the soil, Ruth like the flowers with which she is associated, cannot survive. It is a view expressed in Forster's novel (after Ruth's death) by the country folk of Hilton: "London had done the mischief" (97).

Merchant Ivory try to establish Ruth's spiritual qualities in a number of ways. In London, Ruth is usually back lit so that wisps of hair catch the light to create

a glowing nimbus around her head; a halo effect. Where back lighting is not possible she is side lit to create a partial nimbus effect. The lighting suggests Forster's description of the "quivering halo around her hands" (78). The narrator's comment that "she and daily life were out of focus: one or the other must show blurred", and the "strange atmosphere of dissolution" which Ruth suggests (86), are implied by the use of soft filter lenses which create a misty effect. Ruth's costuming is also used to set her apart. In London scenes, she is the only character wearing white or cream clothing. Everyone else, to the last extra, is dressed in sombre, dark colours, black being predominant. It is an effective way of suggesting Forster's comment that the "city seemed satanic" (94). The only time another character (in a scene with Ruth) is shown wearing white is at Margaret's luncheon party. All Margaret's guests are wearing London uniform -- dark sombre colours, but Ruth, in white (even her hat is creamy white), and Margaret, wearing a white blouse, are seated next to each other. Sunshine streaming in through the windows behind them emphasises the contrast they present to Margaret's other guests. It is one of the ways Merchant Ivory suggest the spiritual kinship of Ruth and Margaret. Another is the use of flowers. Ruth is associated with flowers in the opening sequence. While she is dying in hospital, Margaret brings her a bunch of meadow flowers. They are the perfect choice for Ruth, who has expressed her longing to show Margaret her meadow at Howards End, and reveal Margaret's sensitivity. Ruth takes the flowers and, beckoning to Margaret to lean forward, pushes one of the blooms into Margaret's hair. It is an act which acknowledges their spiritual bond, and prefigures Ruth's dying wish that Margaret should inherit Howards End.

Flowers are again used to establish Ruth's death. From Ruth writing her will, a dissolve leads to a very high angle shot of what is presumably Ruth's grave, covered in pink roses. The sequence which follows is quite extraordinary. In brief it is as follows: From roses, cut to medium angle shot of yellow meadow

flowers in close-up, cut to white irises in close-up, cut to field of white flowers, cut to close-up of snowdrops, track to water rippling against grass, fade to jonquils in close-up, cut to long shot of Howards End with field in foreground, cut to close-up of ground-floor window, cut to close-up of upstairs window, cut to medium shot of Howards End facade. From this sequence, the camera cuts to the scene in which the Wilcoxes discuss Ruth's will. The sequence lasts some forty five seconds, an exceptionally long time for apparently unmotivated shots of scenic beauty. What Merchant Ivory were attempting to achieve, I believe, was a very subtle portrayal of the novel's spiritual dimension. The primary aim of the sequence is to lead the viewer from Ruth writing a note on her death bed in hospital, through her death, to her family's response to what we now realize she was writing -- her will. This aim is successfully achieved, but does not account for the number of flower shots. These were meant to serve a secondary aim. The pink roses on Ruth's grave suggest that her family, in choosing cultivated flowers associated with sentimental love instead of the wild flowers Ruth loved so much, are not worthy inheritors of Howards End. Margaret, who brings Ruth meadow flowers while she is ill, is a more worthy heir. The shots of wild flowers which follow have one thing in common. All the flowers are yellow or white or a combination of yellow and white. Yellow and white are, traditionally, resurrection colours; Ruth was associated with white flowers in the opening sequence. Merchant Ivory are suggesting that the camera is here taking the point of view of Ruth's spirit which, looking down on her grave, transcends death and, rejecting her family's offering of roses, moves to the meadow to rejoice once again in the flowers she loved so in life, and then moves to Howards End where it will reside as spiritual guardian. The sequence also attempts to make the connection between the beauty of England as embodied in Howards End and the surrounding countryside, and the invisible; a connection of which Margaret becomes conscious after her first visit to Howards End:

an unexpected love of the island [England] awoke in her, connecting on this side with the joys of the flesh, on that with the inconceivable . . . it had been hidden from Margaret till this afternoon. It had certainly come through the house and old Miss Avery. Through them: the notion of "through" persisted; her mind trembled towards a conclusion which only the unwise have put into words. Then, veering back into warmth, it dwelt on ruddy bricks, flowering plum trees, and all the tangible joys of spring. (205)

Merchant Ivory's attempt at capturing something of the sense of divinity immanent, a sense so central to Forster's achievement, is an interesting ploy, but does not quite "read", particularly on first viewing which, for most viewers, is also an only viewing.

Yet the failure of Merchant Ivory's Ruth to convince as a spiritual emblem is not as a result of this sequence as much as it is a result of Margaret's luncheon party scene. The problem inherent in this scene is its comic element. Ruth is not at her best in social groups. She finds verbal communication difficult and is, moreover, intellectually dull. During the luncheon she utters nothing but banalities -- outdated ones at that -- yet, despite this, she must "give the idea of greatness" (86), an impression largely reliant on perceiving that she is "nearer the line that divides daily life from a life that may be of greater importance" (87). It is important that she should utter banalities because Ruth's failure to impress Margaret's friends facilitates Margaret's spiritual development by making her realize the superficiality of much of her life in London. Visited by "a sudden revulsion", she acknowledges that she and her set "lead the lives of gibbering monkeys" (88). In Merchant Ivory's film this scene lapses into hilarious comedy. This is partly because Ivory symbolically establishes that Ruth has moved beyond words to things by slowing the rate of Vanessa

Redgrave's delivery to a painful extreme.⁸ As a result, when Ruth talks at the luncheon, there are long, pregnant pauses in her speech which suggest that she is struggling with profound ideas. Margaret's friends listen with baited breath. When Ruth eventually finishes her sentences, the anti-climax is so enormous, the stunned silence of Margaret's friends so marked, that laughter is the only possible response. An even worse problem, however, arises from the casting of Vanessa Redgrave as Ruth. Vanessa Redgrave is a fine actress -- there is no problem there -- she is also, however, a well-known actress who has achieved a very high media profile as a political activist. The viewer is, therefore, confronted with supreme irony when Redgrave utters the line, "I am only too thankful not to have a vote myself." The viewer cannot avoid making the connection. In another character such an irony would not matter. In the case of Ruth, the reminder that the character is being played by a very real person informs against the interpretation of her rôle as spiritual emblem. Merchant Ivory would have done well to follow Lean's example. In A Passage to India, the casting of Dame Peggy Ashcroft as Mrs Moore presents no such problem, for Ashcroft, having achieved her fame on the stage, is not a known face to most viewers. Ashcroft also kept a very low media profile. Consequently, her physical reality did not impinge on her rôle as Mrs Moore.

The conclusion of Howards End is unsatisfying because Forster has not proved his thesis; the connections he aimed at have not been realized; and we are left with what, at best, is a qualified hope: "Logically, [Howards End] had no right to be alive. One's hope was in the weakness of logic" (329). It is hope by default. The victory achieved by the living is only a partial victory. They have retreated to a green world that offers temporary respite but is threatened by the "red rust" of a "creeping" London (329). The desired marriage of "outer" and "inner" lives is not a partnership: Henry Wilcox is beaten, tired, old. No

⁸ One is tempted to suggest that Ivory assumed that Forster's comment about Ruth's voice: "Only once it had quickened -- when speaking of Howards End" (81) had something to do with speed rather than vitality. But perhaps this is uncharitable.

heterosexual relationship flourishes, only the love between Helen and Margaret survives intact. For the lower classes there is not even partial victory, qualified hope. The marriage of industrialism and liberal humanism has not spawned a new economy. The liberal humanists have failed the Bastis utterly, and then abandoned them just as utterly: Jacky is not even mentioned after Leonard's death. The captains of industry have refused to accept either moral or fiscal responsibility for them. The connections that Forster yearned for are fulfilled only in Helen's child who alone carries what fragile hope there might be for England. The final words of the novel, Helen's call of plenty, ring very hollow.

The film's conclusion differs little. Merchant Ivory do not attempt to show the red rust (presumably for practical considerations) but the despoilation of the countryside is still suggested by that "totem of the Wilcox males" (Trilling 94), the car, belching white fumes, in which Henry's brood depart. Camera-work establishes Helen's child as a symbol of hope. The viewer, placed inside *Howards End*, sees him, framed by a window frame, seated outside in a wheelbarrow with the hayfield stretching behind him. Helen swings him into the air, beyond the confines of the frame, and out of view. Symbolically, he is seen to move beyond confines and limitations by virtue of his connection to the earth. The film ends with a high angle wide scope shot of the meadow and surrounding countryside. The harvester drawn by two horses, and Helen and her child, are dwarfed by nature, green, beautiful, and serene. Helen never utters her call of plenty. This, in itself, is possibly a wise decision. What is not, is that Henry is given the last word. He explains Ruth's will, ending as he does in the novel with the question, "I didn't do wrong, did I?" Margaret's absolution, "nothing has been done wrong", is not spoken. Instead, Margaret clasps and squeezes Henry's hand. In preferring action to speech, the film emphasises Margaret's progress from words to things, and suggests Forster's: "Something shook her life in its inmost recesses" (332). Unfortunately, it is not left at that. The car bearing Henry's family away, having presumably turned around, passes in front

of *Howards End*, while Henry, waving, nudges Margaret, saying: "There they are. Bye! Bye!" Those are the last words of the film. It is a pity that it should end on such a bathetic note because *Howards End* is, on the whole, a successful adaptation.

One of the reasons for its success is Merchant Ivory's apparently extraordinary decision to emphasise construct. Good examples of the application of this decision are to be found in two scenes already discussed: Margaret and Henry's confrontation at Oniton, and the Simpson's restaurant scene. In the former, the fades to black with the clock ticking in the background, which mark the division of the scene into subsections, draw attention to the comic contrivance of the scene. In the latter, the psychological "realism" of the camera work, by breaking, and being seen to break the "realism" that fiction film normally aspires to, emphasises the constructive nature of film art, and by extension, the characters it portrays. The unreality of the four shots showing pairs is further highlighted by the editing which marks both the beginning and end of the sequence with blackness. Fades in and out are standard filmic punctuation devices, but in *Howards End* the black screen is held for much longer than normal; held to the point that the viewer becomes conscious of seeing a black screen. These blank black screens are used at other points in the film as well, often as cues that what is to follow requires the viewer to become actively conscious of the construct in order to decode it, thus destroying the illusion of film by pointing to the technology of the film process itself,

for the essence of cinema is not light, but a secret compact between light and darkness. Half of all the time at the movies is spent . . . in complete darkness. There is no image on the screen at all. In the course of a single second, forty-eight periods of darkness follow forty-eight periods of light.

During this same infinitesimal period, every image is shown to the

audience twice; and as a still photograph; for the film comes to a dead stop in the projector forty-eight times in the course of single second. Given the retina's inability to adjust quickly to differences in brightness, an illusion of movement is created by this rapid, stop-start series projection of still photographs, each slightly different from the one before.

Thus, during half the time spent at the movies, the viewer sees no picture at all; and at no time is there any movement. Without the viewer's physiological and psychological complicity, the cinema could not exist. (Vogel 10)

By showing the darkness that the illusion of film's technology works to deny, Merchant Ivory insist not only on fictive construct, but also on technological construct. Moreover, Vogel suggests that it is possibly during the periods of total darkness -- 45 out of every 90 minutes of film we see -- that our voracious subconscious . . . "absorbs" the work's deeper meaning and sets off chains of associations (Vogel 10). In using extended periods of darkness, Merchant Ivory demand that subconscious activity be brought to consciousness.

Linked to the use of black screens is the use of written codes. The use of written codes in film is not innovative. Merchant Ivory used written codes with enormous success in A Room with a View. In that instance, the use of Forster's mock Victorian melodrama chapter headings ("Lying to George", "Lying to Cecil", "How Miss Bartlett's Boiler was so Tiresome") in highly decorated frames, added immensely to the light comic touch of the film, while emphasising the comedy of manners genre of Forster's novel. In Howards End, written codes do not form part of the film's style. They are functional inserts of bland type-face that announce the passage of time in equally bland language -- "Six months later", "One year later". There is no irony here, no subtle humour. It is the sort of thing one would expect from a B grade movie-maker. Merchant Ivory are perfectly capable of devising other ways of showing the passage of

time. They do, in fact, use the contrast between *Howards End* covered with lush green ivy and *Howards End* with bare brown stems covering its facade to mark the movement from the summer of Helen's visit to the winter of Ruth's death. Why then these bald written codes that force the viewer to read text? That, I believe, is precisely their point. In forcing the viewer to read text, however briefly, Merchant Ivory are in effect saying that what is being viewed is as much a construct as the novel on which it was based, and that however smoothly the action might flow, however plausible the plot may seem as "reality", however little spoken rhetoric the viewer is asked to consume, there are connections that must be made. And the viewer must make them. The viewer must "connect". Margaret never speaks the novel's famous epigraph, "Only connect" The camera speaks it for her.

However clever the camera-work might be, the success of an adaptation is ultimately dependent on the script. Ruth Jhabvala's script is intelligent and assured. She has the knack of capturing the essence of Forster's dialogue, even where details are considerably altered, as in the boating scene. She also has the flexibility to find creative solutions to what would appear almost insoluble problems. A good example of this is her treatment of the concert scene which she has replaced with a lecture on "Music and Meaning", thus allowing the goblins of negation in the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth symphony to be expressed in the script.

It is not only awkward scenes for which Jhabvala finds creative solutions. The narrator's comment at the end of Chapter 29, the "Wilcoxes have no part in the place [Oniton], nor in any place. It is not their names that recur in the parish register. It is not their ghosts that sigh among the alders at evening. They have swept into the valley and swept out of it, leaving a little dust and a little money behind" (246), is not the sort of material that "translates" easily to film. Jhabvala has, however, captured its essence in a very short scene, the primary function of which is to establish location. After Helen's meeting with

Leonard at the bank, the camera cuts to an outside view of a country home. Margaret's voice is heard, speaking to Henry, but neither of them is shown at first.

