Hearing Forster: E. M. Forster and the politics of music

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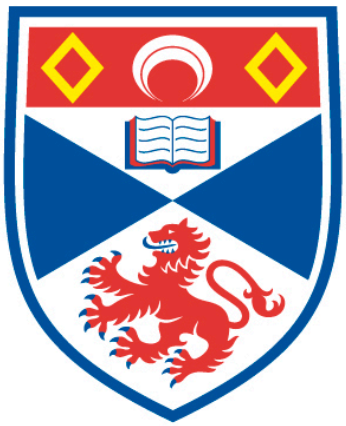

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Abstract

This thesis explores E. M. Forster's interest in the politics of music, illustrating the importance of music to Forster's conceptions of personal relationships and imperialism, national character and literary influence, pacifism and heroism, class and amateurism. Discussing Forster's novels, short stories, essays, lectures, letters, diaries, and broadcast talks, the thesis looks into the political nuances in Forster's numerous allusions and references to musical composition, performance, and consumption. In so doing, the thesis challenges previous formalistic studies of Forster's representations of music by highlighting his attention to the contentious relations between music and political contingencies.

The first chapter examines *A Passage to India*, considering Forster's depictions of music in relation to the novel's concern with friendship and imperialism. It explores the ways in which music functions politically in Forster's most 'rhythmical' novel. The second chapter focuses on Forster's description of the performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Reading this highly crafted scene as Forster's attempt to 'modernize' fictional narrative, it discusses Forster's negotiation of national character and literary heritage. The third chapter assesses Forster's Wagnerism, scrutinizing the conjunction between Forster's rumination on heroism and his criticism of Siegfried. The chapter pays particular attention to Forster's uncharacteristic silence on Wagner during and after the Second World War. The fourth chapter investigates Forster's celebration of musical amateurism. By analysing his characterization of musical amateurs and professionals in 'The Machine Stops', *Arctic Summer*, and *Maurice*, the chapter discusses the gender and class politics of Forster's championing of freedom and idiosyncrasy.

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I, Tsung-Han Tsai, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 61,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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Contents

Abbreviations

AEOW	*Albergo Empedocles and Other Writings*
AH	*Abinger Harvest and England's Pleasant Land*
AL	*Alexandria: A History and a Guide*
AN	*Aspects of the Novel and Related Writings*
AS	*Arctic Summer and Other Fiction*
BBC	*The BBC Talks of E. M. Forster 1929-1960*
CB	*Commonplace Book*
GLD	*Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and Related Writings*
HD	*The Hill of Devi and Other Indian Writings*
HE	*Howards End*
JD	*Journals and Diaries (3 vols)*
LJ	*The Longest Journey*
MS	*The Machine Stops and Other Stories*
MSS-PI	*The Manuscripts of* A Passage to India
M	*Maurice*
PI	*A Passage to India*
PT	*The Prince's Tale and Other Uncollected Writings*
RV	*A Room with a View*
SL1-2	*Selected Letters (2 vols)*
TCD	*Two Cheers for Democracy*
WA	*Where Angels Fear to Tread*

Introduction