MARGARET. What nice houses you have all over the place. I like this one, too.

HENRY. Um . . . Oniton Grange . . . (Cut to elaborately framed portrait.) Waiting to get it off my hands.

MARGARET. (aghast.) Why? (Cut to another portrait.)

HENRY. Well, what is one to do? The shooting is bad and the fishing is even worse. (Cut to third portrait.) Anyway, it's in the wrong part of Shropshire. (Cut to Margaret on landing looking at framed portraits on the wall above the staircase.)

MARGARET. Henry, are these all Wilcoxes?

(As Henry speaks, Margaret moves to join him on the staircase and they descend together.)

HENRY. Heavens, no. I bought the place lock, stock and barrel. The fellow just took his money and cleared off . . . to Italy, I think. I'm told some of these are rather good. What do you think?

MARGARET. I think they're lovely.

By emphasising the huge portraits of unknown people, Merchant Ivory charge this scene with a sense of heritage abandoned and ancestry despised.

Given the constraints of real time within which film must operate, it says much for Jhabvala's economy that "Hardly a scene of importance in the book is missing, and most of the crucial bits of dialogue survive" (Annan 4).

While a good script is the foundation without which an adaptation cannot succeed, much of a film's success is also dependant on the film-maker's ability to find visual equivalents for concepts the script cannot contain. In this respect Merchant Ivory are also exceptionally inventive. The outer life of "telegrams and anger" is vividly suggested by a visual emphasis on the mechanics of

telegramme transmission (41). These in turn, are associated with the Wilcoxes because the Wilcoxes are consistently associated with mechanical objects. Their cars, belching white smoke, reveal them as despoilers, and the hideously deforming dust-coats and goggles they wear when motoring suggest their spiritual deformity. As Charles is led off to prison “the film cuts to the wheels of the steam engine as the train taking him to prison begins to move and the great connecting rods gathers speed, brutally driving up and down, a movement as mechanical as the justice that Charles Wilcox is now to experience” (Annan 4).

Merchant Ivory also associate the “anger” of the outer life with destruction, by linking it to fire. When the Wilcoxes discuss Ruth’s will their anger is effectively symbolized by the hearth fire that features at the beginning and end of the scene. At the beginning, the fire is shot in close-up. A hand throws a log into it, and the fire surges brightly. At the end, Evie tears up Mrs Wilcox’s will and throws the fragments into the blaze, again shown in close-up as it devours the fragments.

The ceaseless flux and flow of London is vividly depicted in short scenes showing the streets. These scenes are remarkably effective as the filmic rhythm, generally leisurely paced, suddenly becomes frantic. The first of these scenes is twenty-one seconds long. In this time the camera cuts five times. The jerky film rhythm suggest the disconcerting effect of London on the psyche which is further emphasised by changing camera angles and the crush of horse-drawn carriages, motor cars and people shown primarily in close-up. In these twenty-one seconds, twenty-eight vehicles and innumerable people move across the screen. Eleven times the foreground is disrupted by figures shot in extreme close-up that shows only torso. These trunks move across the plane of vision, thus simulating wipes. The unsettling effect of London is compositionally stressed in the first shot which shows a close-up of a horse-drawn carriage moving diagonally across the screen from bottom right to top left. The screen is

crammed with vehicles and people but there is virtually no colour -- black, brown and dark grey dominate, and the occasional glimpse of dark red suggests anger, violence. Although mouths can be seen to move, no human voice penetrates the clatter of horse hooves, and the score which starts with heavy oppressive drum beats, builds to a wild tempo of discordant sound as instrument upon instrument is added until a full orchestra is blaring harshly discordant chords. The horror of London could hardly be better conceived, yet horror builds on horror as the camera cuts to Margaret writing a Christmas list for Ruth, and then to the interior of Harrods where the music transposes to bells ringing. The commercial excess of Christmas decorations, unidentifiable gifts, and crammed crowds of shoppers (all with the exception of Ruth dressed in black or brown tones), reflect the extent to which spiritual values have drowned beneath the materialism of a London that has dehumanized its inhabitants in the interests of commerce.

Richard Robbins' score is a masterpiece of subtlety. A detailed analysis of it is well beyond the scope of this study, but to avoid comment entirely would be to ignore one of the major contributing factors to the film's success. *Howards End* and the Schlegels have their own theme tunes, but these are never used unsubtly. For instance, when Ruth writes her will the *Howards End* theme starts up in the background. At the time we are unaware of what she is writing on the paper held for her by a nurse. The theme continues through the dissolve to Ruth's grave and gathers force as the camera moves through the English countryside to *Howards End*. It stops as the camera cuts to the interior of *Howards End* where the Wilcoxes have gathered to discuss Ruth's will. The lyricism of both music and camera work is abruptly shattered by the crash of a log on the fire. We have moved from the view of *Howards End* as spiritual property, to a purely financial understanding of its value. Another instance where score and camera work combine to suggest major themes is the scene showing Leonard's dream the night before he sets out for *Howards End*. In

Forster's text, Leonard has a confused nightmare in which light and snakes prefigure the vision of nullity that confronts Mrs Moore in the Marabar Caves. In its place, Merchant Ivory show Leonard having a dream in which he chases Helen to retrieve his umbrella. Iron bars of a huge gate prevent him from reaching her, and she, though she turns and recognizes him, does not move to take his outstretched arm. The use of iron gates, as Bates points out, is "a deft metaphor for impenetrable class boundaries" (609). But it is the score that gives the dream its real nightmarish quality. Leonard goes to sleep pressing a pillow against his ears to block out the sounds of passing trains that shatter the bedroom with their piercing clatter. Sound matched to the last note struck by a train is the opening chord of the second goblin sequence of the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth. The goblins of negation stalk "with increased malignity" (47) across the world throughout the dream which ends as a sound match of a train whistle on the final notes of the goblin sequence, and wakes Leonard. The music observes "in passing that there was no such thing as splendour or heroism in the world" (46).

Howards End is a very successful adaptation, probably as good as a film adaptation can get of a work that is as subtle and complex as Forster's novel. Where it fails is in its attempts to explore the religious dimension of the novel. The life of the spirit does not translate well into visual imagery. It is the problem that Lean encountered in adapting A Passage to India, but a problem magnified by Forster's far greater stress on the unseen in the later novel.

CHAPTER III

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

A Passage to India is the most complex of Forster's novels, persistently denying final interpretation. Forster stated that it was

not really about politics, though it is the political aspect of it that caught the general public and made it sell. It's about something wider than politics, about the search of the human race for a more lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the Indian earth and the Indian sky, about the horror lurking in the Marabar Caves and the release symbolised by the birth of Krishna. It is -- or rather desires to be -- philosophic and poetic. (qtd. in Lewis 122)

Philosophy and poetry do not lend themselves readily to narrative film, a problem accentuated in the case of A Passage to India by the linguistic subtleties through which they are expressed, and which, moreover, form an intrinsic part of the novel's fascination. Foremost amongst these is Forster's rhythmic repetition of words, phrases, and images that "transcend their immediate contexts to acquire with each reappearance an increased breadth of suggestion and symbolic resonance" (Rosecrance 233). Cosmic, architectural, and natural leitmotifs such as sky, sun, moon, stars, water, arches, domes, caves, stones, snakes, and wasps, as well as more abstract ones such as appeals, invitations, and echoes, are interwoven to create a "web of reverberation" (Trilling 117). It is through this intricate and elusive pattern that Forster poetically evokes a universe beyond man's control and a divinity beyond his comprehension; attempts to approach the inaccessible, explore the inconceivable, and express the ineffable. For, although spiritual concerns are an ever-present feature of all Forster's novels, it is in A Passage to India that they assume paramount importance and unrivalled complexity: "Outside the arch there seemed always an arch, beyond the remotest echo a silence" (52).

Despite seeming an unlikely commercial property, A Passage to India

attracted a flurry of interest in the 60's with Satyajit Ray, Ismail Merchant, and John Bradbourne all attempting to acquire the rights. Forster, however, remained adamant about not releasing them. When his estate eventually did, Ray, and Merchant, had lost interest. Bradbourne thus acquired the rights and contracted David Lean to write the screenplay, direct, and edit. William Goldman, writing in 1982 about the Hollywood film industry noted that "There are always three hot directors and one of them is always Lean. Today it's Lucas, Spielberg, and Lean. A few years back: Coppola, Friedkin, and Lean. A few years before that: Penn, Nichols, and Lean" (218). By industry standards, the designation "hot" implies a director's ability to make films that attract critical acclaim to boost the studio's image, and that have box-office appeal to boost its coffers.

Lean more than vindicated his "hot" label with A Passage to India which not only won a clutch of awards⁹ but helped, by its success, to revive a flagging movie industry: "1980's box-office hits such as Ghostbusters, Amadeus, Star Wars and A Passage to India packed cinemas and rekindled the public's interest in movie going" (Outlines 1).

In many ways it is surprising that A Passage to India should have been such a success, for however "hot" the film industry might have deemed Lean, "hot" had nothing to do with availability, and by the time A Passage to India went into

⁹ A Passage to India received the following nominations and awards:

Eleven Academy Nominations:

Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Film Editing, Best Art Direction, Best Costume Design, Best Original Score, Best Sound.

Two Academy Awards:

Best Supporting Actress – Peggy Ashcroft; Best Original Score – Maurice Jarre.

Five Golden Globe Nominations:

Best Supporting Actress, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Original Score, Best Foreign Film.

Three Golden Globe Awards:

Best Supporting Actress – Peggy Ashcroft; Best Original Score – Maurice Jarre; Best Foreign Film (England being deemed "foreign").

One Los Angeles Film Critics (sic) Association Award:

Best Supporting Actress – Peggy Ashcroft.

Four David Wark Griffith (National Board of Review) Awards:

Best Picture; Best Actor – Victor Banerjee; Best Actress – Peggy Ashcroft; Best Director.

Three New York Film Critics' Circle Awards:

Best Picture; Best Actress – Peggy Ashcroft; Best Director.

One British Film Association Award: Best Actress – Peggy Ashcroft.

production Lean was already considered more a legendary genius than a likely working artist. As Schickel suggests, for Lean, a 76 year old who had not made a film in 14 years¹⁰, to tackle the scripting, directing and editing of any film must have been

an act of extraordinary creative nerve. To do so with an adaptation of a book that, however beguiling its surfaces . . . [had] been a conundrum for readers ever since its publication . . . was flirting dangerously with calamity. After all, a novel that speaks in a quiet adult voice, and that proceeds from delicate ironies to the contemplation of metaphysical mysteries, is not your customary movie property. That Lean . . . brought this . . . work to the screen with such sureness, elegance and hypnotic force is akin to a miracle. (54)

The elements that ensured the success of Lean's "miracle" are numerous for virtually every aspect of the film is superb: acting, musical score, direction, cinematography, art direction, editing: "The craftsmanship of the movie is a marvel" (Ansen 1046). Moreover Lean's screenplay is intelligent and witty; it captures many of the comments of the omniscient narrator, and creates a sense of Forsterian rhythm with images that "fill us with surprise and freshness . . . [in their] repetition plus variation" (*Aspects* 149). Yet for all this, and despite the vigour with which Lean paints the novel's political background, and despite his convincing (if un-Forsterian) reinvention of Adela's character and experiences, *A Passage to India* misses greatness because of Lean's treatment of the spiritual concerns that are the heart of Forster's novel. For Lean to have avoided metaphysics entirely would have been understandable. It is, in fact, surprising that he did not take his cue from Forster who, in a programme note for Santha Rama Rau's dramatized version of *A Passage to India*¹¹, wrote

I tried to indicate the human predicament in a universe which is not, so

¹⁰ Coincidentally, both Lean and Forster produced their last and arguably best work after a 14 year gap.

¹¹ It is reasonable to assume that Lean would have been familiar with this note considering that he used Rau's play, as well as Forster's novel, as source material for his screenplay.

far, comprehensible to our minds. This aspect of the novel is displayed in its final chapters. It is obviously unsuitable for the stage, and Miss Rau -- most rightly in my judgement -- has not emphasized it, and has brought down her final curtain on the Trial scene. (Appendix 328)

Lean, however, opted to include the final section of the novel. What is unforgivable is that he then trivialized it.

Admittedly Lean did not intend spiritual concerns to be a major focus of his film; his primary areas of interest are clearly established in the short introductory scene set in London in the P & O offices:

P & O CLERK. (Writing out tickets.) First time in India, Miss
Quested?

ADELA. First time out of England.

P & O CLERK. I envy you. New horizons. (Adela looks at a
picture on the wall.)

P & O CLERK. Those are the Marabar Caves. About twenty miles
from you at Chandrapore.

ADELA. (her voice and face reflecting a frisson of fear.) I see.

P & O CLERK. Mrs Moore returns on the Royal Pindi on May the
twelfth and your return is open. That is correct?

ADELA. I'll be staying on. Probably.

P & O CLERK. If you decide to return with Mrs Moore then let us
know as soon as possible.

ADELA. I will.

P & O CLERK. Now: labels, stickers, your ticket, Mrs Moore's
ticket. You should have an interesting voyage. The Viceroy's
on boards. Tends to liven things up.

This scene is an excellent example of standard filmic exposition. The major character (here, Adela) is introduced; interest in her is created by a mystery (why will she "probably" stay on in India?); and expectations are aroused about the Marabar Caves by Adela's reaction to the photograph of them. Interest is

also evoked in Mrs Moore (her name is thrice mentioned) but as no expectations are aroused about her, she is presumed to be of secondary importance. Time and place are established by references to India, Chandrapore, and the viceroy; and, because the dialogue begins with India and ends with the viceroy, the importance of the political background is predicted.

It is immediately evident that Lean's interests are considerably different to Forster's, particularly in that Adela becomes a far more important character in Lean's film than she is in Forster's novel in which the focus of the plot is on the friendship between Fielding and Aziz, and the novel's philosophic and spiritual concerns devolve on Professor Godbole and Mrs Moore. Lean's A Passage to India becomes, largely, Adela's story, partly because the film begins and ends with her, partly because her rôle is expanded, and partly because the camera frequently adopts her viewpoint. Not only is Adela foregrounded, she is also remodelled as a commercially more attractive character. In an interview with The Guardian (23 January, 1984) Lean explained his thinking, stating that Adela was "a bit of a bore in the book . . . I've changed her, made her more sympathetic. Forster wasn't always very good with women" (qtd. in Silver 87). By "sympathetic" Lean apparently meant a beautiful young woman, seething with repressed sexual yearnings -- a sort of Freudian case-study. Forster's Adela, plain and angular, dry, sensible, inquisitive, priggish, with "nothing of the vagrant in her blood" (151), disappears almost entirely under the impact of Judy Davis's full-bodied sensuality and Lean's direction. Adela's story becomes a story of thwarted desires; her anti-vision in a Marabar cave the result of repressed sexual yearnings.

Lean lays the groundwork for his interpretation of Adela's experience in earlier scenes: significantly, not one of which is derived from Forster's novel. Lean's preparation proceeds thus:

One: on the night of Adela's arrival in Chandrapore she is sitting on her bed when Ronny knocks at the door. Her look of coy expectation is replaced by one of puzzled disappointment when he bids her goodnight without entering.

Two: the day after breaking her engagement to Ronny, Adela cycles out of Chandrapore. She discovers an abandoned Hindu temple. Erotic sculptures cover the walls of the temple and lie broken in the surrounding grass. The flickering interplay of light and shadow cast by wind-ruffled vegetation creates the impression that the sculptures are moving sinuously. The function of Tantric art, to create in sexual union a metaphor of the soul's union with the divine, in order to symbolise the metaphysical conception of the Two-in-one in which the ego, Atman, combines with the pure spirit of Brahman, is lost on Adela whose intense scrutiny and red, parted lips reveal only sexual arousal. To stress the point, Lean, as Adela dismounts, frames the screen with vegetation from which hang pendulous, phallic fruits. Monkeys clamber down the embracing figures on the facade, accentuating their physicality and, because they are identically coloured to the statuary, creating a momentary impression that the statues are coming alive. The monkey is a symbol of primitive animal instincts and the unconscious. The symbol is both positive and negative: as Hanuman, the Hindu monkey god, it suggests that, if consciously recognized and valued, the animal nature of man can be a source of godlike strength and vitality (Chetwynd 265). Lean's monkeys, however, are aggressive and Adela flees from them, suggesting that her repressed (she doesn't notice the monkeys at first) sexuality is a weakness that endangers her. Adela's sexual arousal is further emphasised by her behaviour on arriving home: she flings her arms around Ronny and re-establishes their engagement.

Three: on the night of the ball the heat is established by banks of fans in the ballroom and Mrs Moore's comment: "Strange -- it must be very cold in England now." Later, Adela lies in bed unable to sleep. Huge clusters of white flowers sway outside her window. As she watches them, her mind keeps returning to the erotic statues, shots of which are montaged into the scene. The heat of carnal passion is flowering in Adela.

One, two, three. All neatly served up for consumption. By the time Adela and Aziz start climbing up the Marabar rock, the sensuality with which Lean

invests the scene comes as no surprise. In its details and dialogue, this scene is not vastly different from Forster's account; what Lean does with it, is.

In the film, as in the novel, Adela and Aziz do not speak much:

ADELA. (Looking at Chandrapore through field-glasses.) It's almost a mirage. (Pause.) Dr Aziz may I ask you something rather personal? You were married, weren't you?

AZIZ. Yes, indeed.

ADELA. Did you love your wife when you married her?

AZIZ. We never set eyes on each other until the day we were married.

ADELA. Oh.

AZIZ. It was all arranged by our families. I only saw her face in a photograph.

ADELA. What about love?

AZIZ. We were a man and a woman, and we were young.

(Later, as they are approaching the caves.)

ADELA. Dr Aziz, did you have more than one wife?

AZIZ. One. One, in my case.

Taken out of the context of the direction, the dialogue seems to explore Forster's text reasonably accurately: Adela's sudden realization that she does not love Ronny is implied in the questions she asks Aziz; Aziz's answers reflect details given about his marriage earlier in the novel. Lean, however, has Judy Davis and Victor Banerjee play the scene with a coy intimacy that invests it with the aura of a courtship ritual. On the first stop up the incline, Davis and Banerjee are seated so close together that their thighs appear to be touching. Davis's tilted head and shy upward glances, the frequent tentative smiles of both performers, and the tender tone in which Banerjee response to questions suggest a courting couple. Forster, by contrast, is careful to avoid any sense of growing intimacy. Aziz "had never liked Miss Quested as much as Mrs Moore, and had little to say to her, less than ever now that she would marry a British official" (149). Aziz thinks about the coming breakfast: Adela reviews her

marriage arrangements. Their conversation is devoid of personal or emotional warmth. Aziz lies: Adela answers “absently” (150).

In Lean’s film, mutual sexual attraction is further implied on the next halt. Adela leans against a rock, panting. After wiping her brow, she strokes her hands languidly. Aziz, finding himself staring at her hands, wrenches his glance away and smilingly offers her his hand. Adela’s hesitation before proffering her own suggests her awareness that the gesture carries with it more than altruistic helpfulness. This interpretation is confirmed by the camera which immediately cuts to a close-up of the linked hands, a shot which is held for over three seconds. When Adela asks about the number of his wives, Aziz’s response is delivered naturally, without any tonal suggestion of the outrage Aziz feels in the novel. He does not splutter or “let go of her hand” (151). Instead, he continues to hold it until they reach the ledge. When Aziz (excusing himself first which he does not do in the novel) plunges off to smoke a cigarette, there is no sense of his thinking, “Damn the English even at their best” (151). His agitation appears as an attempt to control his sexual arousal, especially as when in turning to face Adela to excuse himself, he hangs his suit jacket directly in front of his groin. Adela is, apparently, also aroused. She stares after Aziz’s retreating figure, sighs as he disappears behind a rock, then moves slowly with hip-rolling sensuality towards the mouth of the cave.

In Forster’s novel, from the moment Adela enters the cave, her thoughts and emotions are withheld from the reader until “several days” (189), and some forty pages later. Lean takes the viewer into the cave with Adela. Her “unspeakable” experience occurs as Aziz attempts to locate her. She sees his figure outlined against the cave entrance, and, with parted lips, hears his voice and the resultant echo call her name. As the echo turns into a dull roar, her lips part even further, her eyes roll, she pants rapidly, squeezes her eyelids tightly together, then drops her head. The camera jump cuts to water spilling over a stone. The sequence “reads” more as orgasm than terror. And it has no basis in Forster’s text.

Critics who impose a sexual reading on the text invariably quote Adela's thought, "what a handsome little Oriental he was" (151), in support of their argument, but conveniently ignore the narrator's comment in the next sentence: "She did not admire him with any personal warmth¹², for there was nothing of the vagrant in her blood, but she guessed he might attract women of his own race and rank" (151). Adela's thought, far from implying attraction, confirms, rather, the extent to which she has already succumbed to the prevailing Anglo-Indian miasma. Aziz is reduced from a complex mind/body/soul individual to a physical presence defined by his race, "Oriental"; and further diminished by the condescending adjective "little". The assumption that only "women of his own race and rank" would find him attractive is as racist and bigoted as any remark passed by the Anglo-Indians she claims to despise.

Lean's remodelling of Adela's character and experiences is fluidly incorporated into the plot, consistent and convincing, and provides some of the most memorable footage in the film -- the abandoned temple scene. Indubitably it was a sound box-office decision, but it carried a price-tag of an entirely non-commercial nature that impacted disastrously on his treatment of Mrs Moore and the spiritual concerns of the novel.

Before exploring the consequences of Lean's version of Adela, however, it is necessary to examine his other major focus -- the political.

In dealing with the political dimension of A Passage to India, Lean faithfully explores Forster's ideas, although the term "political" is itself something of a misnomer. Forster stated that A Passage to India was "not really about politics", and, certainly, references to the British presence in India as a political issue are scant, Forster showing little interest in the morality of imperialism. What does concern him is the morality of imperialists. His indictment of the British Raj is socio-political, an indictment of its officers and their wives, and in keeping with comments that he made in "Reflections on India" for Nation and

¹² The manuscripts strike an even more insistent note, with Forster trying, successively, "He did not 'attract' her"; "In no sense did he attract her"; and, "He did not attract her in any sexual sense" (Stallybrass, Manuscripts 240).

Athaeneum:

The decent Anglo-Indian of today realises that the great blunder of the past is neither political nor economic, nor educational, but social; that he was associated with a system that supported rudeness in railway carriages, and is paying the penalty Never in history did ill-breeding contribute so much towards the dissolution of an Empire. (qtd. in Macaulay 190)

The socio-political dimension of A Passage to India, although not the primary thrust of the novel, provides more than historical background. It “inheres in the novel’s very shape and structure” (Trilling 108), for “rudeness spins the plot” (Macaulay 191), and social and cultural prejudices preclude man from understanding his fellow man as effectively as finite nature precludes his understanding of God. It is also of particular interest to South Africans, for the issues raised by Forster’s 1924 novel are the issues that have to be confronted in South Africa at the end of the century if its diverse population is to achieve harmony.

Forster makes it clear that the “rudeness” of Anglo-Indians, their social snobbery, is borne of an “abysmal contempt” for “an inferior race” (216). Anglo-Indian racism is partly the product of a Public School education that teaches contempt for other cultures (25); partly the result of a psycho-pathology inherent in the English language in which white/good, black/evil equations are so entrenched that Fielding’s “silly aside to the effect that the so-called white races are really pinko-grey” (62) can scandalize his listener; and partly the result of a warped religious outlook that is a parody of the political and social pretensions of its adherents, in which God -- elderly, white, male -- is a sort of super-imperialist who appoints the king, who appoints the Viceroy, who appoints the Collectors, the “little gods” (29) of India, and Heaven is a glorified Club from which other races are barred.

Whatever its roots, Anglo-Indian racism is manifested in social arrogance: the Anglo-Indians ignore their Indian guests at the Bridge Party; Mesdames

Callendar and Lesley usurp Aziz's tonga; Ronny ignores Dr Aziz and Professor Godbole at the tea-party, and calls "firmly to the moon" (30) when he wants his sais.

Conscious of Indians only at an official level (75), the Anglo-Indians, in their choice of nomenclature, deny any sense of Indian personal identity or value, generally referring to them as "the native" or "natives". The sardonic tone of Turton's "the Aryan Brother" (28) and Ronny's "the worthy doctor" (80) are equally dismissive. After the Marabar incident Aziz is "always referred to by a periphrasis" (179). Tone is particularly telling: Ronny is "ruffled" because his mother had not "indicated by the tone of her voice that she was talking about an Indian" (31); Fielding only invites Mrs Moore and Adela to tea "because they were newcomers who . . . would not turn on a special voice when speaking to his other guests" (63); Mrs Turton addresses Indian ladies in Urdu, a "lingo" of which "she knew none of the politer forms and of the verbs only the imperative mood" (42).

Although the Anglo-Indians believe they are "superior to everyone in India" (42), Forster shows how absurd their arrogance is. The veneration accorded to Mr Turton is totally disproportionate to his real power, a collector being an administrator of a small region of which there were thousands in India. By treating him like a "little god" (29), however, the Anglo-Indians increase their own sense of importance which is further bolstered by the jargon of validation: Turton is the "Burra Sahib" (30), Ronny a "sahib" (26), but Fielding and Adela are not "pukka" (29). Particularly absurd is that the arrogance of the Anglo-Indians is not based on individual worth, but on group power; Mr Turton's praise for Ronny is grounded purely in Ronny's conformity to collective demeanour: "It wasn't that the young man was particularly good at the games or the lingo, or that he had much notion of the Law, but -- apparently a large but -- Ronny was dignified" (26). The value of men's judgement is, similarly, assessed not by their actions or wisdom but by the length of their service in India: "above [Ronny] there stretched the higher realms of knowledge, inhabited by Callendars

and Turtons, who had been not one year in the country but twenty and whose instincts were super-human" (79). The civil station is a transplanted Sawston. Its inhabitants are philistines: "Their ignorance of the Arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity of proclaiming it to one another" (40); snobs: Mrs Blakiston, "the wife of a small railway official, . . . was generally snubbed" (178); and malicious gossips (48). Their intellectual paucity is revealed by the ease with which they make sweeping statements and generalizations, and their penchant for clichés and jargon. Their moral dishonesty is displayed in the double standards that expect "a Mohammedan to answer if . . . asked . . . to take off his hat in church" (32), but a Christian to ignore a request to remove shoes in a mosque.

Not all Anglo-Indians are jingoistic bigots; there are exceptions: Fielding, the missionaries, newcomers, a disembodied voice at the club. Even Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali and Aziz can recall "little kindnesses and courtesies" (14). But Fielding is considered "a disruptive force", "tolerated" by the men, "disliked" by their wives (102); the missionaries run a separate church and do not visit the club; newcomers are "snubbed . . . until they kept to the accredited themes and began to snub others" (47); and, as Mahmoud Ali concludes: "The exception does not prove the rule" (14). Even barring the exceptions, there are marked differences among the Anglo-Indians. The women are worse than the men, Callendar worse than Turton. As individuals they seem harmless, if hideous, but as soon as their "sense of insecurity [is] awoken" the "herd-instinct" comes to the fore (62). It is then that the malevolence, brutality, and vindictiveness of racism become evident. The club is the nexus and fortress of the herd: "God save the King" its rallying cry. Totally exclusive, Indians not allowed in even as invited guests, at its best the club offers a refuge in a frightening land. At its worst it becomes a breeding-ground for group evil. During the club meeting after Aziz's arrest, Fielding becomes aware that "the evil was propagating in every direction, it seemed to have an existence of its own, apart from anything that was done or said by individuals" (184). Adela's charge against Aziz whips

the club into fervour, and, in the most blatant expression of herd mentality in the novel, its members close rank around her. When she speaks the truth in court, she is neither admired for her courage, nor condemned for making a false charge in the first place. She is callously abandoned for letting down the side. Truth and justice are irrelevancies when group pride and status are threatened.

In dealing with the socio-political aspects of A Passage to India, Lean follows Forster's ideas closely, stressing the Anglo-Indian "miserable tragedy of manners and of heart" (Macaulay 190-191), thus revealing that while the Anglo-Indian presence in India is politically motivated, it is not political issues that are the major problem, but the mentality and behaviour of those whose power and authority is politically acquired.

The first fifteen minutes of Lean's film are devoted, primarily, to sketching in the socio-political context. These early scenes demonstrate Lean's sensitivity to the differing demands of novel and film for, although many of the characters, sections of dialogue, and incidents are drawn from or suggested by the novel, and comments made by the omniscient narrator are implied, none of the scenes is Forster's. In the novel, Adela and Mrs Moore are first encountered on the night of the "Cousin Kate" performance: Lean shows their journey from Bombay to Chandrapore. The sequence depicting their train journey provides an excellent example of Lean's technique.

Adela and Mrs Moore are taking tea in their compartment when Mrs Turton enters.

MRS TURTON. Mrs Moore?

MRS MOORE. Yes?

MRS TURTON. I'm Mrs Turton. (Pause.) My husband's the
Collector.

MRS MOORE. Oh, Oh. We gave our tickets to the Indian
gentleman.

MRS TURTON. The chief administrator of Chandrapore. Ronny's
Burra Sahib.

(Turning to Adela who is squashed behind the door.) You must be Adela.

MRS MOORE. Please forgive us, Mrs Turton, we've had a very trying day.

MRS TURTON. We just wanted to welcome you to the fold. Uh, oh, we're off. We must have a drink or something later when you've recovered.

Through Mrs Turton many Anglo-Indian characteristics are introduced in this scene. Her arrogance is immediately established by the way she pushes against the door as soon as it is opened, squashing Adela behind it. The pitch of Antonio Pemberton's voice -- just too high for sincerity -- reveals Mrs Turton's condescension. Her assumption that, first, Mrs Moore will recognize her name, then, secondly, know who the Collector is, reveals her self-importance, the absurdity of which is comically underscored by Mrs Moore's nescience. Nothing, however, dents Mrs Turton's self assurance and habit of self-aggrandizement. Even when reduced to having to explain her presence fully she adds the "Burra Sahib" tag, thus showing, too, her penchant for the jargon of imperialism. Her "just wanted to welcome you to the fold" not only reflects a propensity for clichéd expressions but is also an apt metaphor for the enclave of the herd -- the club -- and implies the lamb/wolf dichotomy which characterizes Anglo-Indian perception of English/Indian rôles.

The second scene in this sequence is shot in the dining-car.

MRS TURTON. (As her husband pours a glass of port.) I believe you and Ronny met in the Lake District, Miss Quested.

ADELA. (Evidently taken aback.) Yes, we did.

MRS TURTON. You must forgive me. We have very few secrets in Chandrapore and I'm an incurable romantic.

(An awkward silence ensues while Mrs Turton passes the decanter to Adela, who passes it to Mrs Moore, who returns it to its original place.)

MRS MOORE. Miss Quested was with her aunt, and I was with Ronny.

(Another awkward pause.)

MR TURTON. Of course, you know, Mrs Moore, Ronny's doing splendidly. You'll be proud of him.

MRS TURTON. (Recovering from the put-down and resuming the rôle of genial hostess.) I'll second that. He's become a proper sahib. (Camera cuts to reverse shot of Adela watching her.) Just the type we want, if I might say so.

(Adela becomes aware that she is staring and looks out of the window to cover her confusion.)

MRS MOORE. You know, Mr Turton, when we get settled in, we look forward to meeting some of the Indians you come across socially, as friends.

MR TURTON. As a matter of fact we don't come across them socially. Full of all the virtues, no doubt, but . . . er . . . we don't.

MRS TURTON. East is East, Mrs Moore. It's a question of culture.

This scene re-enforces and expands upon impressions created in the former. The way Mrs Turton relishes the titbit about Ronny and Adela meeting in the Lake District establishes her as a quidnunc, and, as the camera takes Adela's viewpoint, "incurable romantic" translates readily as "malicious busybody". Mrs Turton's smug "East is East" is particularly apposite because Forster deliberately "subverts the Kiplingesque tradition of colonial fiction and exposes the cruelty and fear on which the British Raj rested so sanctimoniously" (Summers 184). Mr Turton subconsciously reveals the prejudice that prevents social intercourse with Indians. Not only does his explanation collapse lamely, but the "no doubt" appended to "full of all the virtues" has the effect of a disclaimer.

Of particular interest in this scene is the use of the camera as omniscient narrator. The scene begins with a brief shot of a waiter taking port to the

Turton's table. The lavish crystal decanter; highly-polished silverware; and the waiter's uniform of black trousers, starched white jacket, and white gloves humorously suggest the attempt to re-create England (or Sawston) in India. The shot is a medium shot which shows the waiter from shoulder to knee leaving him literally and symbolically faceless, and focussing attention on his hands. By reducing him to his function, the camera offers an ironic comment on the Anglo-Indian inability to perceive of Indians as human beings. Lean also approximates Forster's ironic voice in three extreme long shots of the train which are montaged into the sequence. In each, the foreground is dominated by something specifically Indian -- a minaret, the Ganges, and a statue of a Persian horseman -- whilst the train in the far ground is a minute straight line crawling from left to right across a vast landscape. The arrogance and self-importance of the British administrators is thus ironically deflated, for, in contrast to nature (the Ganges), the religion (minaret), and history (Persian horseman) of India, man and technology are reduced to insignificance. There is also wonderful ironic and satiric humour in the jump cut immediately after Mrs Turton's pompous, "It's a question of culture," for the Persian horseman that so dominates the next frame is a symbol of a culture far richer and older, far more intricate and subtle than anything that the Anglo-Indians can offer. The silhouetted statue also serves as a reminder of the limits of certainty by defeating attempts at identification. Is it one of the horsemen from the Mandapa at Srirangam? (Fry 105) The outline seems right, but the details are swallowed in blackness. Symbolically it predicts that, whether approached with the jaundiced eye of Anglo-India or the benevolent curiosity of an Adela or Mrs Moore, India and the multiverse of which it is a symbol are, like the statue, ultimately unknowable.

It is not only India that is destined to remain unknowable, however. The only Indians Adela and Mrs Moore will spend any time with are a surgeon and an educationalist. That they are hardly representative of India's population is suggested by Lean in scenes showing Bombay quay and the Chandrapore bazaar.

Porters, Muslim women in the chadors of purdah, food merchants, snake-charmers, pall-bearers, women in glowing multi-coloured saris, and turbaned men with naked torsos suggest a vivid culture that the visitors glimpse only in passing. Lean's vibrant and colourful Chandrapore is not Forster's, where "The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving" (9), but Lean does suggest "humanity grading and drifting beyond the educated vision, until no earthly invitation can embrace it" (38): banks of impoverished and sickly Indians cough themselves to sleep under a bridge over which the train passes. The travellers, however, cannot see the consumptive hordes. Adela and Mrs Moore want to see and know; their smiling faces and animated gestures as they drive through the bazaar reveal their interest. In contrast, for the Anglo-Indians not seeing is volitional. Ronny stares straight ahead, and as the Turton entourage drive through the bazaar Lean pulls to shallow focus, leaving the background an undifferentiated blur, to reveal their indifference.

Glorifying England is an Anglo-Indian corollary to ignoring India. The Anglo-Indian agglutination to all things English is comically and economically exposed. On the day after their arrival Adela and Mrs Moore take tea at the club. Adela picks up a sandwich, looks at it disparagingly and utters only one word: "Cucumber." A street sign at the entrance to the civil station reveals that the streets are named Trafalgar Road, Wellington Road, and Kitchener Avenue. Carved into the architrave of Ronny's home is its name: FAIRHOLME. It is a fitting choice in a community that has failed to respond with any imaginative sympathy to a land, or a people, they have subjugated.

The interior of Ronny's home lives up to the promise of the facade: it is a home any Sawston matron would be proud to own, from the furniture, to the topis on pegs, to the framed picture of a spaniel. (Maude Goodman's *Doggie?* [69]) It is depressingly tidy. As Ronny and Mrs Moore enter, they stop on the threshold framed by the doorposts. The closed frame evokes the claustrophobic, stultified atmosphere in which the Chandrapore administrators live, consumed by their determination to block out anything un-English. The

viewer is invited to share Mrs Moore's response to her son's home. Her face reveals disappointment, and in answer to Ronny's proud, "Here we are then!" she can manage only an unenthusiastic, "Very nice, dear."

Mrs Moore's response to Fielding's home is very different. Her expression is one of pure pleasure; her only comment a delighted, "Oh!" Because of this, and because both homes are viewed through the eyes of a visitor, comparison is invited. The stark contrast between the two serves to emphasise Fielding's position as outsider, while the *mise-en-scene* visually re-creates Forster's description of Fielding in Chapter 7.

The first shot of Fielding's home, an open-framed long shot taken from inside looking out, immediately suggest its owner's open mind while the novel's "It was . . . a very beautiful room, opening into the garden through three high arches of wood" (63) is graphically presented by the view of a water tank in a garden of marvellous, gnarled old trees seen through three ogee arches with latticed spandrels supported by slender white columns. The ogeed shapes speak of ancestry in Muslim architecture. The water tank similarly evokes a Muslim heritage for, although Aziz's claim that the water in his mosque also fills Fielding's tank is factually inaccurate, it is truth of mood that is important. Aziz makes his entrance through the arches, to discover Fielding in the shower. In response to Fielding's, "Make yourself at home," Aziz explores the room. His curiosity invites the viewer's attention to details of the *mise-en-scene*. The furniture is eclectic; some pieces, like the roll-top desk, are decidedly British; some, like the brass-topped coffee-table, very Eastern. Aziz's tour draws attention to a bookcase housing weathered volumes; a cricket bat hanging on the wall; a variety of post-cards and prints (noticeably Turner's Burning of the Houses of Parliament) pinned to a notice-board; and a commemorative army mug informally filled with yellow flowers which Aziz moves aside to reveal a framed photograph of a First World War tank with a photograph of (presumably) Fielding's army buddies stuck into the frame at bottom left. The contents of the desk are disorganized. The impression given of the room is that

there is "some luxury in it, but no order -- nothing to intimidate poor Indians" (63). The general contrast between this room and the immaculate rooms in Ronny's home functions in the same way as the contrast between the rooms in Gino's home in Where Angels Fear to Tread to suggest vitality and life as opposed to sterility and death, while the details offer an insight into its owner's character. Fielding's scholastic career and his belief in education is suggested by the desk and books; the cricket bat implies his "strong body" (62), and enjoyment of sport; the army tank offers proof of Forster's "he was not unpatriotic" (61), the army buddies that "he always got on with Englishmen in England" (61). The books and art prints reveal that Fielding, unlike other Anglo-Indians, is a cultured man. In choosing Turner's Burning of the Houses of Parliament as the dominant print on the notice-board, Lean implies Fielding's implicit, if not politically conscious, rejection of the British Raj;

"And those Englishmen who are not delighted to be in India -- have they no excuse?" he [Hamidullah] asked [of Fielding].

"None. Chuck 'em out." (109)

Two objects not specifically examined by Aziz, also stand out: a bronze dancing Siva, and a framed print of Raphael's Portrait of a Cardinal. Together, the Hindu Siva and the Catholic cardinal suggest Fielding's atheism: they are to him aesthetic artefacts rather than religious icons. Individually, they are more disturbing. The Raphael, one of the great master-pieces of the Italian Renaissance, suggests Fielding's limitations: his norm is the "human norm" of "the Mediterranean", the "monstrous and extraordinary" lie outside his ambit (275). The Raphael also anticipates Fielding's appreciation of the beauty of form in Venice, and his realization that his Indian friends "would miss the joys he experienced . . . and that this constituted a serious barrier" (275). The Siva is a copy of the one in the Siva Temple at Tanjore, representing Siva as Nataraja, or Lord of the Dance (Ambrose 19). In one hand he carries a small drum symbolizing the rhythm of creation, in another the fire of destruction. While the emphasis in the tea-party scene is on the creation of an expanding circle of friendship begun in the mosque, Lean provides disquieting undertones

that look forward to the dissolution of friendships that will begin at this very party with the invitation to the Marabar Caves.

Perhaps this is an appropriate moment to mention Lean's excellent use of music, as the first meeting between Fielding and Aziz contains a fine example of the ironic use to which it is often put. While Aziz inspects the room, Fielding sings in the shower. The action, in itself, suggests his relaxed social grace: unlike other Anglo-Indians he is not stiff and unnatural in the presence of an Indian. His choice of song, Yum-Yum's "The Sun whose Rays" from Mikado, is, however, ironic. Not only does his choice of Gilbert and Sullivan accord with the tastes of the club who are considering The Yeoman of the Guard as their next musical (40), but the lyrics,

The sun, whose rays
Are all ablaze
With ever living glory,
Does not deny
His majesty

are in ironic contrast to the narrator's perception of the sun in Forster's novel: "The Sun was returning to his Kingdom with power but without beauty . . . He was merely a creature, like the rest, and so debarred from glory" (112).

Fielding is, thus, revealed to be a Romantic. Not one of the English who "sneer at [Indian] skins" (114), he is, nonetheless, as imaginatively incapable of understanding India as his fellow Anglo-Indians. It is only under the influence of the delicate beauty of the English countryside, "the buttercups and daisies of June" (275), that he can "flower".

Lean uses music at the Bridge Party for satiric effect. Three popular tunes are played by the band: "Tea for Two", "Roses of Picardy" and "Nights of Gladness". "Tea for Two" is riotously inappropriate, wafting out as it does over massed banks of Indian visitors. For viewers who know the lyrics, one line in particular, "Nobody near us, to see us or hear us," augments the comic effect, and offers a satiric comment on the Anglo-Indian propensity for treating Indians

as invisible. The maudlin sentimentality of "Roses of Picardy" is also used satirically:

The flowers may fall in the summer-time,
And our roads may be far apart,
But there's one Rose that dies not in Picardy:
'Tis the rose that I keep in my heart.

As the rose is the national flower of England, it suggests the Anglo-Indian emotional adherence to all things British which precludes them from meaningful interaction with India or Indians. For the Indian visitors, there will be no "Nights of Gladness" attached to the Bridge Party for, "when seven o'clock struck, they had to be turned out" (44).

As the Bridge Party winds to a close, Lean includes the purport of the conversation between Ronny and Mrs Moore which, in the novel, takes place in Ronny's home later that evening. An original addition is Mrs Moore's response to Ronny's: "What do you and Adela want me to do? Sacrifice my career? Lose the power I have for doing good in this benighted country?" Mrs Moore exclaims in exasperation: "Good! You're speaking about power. The whole of this entertainment is an exercise in power, and the subtle pleasures of personal superiority." As she turns away angrily, the band strikes up "God save our gracious King". It is a deft touch by Lean. Peggy Ashcroft's Mrs Moore struggles out of her chair, her mouth a tight line of anger, and, with eyes closed in irritation, exhales noisily. Her action shows disparagement of both Ronny's attitude to the British presence in India, and "the curt series of demands on Jehova" (27). The gulf that exists between Mrs Moore's Christianity and that of the average Anglo-Indian is evidenced in Mrs Moore's next comment: "God has put on earth to love and help our fellow men," and Ronny's responding, "Yes, mother," delivered in that tone which has as its subtext, "I am acquiescing not because I agree, but because I realise it is pointless to continue any further discussion." Ronny is utterly dismissive of his mother's viewpoint, thus reflecting the narrator's comment in the novel: "Ronny approved of religion as

long as it endorsed the National Anthem, but he objected when it attempted to influence his life" (51). This is the second time the National Anthem is played in the film. The first, following the novel, is after the performance of Cousin Kate. Then, the unnaturally stiff faces and even stiffer postures (especially of the four billiard players) suggested only excessive national zeal: in this scene, coming as it does immediately after Mrs Moore's comment about the pleasures of power, it is a forceable reminder that it was "the Anthem of the Army of Occupation" (27). As such, its tactless use at a tea-party ostensibly designed to bridge the social gap between East and West is an example of crass jingoism.

Lean, unlike Forster, provides a brief glimpse of the performance of Cousin Kate in a scene which borders on burlesque. From the strident singing and exaggerated gestures, to the appallingly-executed, clichéd choreography, it epitomises coarse acting. The section of song Lean uses is remarkable only for the inanity of its lyrics with their trite forced rhyme:

KATE. I've got this strange feeling

I've fallen in love.

DUET. She's fallen in love.

KATE. While I won't reveal it . . .

(The next line is inaudible as the camera cuts to the wings, showing

Ronny, as stage-manager, cueing in the chorus.)

CHORUS. Hooray, hooray, hooray,

It's a wonderful day today.

KATE. But I know that at this juncture

I can't afford a puncture.

This is amateur theatre at its worst: in the film it functions satirically to suggest the superficiality of the Anglo-Indians, with Ronny's solemn concentration revealing their humourless dedication to the preservation of shallow Edwardian public school values.

One other piece of music deserves special mention -- the overture. Accurately described by Sheila Benson of Los Angeles Times as "not

traditionally Indian at all . . . sweet and rueful, romantic and faintly humorous, almost a 1920's dance tune" (1042), Maurice Jarre's score attracted strong criticism from many reviewers such as New Statesman's John Coleman who deemed it an "infelicity . . . appallingly wrong . . . promising a musical -- The Marabar Follies" (1042).

Film critics both for and against, however, seem united in missing the point by ignoring the combination of sight and sound. The visual image that accompanies the overture is the sixth century fresco of Avalokitesvara Padmapani, the Bodhisattva, which forms part of the decoration of Cave I at Ajanta. The Bodhisattva, "a prince who wears a bejewelled tiara as the symbol of his sovereignty over Samsara¹³" (Mukerjee 276), is flanked by female figures, dwarfs and monkeys to "emphasise his own serene spirituality" (Deneck 36). He represents the "balance between the worldly and the spiritual" and as such is a symbol of "metaphysical idealism and universal compassion" (Mukerjee 276). Set in contrast to the superficial social values suggested by Jarre's overture, the visual image suggests an irreconcilable dichotomy. If Jarre's overture seems "infelicitous", that is precisely the point. Together, image and music serve as a metaphor for Forster's depiction of the imperial presence in India: the Anglo-Indians have infelicitously superimposed their own brash tastes and values on a culture that is far older, more subtle and spiritual. The Bodhisattva and Jarre's overture form the background to the title credits. Because the title credits emphasise that what is about to be shown is Lean's version of Forster's novel, a second, and by Lean unintended, metaphor is ironically suggested; Lean has superimposed his own brash tastes on a novel that is subtle and spiritual. Which brings us back to Lean's interpretation of Adela.

In deciding that his version of Adela was "more attractive" than Forster's, Lean committed an act of filmic imperialism, and his brasher Adela impacted infelicitously on the novel's spiritual concerns. The problem it created was

¹³ The transmigratory experience

twofold. First, in providing a rational, Western explanation for Adela's experience in the cave, Lean compromised Forster's thematic intentions in the novel as a whole, namely "to indicate the human predicament in a universe which is not, so far, comprehensible to our minds" (Forster Appendix 328). Forster was adamant that even he did not know what had happened to Adela. In a 1924 letter to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson he stated:

In the cave it is either a man, or the supernatural, or an illusion. And even if I know! [sic] My writing mind therefore is a blur here -- i.e. I will it to remain a blur, and to be uncertain, as I am of many facts in daily life. This isn't a philosophy of aesthetics. It's a particular trick I felt justified in trying because my theme was India. (qtd. in Moran 597)

In 1934, Forster again insisted on his ignorance, writing that he had "tried to show that India is an unexplainable muddle by introducing an unexplained muddle -- Miss Quested's experience in the cave. When asked what happened there, I don't know" (qtd. in Moran 597). Certainly, Forster's creation, Adela, never works out what happened. Her final word on the subject is: "It will never be known" (256). If she has learnt anything from her experience it is that the "intellectualism" (206) she embraces is inadequate. She is left with a "wistfulness" for something missing in her life, a feeling that "The shadow of the shadow of a dream fell over [her] clear-cut interests, and objects never seen again seemed messages from another world" (257). Even Adela's name is significant, the manuscripts revealing that Forster had originally thought of Janet, then Edith. The change to Adela, "from the Greek meaning unclear or 'not manifest'" (Moffat 334), reflects Forster's decision to shroud her experience in uncertainty as an analogue for the mystery that lies at the heart of all human endeavour to understand an unfathomable universe. Partly because Lean lays out a trail of clues that leads to a single interpretation of Adela's experience, his India is all but divested of its aura of mystery so carefully established in the train journey sequence, and fails to function as a metaphor for

an unknowable universe.

The second problem created by Lean's version of Adela is the nature of the Marabar Caves themselves. Their significance, in Forster's work, is inextricably bound to the religious themes of the novel. The "passage" of the title is a spiritual quest, a yearning for mystic union with the divine that however feebly realized by some is common to all: it is a quest to dispel "our loneliness . . . our isolation, [it expresses] our need for the Friend who never comes yet is not entirely disproved" (103). Religion is a man-made artifice designed to enable passage; the extent to which Islam, Christianity and Hinduism are effective artifices is explored in A Passage to India. Ultimately, all are limited, for the divine is infinite, and infinity by its very nature precludes comprehension. It is only in fleeting moments when personality is abandoned in transcendent vision that man can achieve a glimpse of divinity. And it is only through love -- that spiritual force of "universal warmth" which is itself a collapse of ego-boundaries -- that such moments can be achieved (281). Perfection is impossible, "but there are . . . many kinds of failure" (51), each determined by the limits placed on infinity, and the limited ability to love. Even Professor Godbole, who except for Mrs Moore, is the most spiritually advanced of the protagonists, falls short when he cannot love a stone (282).

Of the religions examined, Christianity provides the least effective passage, its exclusivity revealed at worst by Mrs Callendar who deplores missionaries because she would like other races barred from heaven (28), at best by the missionaries. Even here there are levels of failure. Mr Graysford, while happy to allow all races "their collateral share of bliss", insists that "divine hospitality" does not extend beyond man (28). The "advanced" Mr Sorley, viewing God's mercy as "infinite", is prepared to include all mammals, but his concept of infinite somehow manages to exclude wasps and anything else lower down the scale of creation: "we must exclude someone from our gathering, or we shall be left with nothing" (38). While there are many kinds of failure, none is complete. Even the Anglo-Indians, whose prayer, like Mrs Turton's communication with

Indians, is restricted to "the imperative mood" (42), being expressed in a "curt series of demands on Jehovah", "perceive something" which results in good will; "they poured out, offering one another drinks" (27). Mrs Moore, nominally a Christian, has outgrown the limitations of her faith. Desirous of being "one with the universe" (203), she finds that the Christian god, though "constantly in her thoughts . . . satisfied her less" (52). Her approach to divinity is not exclusive: she recognizes the presence of god in Aziz's mosque; intuitively understands that the Nawab's car was hit by a ghost; loves Aziz and a wasp.

Islam fares little better than Christianity, the differences between them being superficial, as implied by the description of Aziz's mosque as "an English parish church whose side has been taken out" (18). Ultimately, "those shallow arcades provided but a limited asylum. 'There is no god but God' doesn't carry us far through the complexities of matter and spirit; it is only a game with words, really, a religious pun, not a religious truth" (269). Aziz, like the Anglo-Indians, connects religion with nationalism (108), is chauvinistically intolerant (261), and not particularly devout (58). He is, however, partly redeemed from the narrow exclusivity of his faith by a philosophy that gives primacy to "the secret understanding of the heart" (21).

Hinduism comes closest to providing passage because its keynote is inclusivity. The participants at the Gokul Ashtami festival include "villagers . . . tradesmen . . . officials, courtiers, scions of the ruling house . . . schoolboys . . . The Rajah . . . Gods, big and little" (279 - 300), and even the "unclean Sweepers . . . the spot of filth without which the spirit cannot cohere" (301). At the transcendent moment when "Infinite love took upon itself the form of Shri Krishna, and saved the world . . . All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars" (283). Even other religions are accommodated: Professor Godbole, "imitating God", loves Mrs Moore and wasp equally: "He was a Brahman, she Christian, but it made no difference" (285 - 286). The tray holding the model of the village of Gokul also contains "little images of Ganpati", the elephant-headed Hindu god of prosperity;

“tiny tazias” that represent the tomb of Mohammed’s martyred grandson, Hussain; and “baskets of ten-day corn” (309), symbols of the fertility rites of the western dying gods of whom Christ is the latest manifestation (Phillips 122). Hinduism is accepting of other religions because it recognizes that all religions, including its own, are but man-made attempts to achieve “a passage not easy, not now, not here” (309). The tray is thrown away because the symbols it contains are “scapegoats, husks” -- insignificant and superficial representations of that which is indefinable, ineffable, and “unattainable” (309). The divine, being infinite, incorporates mystery and muddle. This aspect of Hindu thought is enigmatically captured by the inscription “God si love” (281). Is it just “an unfortunate slip of the draughtsman”, or does the narrator’s ironic comment that it was “composed in English to indicate His universality” rebound upon itself (281), the phrase being more universal than the narrow ethno-centricity of the narrator allowed for, with “si” being the French “if”, and its message being that God can only be present where love exists? Perhaps it is even more subtle -- a rejection of linguistic complacency, a denial that the complexities of either love or divinity can be expressed in language. Or is it just meant to be read backwards -- “Love is God”? Is it a muddle posing as a mystery, or a mystery revealed through a muddle? “Perhaps all these things! Perhaps none!” (285) “God si Love”, in denying final interpretation, is a perfect expression of Hinduism’s attitude to the divine.

Apart from the three religions, another religious issue receives prominence in “Caves” -- the caves themselves. Strictly speaking Jain Caves, they provide nonetheless a concrete expression of an aspect of Hindu thought. Although conceptualizing the divine as “Infinite love” (283), Hinduism, in acknowledging the complexity of infinity, rejects the simplistic dualism of Islam and Christianity. The divine, being infinite, must incorporate all the polar opposites -- light and darkness, absence and presence, good and evil. As Professor Godbole explains to Fielding: “When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe. Similarly when good occurs Good and evil . . . are both of

them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence" (175). The importance of the caves is established in the first sentence of the novel where the "conjunction . . . between nothing and extraordinary presents a highly condensed suggestion of . . . [their] significance" (Rosecrance 189). This suggestion is amplified in "Caves". Geologically, the Marabar Caves are "older than anything in the world" (123); in evolutionary terms they are "flesh of the sun's flesh" (123), pre-dating the earth itself; spiritually they are "like nothing else in the world . . . older than all spirit" (123 - 24). Their inconceivable antiquity, the parody of "God of God, light of light", and their unique nature imply numinosity. Their physical appearance adds to the impression, for the rough man-made tunnels that leads to "the internal perfection" suggest man's clumsy attempts to understand God (125). Forster's comment about his original conception of the caves -- they "represented an area in which concentration can take place. A cavity They were to engender an event like an egg" (qtd. in Furbank and Lago 28) -- provides three clues: "concentration", "cavity" and "egg". The egg metaphor is repeated in A Passage to India: the "bubble-shaped cave that has neither ceiling nor floor," should it fall and smash, would be "empty as an Easter egg" (125). The Easter egg, in Christian symbology, represents the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea which, when the three Marys arrive to prepare the body of Christ for burial, is empty. God is not there. But the absence of Christ is not evidence of his non-existence, "absence implies presence" (175). The Marabar Caves are cavities, holes of emptiness, concentrations of nothing: "Nothing, nothing attaches to them" (124). Yet in this novel of uncertainties, not even nothing is absolute. The caves do "contain" an absence of light; they mirror their "own darkness in every direction infinitely" (125). This darkness is the "Ancient Night" Aziz encounters when he attempts to find out from Professor Godbole why the caves are considered extraordinary (74). Read in this way, Mrs Moore's experience, which Forster called "a moment of negation . . . the vision with its back turned" (qtd. in Beer,

Achievement 158), makes perfect sense. So does her final view of India, for she realizes that the Marabar Caves are not final; realizes that "Nothing embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing . . ." (143); realizes what Professor Godbole has always known: "Absence is not non-existence" (175). The structure of the novel supports this interpretation for "Mosque and temple -- two buildings, two religions flank a central geological enigma, the caves" (Dowling 257). Dowling's comment, that "the structure of the novel reflects the motif of the arch" (257), emphasises the spiritual nature of the caves, for Forster uses a series of arches as symbols for an ever-receding infinite. Even more significantly, however, the structure reflects the tension between absence and presence. In Aziz's mosque, Mrs Moore notes that "God is here" (21); in "Temple", "Professor Godbole stands in the presence of God" (279); in the caves, God is absent.

The nature of the caves is of seminal importance to the themes of the novel in general, and Mrs Moore and Adela's experiences in particular. Mrs Moore comes to India desiring "to be one with the universe" (203); she mystically experiences what the surrender of identity in the absence of divinity is like. Adela comes to India desiring to be united with a man; she mystically experiences union with a man in the absence of love -- rape. In contrast, Lean's version of Adela's experience strips the caves of mystic significance. Committed to a marriage with a man who seems unlikely to be able to fulfil her sexual needs, sexually aroused by Aziz, and unaccustomed to the extreme heat, Adela's subconscious desires overwhelm her in a moment of faintness during which she experiences an orgasm which her conscious mind rejects and interprets as a rape attempt. Adela's cave becomes simply a cool, dark interior which, in sudden contrast to the glaring heat of the plains, induces a fainting spell. If it functions symbolically at all, it is as a descent into the unconscious. This leaves Lean with a nasty quandary when dealing with Mrs Moore, for it is well-nigh impossible to invest one cave with cosmic significance while another cave is just a cave.

It is a quandary which Lean never resolves. Far from imposing an interpretation upon the viewer as he does in Adela's case, Lean seems unable to decide whether Mrs Moore has some cosmically significant experience or simply an attack of claustrophobia, and lurches uncomfortably between the two interpretations.

The scene before the party enters the first cave provides an excellent example of the problems that are to follow. The first shot of the caves shows Mrs Moore outlined against the entrance tunnel. The shot, a high-angle long shot, is taken from inside the cave looking out. Together with Mrs Moore's evident unease, it predicts a coming disaster. She moves to sit at a table with Adela.

MRS MOORE. (To Adela.) Horrid, stuffy place, really, but everything is very well arranged.

AZIZ. (Arriving with a bottle of port and two pewter beer tankards.)

And here, ladies, is your port. . . . The guide says everyone to go in quietly [sic]. All sounds make an echo and many sounds create inharmonious effect.

MRS MOORE. I do hope I shall be alright. In my early days with Ronny's father, I made rather a fool of myself in the Chamber of Horrors.

AZIZ. Horrors? What horrors?

MRS MOORE. The wax-work museum. He was a very conventional young man, which made it all rather worse.

AZIZ. This was not Stella's father?

MRS MOORE. No, no! He was very unconventional. (Sighing nostalgically.) My goodness me.

The disquiet created by the opening shot is compounded by the alarm expressed by Mrs Moore when Aziz mentions the echo, and by the implication that the cave will be a chamber of horrors. The effect of these hints is, however, undercut by Mrs Moore's anecdotal treatment of the wax-work museum incident which suggests that nothing more serious than claustrophobia

is in store for her. She is gay and humorous, and rather than being upset by a vivid recollection of distress, drifts off into nostalgic memories of her second husband, gazing into the distance, a dreamy smile on her face. It is further undercut by the comic "business" with the port, and the comedy of Aziz's lack of cultural references for "Chamber of Horrors". In another context, the comedy and misunderstanding would be apt. Here they confuse.

This scene sets the pattern for what is to follow, with some aspects of the screenplay implying that Mrs Moore experiences a spiritual crisis, others denying it. The former is suggested by Mrs Moore's anxiety as she enters the cave, and her extreme distress as she staggers out. The high-angle long shot which shows her as a small figure outlined against the entrance is taken from outside this time, thus bracketing her experience in the cave with intimations of disaster. As she sinks into a chair, she turns her face to the sky. Because the heat of the day has already been established, a justified cut to the sun is expected. Instead, the camera cuts to a shot of a bloated midday moon lurking behind the Kawa Dol. Its aberrant appearance lends force to her words: "I suppose, like many old people, I sometimes think we are merely passing figures in a godless universe." The camera affirms her comment by cutting to an extreme close-up of the moon. Sallow in the midday light, its distended, pocked face seemingly disease-ridden, the moon engulfs the world of the film, speaking of a universe alien and inimical, impervious to personal pain or pleasure, incapable of compassion or love. Together with Mrs Moore's reference to "a godless universe", it implies the narrator's comment: "she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul" (148). It is the closest Lean comes to conveying the nature of Mrs Moore's experience.

The very next shot undermines the impression created by the moon. Adela's face as she bends anxiously over Mrs Moore is enlarged, distorted and semi-disembodied. It is the optical distortion that happens when one is about to faint, and thus emphasises physical disturbance. Admittedly Mrs Moore "nearly

fainted" (145) in the cave in Forster's text, but there her Eastern version of the dark night of the soul is clearly established by the effect of the echo on her psyche. Forster's echo is "entirely devoid of distinction . . . monotonous . . . utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce 'boum'" (145). The reductive quality of the echo strips life of significance: "Pathos, pity, courage -- they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value" (147). It also denies religious hope: "Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from 'Let there be light' to 'It is finished' only amounted to 'boum'" (148). Lean's echo is positively garrulous, far more in keeping with "the long, solid sentences that voyage through the air at Mandu" than with Forster's Marabar (145). "Kawa Dol," shouts the guide: "Kawa Dol," repeats the echo: "Mrs Moore," shouts Aziz: "Mrs Moore," replies the echo. It is most unfortunate. Instead of obliterating distinctions, Lean's echo insists upon them.

Although the initial impressions created about Mrs Moore's experience in the cave are ambiguous, Lean's treatment of her reaction to the rest of the expedition eradicates any sense of spiritual crisis. In stark contrast to the novel where, by the time Fielding arrives and Aziz returns, Mrs Moore "appeared sulky and stupid" (155), was "sunk in apathy and cynicism" (156), and "scarcely spoke" (155), Lean shows her thrilled to see Fielding, actively concerned and participating fully in the discussion about Adela's sudden decampment. Aziz's arrest provides an even starker contrast. In the novel, Mrs Moore had "taken no interest at the arrest" (196). Lean shows Ronny forceably removing her from the station. She struggles physically against him; shouts above the chaos that she cannot leave without speaking to Fielding and Aziz; and, as Ronny admonishes her to, "Come along," breaks free saying, "I will not: something very terrible is happening." This is not someone who "has lost all interest, even in Aziz" (148).

Between Aziz's arrest and Mrs Moore's departure, Lean uses Mrs Moore in two scenes. Much of her dialogue is drawn from the novel, but the impression

created in the first of these is vastly different from the novel because of the context. On the day of the picnic, Ronny and Mrs Moore sit on either side of Adela's bed while Mrs Callendar removes cactus spines from Adela's leg. Adela is in a drug-induced sleep.

MRS CALLENDAR. She's been complaining about an echo in her head.

MRS MOORE. What about the echo?

MRS CALLENDAR. She can't get rid of it.

MRS MOORE. Humph! I don't suppose she ever will.

MRS CALLENDAR. (Leaving the room after an awkward pause.)

Back in a moment.

RONNY. That was unkind.

MRS MOORE. Unkind? Unkind? What about poor Dr Aziz and those terrible police?

RONNY. Mother, quiet . . . please!

MRS MOORE. (Raising her voice.) I won't be quiet. Aziz is certainly innocent.

RONNY. You don't know that.

MRS MOORE. I know about people's characters, as you call them. It's not the sort of thing he would do.

RONNY. Whatever you think, the case has got to come before a magistrate now. It really must. The machinery has started.

MRS MOORE. (Looking at Adela with animosity.) Yes. She has started the machinery. It will work to its end.

In the novel, Mrs Moore "kept away" (189) from the sick bed, the purport of Lean's scene occurring when Adela returns to Ronny's home, hoping for Mrs Moore's help. Mrs Moore has "no inclination to be helpful" (194), and Adela is thrice reduced to tears by her unkindness and irritability (195, 197, 200). Lean has retained Mrs Moore's "air of ill-temper" (199), but it loses its impact when Ronny is on the receiving end. In the novel Mrs Moore's opinion about Aziz's innocence is offered "indifferently" (200). Far from refusing to be quiet, she

views speech as futile: "Say, say, say," said the old lady bitterly. As if anything can be said! I have spent my life in saying or in listening to sayings; I have listened too much. It is time I was left in peace. . . ." (195). What Lean leaves out is significant. Expurgated from the film is Mrs Moore's scoffing reference to Christianity: "Was he in the cave and were you in the cave and on and on . . . and Unto us a Son is born, unto us a Child is given . . . and am I good and is he bad and are we saved? . . . and ending everything the echo" (200). Gone, too, is her calm acceptance of evil, and her relegation of good to the realms of illusion: "I am . . . a bad old woman, bad, bad, detestable. I used to be good . . . I meet this young man in his mosque, I wanted him to be happy. Good, happy, small people. They do not exist, they were a dream . . ." (200). Forster created an old woman, already unsettled by her visit to India, who undergoes a profound spiritual crisis as the result of a horrifying mystic experience in a cave. Christianity, once the guiding principle of her life, is reduced to a meaningless clatter of words; the eternal essence, once a God of love, becomes "something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity -- the undying worm itself" (203); all distinctions are blurred: "everything exists, nothing has value"; her very "hold on life" is undermined (147). She becomes a cynical, "withered priestess" (203), irritable, petty and selfish, embracing a fatalism which is nihilistic. Lean gives us an old woman who has a bad attack of claustrophobia in a cave. She has a fleeting thought that God does not exist, but bounces back. Indignant about the treatment of Aziz, angry with Adela and Ronny, she refuses to be silenced.

In the last scene before Mrs Moore's departure, Lean attempts to recover something of Forster's creation. By then, of course, it is too late. Mrs Moore's closing statement: "Nothing I can say or do will make the least difference," and her refusal to be a witness, seem to contradict her earlier avowal of, "I won't be quiet." Her sudden refusal to draw distinctions, "All this rubbish about love in a church, love in a cave, as if there were the least difference," comes uncomfortably from the mouth that preached Christian doctrine. Lean also adds a distracting red-herring. When Mrs Moore selfishly insists on changing her

travel arrangements so that she can “settle things up, see Stella,” Ronny sighs and drops his head. Evidently he has always felt that Stella was the favourite child, as is further implied by his later flare-up: “I don’t understand you. I’ve never understood you any more than you’ve understood me.” The sceptre of sibling rivalry turns the whole scene into an extension of a long-standing familial disharmony. Lean’s sudden volte-face does nothing to clarify Mrs Moore’s experience in a cave which, by now, seems to have marked the onset of a psychotic episode. When Ronny mentions the caves and their echo, Mrs Moore snaps at him: “You will never understand the nature of that place, Ronny. Nor will anyone else in that ridiculous court of yours.” Nor will the viewer, given Lean’s mishandling, a mishandling which, ironically, was the result of Lean’s own failure to understand. In a letter written while on location, Peggy Ashcroft admits that she is finding Mrs Moore difficult to “see,” and that while Lean “loves the character of Mrs Moore . . . [he] also doesn’t understand the change she undergoes” (Billington 274).

Lean’s treatment of Mrs Moore’s “twilight of the double vision” (202), however disappointing, is only part of a much larger problem -- his failure to engage in any meaningful way with the religious dimensions of the novel. Particularly disastrous is his handling of “Temple”, although there are disturbing hints of what is to come in earlier scenes.

The first of these hints is that the tea party where Lean substitutes Professor Godbole’s song of the milkmaid to Krishna with a clichéd explanation of Hinduism’s reincarnation beliefs that includes a coy reference to Mrs Moore as “A very old soul”. Far more disenchanting is Lean’s version of Hindu philosophy during the interview between Fielding and Professor Godbole after Aziz’s arrest. Godbole’s discursion on good and evil, absence and presence, which is so central to Forster’s themes, is replaced by a trite and totally inaccurate discussion of Karma:

FIELDING. Don’t you care what happens to him [Aziz]?

GODBOLE. Yes, yes, but it is of no consequence if I care or do not

care.

The outcome is already decided.

FIELDING. Destiny. Karma.

GODBOLE. Just so, Mr Fielding. We are all part of a pattern we cannot perceive.

.....

FIELDING. So do nothing, is that your philosophy?

GODBOLE. My philosophy is you can do what you like, but the outcome will be the same.

In the Hindu caste system, a Brahman such as Professor Godbole is the “custodian of spiritual culture” (Mahadevan 132). It is inconceivable that such a man would be ignorant of the fact that Karma has nothing to do with external fate, that, conversely, Karma is this belief that “the actions that the soul performs bring in their train consequences which attach to the soul and determine the nature of its future birth” (Mahadevan 132), and thus stresses personal responsibility.

Although Lean’s treatment of both these scenes, and the caves, cautions that he had decided to marginalize the novel’s religious concerns, they do nothing to prepare for the extent to which “Temple” is bastardized.

Forster said of “Temple” that “It was architecturally necessary. I needed a lump, or a Hindu temple if you like -- a mountain standing up. It is well placed; and it gathers up some strings” (qtd. in Furbank 28). The strings that are gathered are the loose ends of the plot, and the religious themes that permeated “Mosque” and “Caves”. In the penultimate chapter of “Caves”, Fielding tells Aziz: “There is something in religion that may not be true, but has not yet been sung” (270). In “Temple”, Forster explores the “something”. It is the “something” that Stella seeks; the reason she and Ralph “like Hinduism” (315). It is “something” which induces selflessness: “all men loved each other, and avoided by instinct whatever could cause inconvenience or pain (299); it reconciles differences, redeems pain: “All sorrow was annihilated not only for

Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars" (283); it begets benediction: "their [the Fielding's] union had been blessed" (314); and it bestows absolution to "wipe out the wretched business of the Marabar for ever" (313). This "something" is present during the Gokul Ashtami festival and is released by Professor Godbole's mystic contact with Krishna, Mrs Moore, and a wasp to influence the rest of the action and provide what "completeness" can be found (282). What the "something" is, however, is the final mystery in a novel of mysteries: "I can't explain, because it isn't in words at all" (315).

Forster provides a vivid description of the Gokul Ashtami festival. It is a glorious celebration of inclusiveness. Social fragmentation is swept aside, religious cleavages ignored. Ritual and random elements are alike embraced; religious symbols and gaudy decorations share pride of place; men, women, children, elephants and flies partake of bliss. Although it is a profound religious experience it is celebrated by a joyous explosion of music, song, dance, and even practical jokes: it sounds "every note but terror" (309). The central symbol of the festival is a silver icon of the God to be born, but the village of Gokul is "not holy" and serves to increase "sacred bewilderment" (283), for there is a strong subversive element to the festival. In the course of the celebration all the vaunted pillars of rationalism are torn down: logic is refuted: "God is, was not, is not, was" (279); language subverted: "God si Love" (281); monolithic interpretation denied: "no man could say where was the emotional centre of it, anymore than he could locate the heart of a cloud" (311): "science, history, yes, beauty herself" (283) are flung down. The festival is befittingly a "frustration of reason and form" (280), for reason and form are antithetical to infinity, and through the celebration "the human spirit had tried by a desperate contortion to ravish the unknown" (283).

Did it succeed? Books written afterwards say, "Yes." But how, if there is such an event, can it be remembered afterwards? How can it be expressed in anything but itself? Not only from the unbeliever are mysteries hid, but the adept himself cannot retain them. He may

think, if he chooses, that he has been with God, but as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rules of time. (283)

Ultimately, we are left with the paradox of the incommunicable. This is appropriate, for while plot and structure lead to philosophic and metaphysical contemplation of the limits of knowledge and certainty, the linguistic pattern of the novel leads to a metafictional debate about the limits of language and fiction, whose final message (if anything as absolute as “final” or as concrete as “message” can be deduced) seems to be: “a perfectly adjusted organism would be silent” (132).

Lean has, understandably, not entered this arena. It is, in any event, unlikely that film could engage in a metafictional debate, being, presumably, limited to a metafilmic one. But, while acknowledging that Lean was precluded from a full exploration of the Gokul Ashtami festival by the limitations of his medium, there seems no justification for what he did do with it -- reduce it to a cross between Diwali and Guy Fawkes. It is reduced at quite a literal level, too, occupying barely twenty seconds of film time, including the fireworks that precede and follow it, and less than seven seconds if the fireworks are excluded. Of the religious (?) celebrations (?) all that is shown is Professor Godbole lighting lamps held by a line of passive, silent devotees.

This is disastrous for the novel's themes, as “Temple” is Forster's answer to “Caves”. In “Caves” there is a literal mountain -- the Marabar Hills -- containing literal caves. In “Temple”, there is no literal temple, the ceremony of the Birth taking place in the Rajah's palace. Metaphorically, however, the whole ceremony is a Hindu temple. The confused chaotic life of it represents the outside of the world mountain, the architectural principle of Hindu temples which are covered in statues representing every aspect of life. At the very centre of a Hindu temple is a small chamber where the devotee can come face to face with God. In the Marabar caves, in the absence of God, Mrs Moore and Adela experience anti-visions, and evil is released. “Sorrow . . . doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear” dominate the rest of the action in “Caves”

(283). There seems to be “no stopping the echo . . . [which] is always evil” (269). But the evil is stopped. In “Temple”, Professor Godbole symbolically retreats to the cave in the centre of the world mountain where he “stands in the presence of God” (279), and experiences a transcendental vision. When he steps “out of the temple” (286), the rain which the sky releases is a symbol of Love released, as a result of which “all sorrow was annihilated . . . there had never been . . . doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear” (283). As Mrs Moore realizes when she sees “thousands of coconut palms . . . wave her farewell” (204), the Marabar caves are not the final word. ““So you thought an echo was India; you took the Marabar caves as final?” they laughed. ‘What have we in common with them, or they with Asirgarh?’” (204). By the end of the novel, “The divisions of daily life were returning, the shrine had almost shut” (316). But if Gokul Ashtami does not represent final solution, it does represent the potential for solution, it does offer “something” in contrast to the caves’ “nothing”. Forster’s insistent use of the word “nothing” in the first chapter of “Caves” is balanced by his equally insistent use of “something” in the final chapter of “Temple”.¹⁴

Lean’s dismissal of Gokul Ashtami is disastrous for another reason too: the resolution of the plot is dependent upon it. The event which Gokul Ashtami celebrates is the moment when “Infinite love took upon itself the form of Shri Krishna, and saved the world” (283). Of that moment

No definite image survived . . . it was questionable whether a silver doll or a mud village, or a silk napkin, or an intangible spirit . . . had been born. Perhaps all these things! Perhaps none! Perhaps all birth is an allegory! . . . Professor Godbole had, with increasing vividness, again seen Mrs Moore, and round her faintly clinging forms of trouble . . . It was his duty, as it was his desire, to place himself in the

¹⁴ “Nothing” is used six times in Chapter 12, “something” is used five times in Chapter 37. In Chapter 14 (the other major caves chapter) “nothing” is used fifteen times. The twenty-one repetitions of “nothing” in the two caves chapters, are balanced by the use of “all” in the two major Gokul Ashtami chapters – fourteen times in Chapter 33, and a further twenty in Chapter 36. By the end of the novel, however, “the shrine had almost shut” (316), and the “all” has transmuted to “something”.

position of God and to love her, and to place himself in her position and to say to the God, "Come, come, come, come." This was all he could do. How inadequate! (285 - 86)

Yet it proves not to be "inadequate", for "an intangible spirit" has "been born". Professor Godbole, in propelling Mrs Moore into the presence of God, has, in some indefinable way, re-incarnated her and released her influence of love. The "faintly clinging forms of trouble" -- the pain that was engendered in the caves -- will be wiped out in another allegorical birth, the dunking in the waters of the Mau tank.

Forster stated that "Mrs Moore's influence does not disappear . . . but reappears in the third section of the novel" (qtd. in Olson 400), and indeed every step in the path towards reconciliation is associated with her. When Ralph announces, "I'm only Ralph Moore" (297), Aziz realizes that his assumption that Fielding has married Adela is erroneous. It is for him "an uneasy, uncanny moment when Mrs Moore's name was mentioned, stirring memories. 'Esmis Esmoore . . . ' -- as though she was coming to help him" (298). When Aziz later says to Ralph, "Then you are an Oriental," he realizes "with a little shudder" that they are the exact words he had used "to Mrs Moore in the mosque in the beginning of the cycle" (306). When he takes Ralph out on the Mau tank, the apotheosis of Mrs Moore is again recalled during the Radhakrishna chant: "in the interstice he heard, almost certainly, the syllables of salvation that had sounded during his trial at Chandrapore" (208). When the boats are hit by the village of Gokul on its tray, it is not the collision that plunges their occupants into the water: "The shock was minute, but Stella, nearest to it, shrank into her husband's arms, then reached forward, then flung herself against Aziz, and her motions capsized them" (310). Stella's reaction is disproportionate and illogical, but she is Mrs Moore's daughter in more than flesh; she is her spiritual heir as well. While Mrs Moore achieves apotheosis as Esmis Esmoore, Stella too becomes for a brief moment a goddess -- Stella Maris, star of the sea. The epithet is appropriate both in its original application

to "the sexually active goddesses Isis, Ishatar, Aphrodite, Venus and Mari-Anna" (Phillips 134), and in its later transference to the Virgin Mary through whose intercession God, the divine spirit of love, can be reached, for Stella awakens to the joys of physical love (313), and Aziz and Fielding are re-united in friendship. The dunking in the Mau tank also heals the breach between Aziz and Adela. In his letter to her, he writes: "As I fell into our largest Mau tank . . . I thought how brave Miss Quested was" (313). He later appends: "I shall henceforth connect you with the name that is very sacred in my mind, namely Mrs Moore" (315). The afterthought occurs while he is talking to Fielding and "something -- not a sight, but a sound -- flitted past him" (315). Significantly, the last words Aziz had heard were "at all events you're Oriental" (315), almost exactly the words he used to Mrs Moore in the mosque. The cycle ends where it began.

Earlier in "Temple", as Professor Godbole "stepped out . . . into the grey of a pouring wet morning" (286) he thought, "One old Englishwoman and one little, little wasp It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself" (286). It did not seem much, yet it proved to be everything. But, like Professor Godbole, Lean did not think much of it, dismissing the resolution of the plot in as summarily a fashion as he dismissed the festival. He moved the rains up to the end of the court case, thus destroying their symbolic value, and attenuated Forster's reconciliation process into a brief social chat in which Aziz's initially frosty reception of Fielding dissolves into warm and enthusiastic friendship as soon as he discovers his error. When Fielding leaves, Aziz shouts Mrs Moore's name across the lake, but there is no sense of her having precipitated their reconciliation as this is the first time she is remembered. There is no sense of her presence being mystically invoked because Professor Godbole has no ecstatic vision. She cannot function as a spiritual avatar of Krishna because Krishna is not even mentioned. Neither is Ralph Moore. There is no torchlight procession, no village of Gokul, no throwing away of the God, no baptism in water. We do not hear the great religious chants of Tukaram and Radhakrishna which symbolise the soul's mystic union with the divine, and which, in Forster's

which symbolise the soul's mystic union with the divine, and which, in Forster's novel, are offered in contrast to the song of the milkmaid to Krishna who "refuses to come" (78), and Ghalib's poetry which voiced our "need for the Friend who never comes" (103). In place of Forster's "something", Lean provides "nothing". Well, almost nothing. Lean does have "one little, little wasp". When Professor Godbole tells Aziz of the Fieldings' arrival he adds: "I shall be going to the Guest House to greet them, but my religious duties . . . [here he pauses to examine a wasp on a lamp] will be claiming my full attention for the next three days."¹⁵ For viewers familiar with Forster's novel, it promises something which is never delivered; for those unfamiliar with A Passage to India, it is a totally meaningless moment for the wasp has not appeared before nor is it alluded to again. Lean's wasp is a moment of self-indulgence by a filmmaker anxious to prove that he knows more than he is willing to show.

Self-indulgence is, in fact, the hall-mark of the section of the film corresponding to "Temple". Another glaring example is Lean's decision to site this section in Srinagar, a choice that seems motivated purely by the filmic opportunities presented by the Alps. The scene in which Fielding and Stella stop to examine them is ostensibly presented as an opportunity for viewers to examine Stella's face in detail so that there is no chance of their thinking, with Aziz, that Fielding has married Adela. The scene runs for almost a minute, more than half of which is devoted to (admittedly spectacular) shots of the Alps. The Alps get five times the footage devoted in the religious festival.

The penultimate scene of the film is possibly Lean's worst betrayal of Forster's themes. In the final chapter of the novel, Fielding and Aziz take a last ride together, and end up wrangling about politics (316). Their argument ends with Aziz "half kissing" Fielding, and Fielding holding Aziz "affectionately" (317), while both assert that they want to be friends. Earlier, Ralph Moore, Forster's "divine fool" (Colmer 61), had responded to Aziz's statement that "the two nations cannot be friends" with the words, "I know. Not yet" (206). In the last paragraph of the novel, everything in the world concurs, and the sky says,

¹⁵ In retrospect, one is forced to wonder how long it can possibly take to light a few lamps.

"No, not there" (316). Lean chooses "to make all right in the end" (HE 47). Fielding and Aziz do part, but their parting expresses nothing of a universe inimical to man's puny efforts to achieve unity. Forster abandons Fielding and Aziz on the shores of the Wasteland: Lean shows Fielding and Stella driving off down the Srinagar road while Aziz waves goodbye.

In Aspects of the Novel, Forster stated that "as far as one can generalize . . . the inherent defect of novels [is that] they go off at the end" (94). Lean's film provokes the rejoinder, "You ain't seen nothing yet!" "Failure of pep" (Aspects 94), which Forster posits as one explanation for the weak conclusion of novels, accounts, in part, for Lean's feeble ending too. There is a distinct sense that Lean is butchering Forster "in order that the job may be done to time" (Aspects 94). Lean's inability to understand Mrs Moore's rôle in the novel, and his conscious decision to trivialize Hindu philosophy are also contributory factors. Another is the limitation of Lean's medium: film does not readily lend itself to metaphysical abstraction. Put crudely, film cannot show the "silence" that resides "beyond the remotest echo" (52); it cannot impel wasps into the presence of God; it cannot, without evoking derisive laughter, make the sky speak. There is yet another factor: Lean stated that he wished at long last to show "the real India" on screen (qtd. in Millar 1047). It is ironic that Lean should echo Adela for, like her, he seems at times to confuse "real" with "picturesque". Forster said, "I don't myself like the phrase 'the real India'. I suspect it. It always makes me prick up my ears . . . 'Real' is at the service of all schools of thought" (Two Cheers 325). In Lean's school of thought, "real" seems to mean tangible, rational, sensible. Politics are "real", and Lean handled the socio-political aspects of A Passage to India brilliantly; philosophy and religion, however, are not "real", and are thus eschewed. Cynically and "real"istically, Lean also needed his film to sell, so he gave his viewers what he imagined they wanted of Forster, not what Forster wanted of his text. Commercial considerations were probably behind Lean's decision to trivialize Hinduism. Lean's target market was the West, most of his potential audience,

at least nominally, Christian. Forster stated: "I cannot believe that Christianity will ever cope with the present world-wide mess" (*Two Cheers* 83), and while he does not offer Hinduism as a final solution, he does present it as infinitely superior to the Christianity he "deplore[d]" (*Commonplace Book* 279). Lean might well have been concerned that his audience, while prepared to accept criticism of religion per se, might balk at Forster's unflattering comparison. While this is purely speculative, there are many indications that Lean pandered to popular thinking and taste. Sex and courtroom dramas are safe box-office bets, so Lean emphasised these elements. He jollied-up the end of his film because film as "entertainment 'dream factory'" has led audiences to expect a reasonably happy ending (Durgnat 13). Fielding's first name is changed from the novel's Cyril to Richard because Cyril is out of fashion -- it sounds limp-wristed -- Richard sounds stronger, more virile. No mention is made of Stella's lack of sexual appetite for viewers might think that Fielding is inadequate, and who wants a hero in need of Viagra? More sinister is Lean's excision of Ralph. In Forster's novel, Ralph, who gets into "a state over his arm, which hurt" from the bee-stings (296); is "frightened" (305), and in a "nervous state" when Aziz wants to put salve on it (304); and "appeared to be almost an imbecile" (302), proves to be psychically gifted and wise. Popular thinking, however, does not approve of weak, nervous men; and Lean did not want to challenge comfortable common assumptions about the superiority of conventional intelligence.

It is an enormous pity that commercial imperatives inform so much of Lean's screenplay for in other areas he reveals himself as an artist of exceptional ability: subtle, intelligent, and fully attuned to the demands of his medium. As Schickel notes, "the largest weight of his meaning is carried not by dialogue but by images, and his manner of juxtaposing them in the editing" (1049). An excellent example of this is Lean's ironic use of exterior shots during the train journey to Chandrapore.¹⁶ A different use of the technique is evident in the juxtapositioning of two sets of scenes involving Adela and Aziz. The first set

¹⁶ As discussed on pages 80.

begins with the afternoon tea at the club. Mrs Moore attempts to soften Adela's disappointment over the cucumber sandwiches by remarking, "Adventures do occur, but not punctually." Lean immediately cuts to a shot of Aziz writing out a prescription for Hamidullah's wife who is in bed with a thermometer in her mouth. She urges Aziz to take a wife, thus establishing his marital status as single. The next shot shows Aziz, Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali at dinner. Every aspect of the meal is in contrast with the club's tea. It is served on the floor; the drifts of steam released as servants remove the covering cloth combine with the wavering reflections of water on the walls to create a mysterious atmosphere; the array of Oriental bowls containing the food implies its exotic nature. The suggestion created by the editing, that Aziz will be Adela's adventure, is later expanded. After the ball, Adela, lying hot and restless in bed, has erotic memories of the ruined temple. The next scene shows Aziz in bed, thermometer in mouth, paging through a "girlie" magazine. The editing implies that Adela's adventure will be sexual, but the thermometer which links the two sets of scenes also speaks of disease and warns that the adventure will be pathological.

Stylistically, the most impressive feature of Lean's film is the extent to which he has imbued it with Forsterian rhythm. Of all Forster's novels, A Passage to India is rhythmically the most complex. Not only is "the very texture of the story a reticulation of echoes" (Trilling 117), but rhythm pervades the novel to the extent that it becomes "an accent in the novelist's voice . . . [announcing that] his theme is the universe or something universal" (Aspects 116). Rhythm and Forsterian prophecy become interlinked so that A Passage to India becomes what E.K. Brown (mimicking Forster) describes as a "singing in the halls of fiction" (113). Lean has not reproduced Forster's rhythmic devices. That would be impossible. What he has achieved is a texturing of his film with a feeling of Forsterian rhythm that begins to speak of the universality of Forster's themes. Forster's "web of reverberation . . . gives his book a cohesion and intricacy usually only found in music" (Trilling 117): Lean's rhythmic treatment of his film gives it a depth and subtlety usually only found in fiction.

of his film gives it a depth and subtlety usually only found in fiction.

Some of Lean's rhythmic leitmotifs, such as the moon and the sun are derived from Forster's novel and used for much the same purposes. Moonlight bathes a serene Ganges, but also highlights the violent disturbance of the water caused by an unseen predator: "What a terrible river! What a wonderful river" (32). In Aziz's mosque the moon is shown as a tiny exquisite orb of silver reflected in the water tank. Into the moonlight steps Mrs Moore who recognizes the presence of God in the mosque. Outside the first Marabar Cave, Mrs Moore's view of the hideous bloated moon skulking behind the Kawa Dol seems to confirm her notion that the universe is "godless". The sun, so friendly at the tea-party, becomes an increasingly hostile presence. Ronny, Adela and Mrs Moore go to church. Ronny, fingering his collar to admit a whiff of air, looks at the sky. A justified cut shows the sun as a huge, almost colourless disc, hazy with heat. To emphasise its malignity, Lean has Mrs Moore examine the churchyard gravestones. A virtually identical shot of the sun dominates the screen when Fielding visits the sick Aziz. In both these instances, the sun functions ironically to deny the primary import of the scene. In the former, Ronny and Adela receive congratulations on their engagement: the sun says marriage is death. In the later, Aziz cements his friendship with Fielding by showing him a photograph of his dead wife: the sun says their friendship is doomed.

Some of Lean's rhythmic leitmotifs are derived from Forster's novel but used for different purposes. Forster's arches are symbols of an ever-receding infinite that is beyond utterance; Lean's are gateways to new experiences, physical, psychological and/or spiritual. The massive triumphal arch through which the viceregal couple enter India begins the series. A high-angle extreme long shot shows them as unidentifiable specks emerging onto a strip of red carpet running through the arch. Alienated and isolated, they become symbols of human inadequacy. The arch in Chandrapore is a gateway to both the Indian bazaar and the civil station. The arches in the mosque and in Fielding's garden room mark the start of new friendships. Adela cycles through an arch on her way to

the ruined temple. The tunnel entrances to the Marabar caves lead to Adela and Mrs Moore's anti-visions. The arches of yellow flowers on Aziz's victory carriage lead him to a new life based on his rejection of the British. The arched tunnel through which Fielding and Stella travel leads to a new accord with Aziz. If Lean's use of arches seems more Tennysonian than Forsterian -- "all experience is an arch" -- this is not entirely inappropriate for Tennyson does suggest something of Forster's ever-receding infinite:

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move. (53)

Lean's most creative use of an arch is the gesture made by Professor Godbole to Mrs Moore as she leaves Chandrapore. Professor Godbole places his palms together high above his head, physically re-creating the ogeed shape of the arches in Fielding's garden room. The gesture signals his intuitive spiritual bond with Mrs Moore, and intimates that her journey will lead to new experiences. It does. Appropriately they are spiritual experiences -- death and apotheosis.

Some of Lean's rhythmic leitmotifs, such as flowers, have no basis in Forster's novel but are used to suggest something of the novel's "double vision" (202) -- its pattern of presence and absence, promise and withdrawal, invitations accepted and declined. Arrivals at Bombay quay are garlanded with yellow marigolds; yellow marigolds bedeck the bier carried through the Chandrapore bazaar. Ronny greets Adela with a posy of white flowers; an almost identical posy is thrown into the waters after Mrs Moore's body. In the ladies' restroom on the night of the ball a jug containing sprays of white blooms is centre-screen for much of Adela and Mrs Moore's conversation which ends with Mrs Moore's line: "You must dance with Ronny; apart from anything else it will serve as a notice of intent." Later that night, a tree with clusters of white blooms sways outside Adela's window as she is troubled by erotic memories. After the trial, Aziz is garlanded with multi-coloured leis. So is Adela. Lean's use of flowers

to develop a “double vision” of arrival and departure, repression and release, victory and defeat, while not echoing the novel, does add to the Forsterian mood of his film.

At times Lean uses rhythmic repetitions to comment on the action. An excellent example of this is a series of scenes showing the arrivals of the viceroy and vicereine in Bombay and the Turtons in Chandrapore, and Ronny's homecoming with guests in tow. Each is successively lower-keyed, but equally formal. The viceroy is met by a full military parade, the Collector by a police presentation of arms, the city magistrate by a guard of honour formed by his servants. Collectively these scenes emphasise the Anglo-Indian delight in pompous displays of power, and offer a trenchant comment on the hierarchical structures that operate within the Anglo-Indian community. Although each arrival is apparently greeted with pleasure, each scene contains a single shot which reveals the unofficial response to the cold, arrogant Anglo-Indians. Scowling Hindu women glare at the viceroy and vicereine. A monkey on the roof of a station building snarls at the Turtons, his aggression extended to include the entire British Raj because the building bears the inscription IMPERIAL MA The monkey also functions symbolically to emphasise that the Turtons are aping the viceregal pair and making monkeys of themselves in the process. The comic salute by one of Ronny's servants captures a comment (made about Aziz's “comic salaam” to Fielding) in Forster's novel: “. . . like all Indians, he was skilful in the slighter impertinences” (296).

The monkey who snarls at the Turtons also forms part of a rhythmic pattern of aggressive monkeys. Adela is scared away from the ruined temple by a colony of fierce monkeys. Men costumed as monkeys in honour of the Hindu monkey-god, Hanuman, lead a procession which is ostensibly part of the Moslem Mohurram festival but in which placards inscribed “Aziz our Hero” and “Free Dr Aziz” proliferate. As Adela and the Turtons make their way to court a monkey-man in a tree hurls a branch onto their car. Another thrusts his hissing face through the car window only to be hauled away and beaten to death by

police. As his body is dragged off, Lean cuts to a statue of Queen Victoria, then to the wheels of the car rolling over a "Quit India" placard. Monkey-men are dotted amidst the crowd that assembles outside the court-room, one of them leads the charge inside when Aziz is freed. The placards strike a new note: "Down with the English", "Go back to England", "English Pigs Free Aziz". As the instinctive aggression of real monkeys towards the cold, repressed English is replaced by the polical hostility of "religious" monkey-men, Lean shows how the social, religious, and political worlds of the novel collide after Aziz is charged with rape, and indicates, too, that a "local consequence of the trial was a Hindu-Moslem entente" (260).

In the foreword to Harold Pinter's screenplay of The French Lieutenant's Woman, John Fowles writes: "I do not think of the present script as a mere "version" of my novel; but as the blueprint . . . of a brilliant metaphor for it. I approve entirely of this approach . . . because I am sure that viable transitions from the one medium to the other need just such an imaginative leap" (qtd. in Outlines 59)

A comparison of the three films examined in this thesis would seem to confirm Fowles's opinion about viable transitions. Sturridge did not even manage an imaginative hop, lifting most of his scenes, most of his dialogue, straight from his source. His film is as flat-footed as his approach to adaptation, a failure as a film in its own right,¹⁷ and an even worse failure as an exploration of Forster's ideas. Merchant Ivory's selective, creative, and thoughtful approach enabled them to explore successfully all but the novel's spiritual concerns, and reap a harvest of industry awards.¹⁸ Lean's A Passage to India is a metaphor for

¹⁷ It was not even nominated for an award.

¹⁸ Howards End received the following nominations and awards.

Nine Academy nominations:

Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress – Vanessa Redgrave,
Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Art Direction, Best Costume
Design, Best Original Score.

Three Academy Awards:

Best Actress – Emma Thompson, Best Adapted Screenplay – Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Best Art
Direction – Luciana Arrighis with set decoration by Ian Whittaker.

(Continued overleaf)

One National Society of Film Critics Award:

Best Actress – Emma Thompson.

Forster's novel. Of its hundred some scenes, only two are virtually identical to scenes in Forster's novel -- the interviews after Aziz's arrest between Fielding and Turton, and Fielding and McBryde. Of the remainder, well over a quarter are not derived from the novel although dialogue in them might be; another quarter are simply visual images that suggest comments made by the novel's narrator; the rest all contain significant omissions or additions. Lean's approach allowed him to invest his film with a resonant level of irony, texture it with a sense of Forsterian rhythm, and explore the socio-political aspects of Forster's novel with brilliance. New York Post's Rex Reed called Lean's A Passage to India an example of "Genuine movie greatness" (1044), and it certainly collected an impressive number of industry nominations and awards.¹⁹ However, New Statesman's John Coleman's more conservative comment is more accurate: "Those unacquainted with the book will be free to find it a marvellous film" (1041), for Lean's film, for all its subtlety, for all its technical virtuosity, contains "a certain emptiness at [its] core" (Lloyd 259). Lean took such an imaginative leap that his metaphor "o'er-leaps itself / And falls on th'other" side as far as the major concerns of Forster's novel are concerned (Shakespeare, Macbeth I, vii, 25). Given the commercial constraints of film-making, the limitations of film as a medium, and the fact that Lean was attempting to adapt what is possibly the greatest novel of the twentieth century, David Denby's assessment of Lean's achievement is probably the most astute: "Lean . . . attempted something impossible and almost pulled it off" (Passage 1042).

One National Society of Film Critics Award:
 Best Actress – Emma Thompson.
 One New York Film Critics (sic) Circle Award:
 Best Actress – Emma Thompson.
 One Golden Globe Award:
 Best Actress (drama) – Emma Thompson.
 One Los Angeles Film Critics (sic) Association Award:
 Best Actress – Emma Thompson.
 Three National Board of Review (David Wark Griffith) Awards:
 Best Picture, Best Actress – Emma Thompson, Best Director

¹⁹ See page 66.

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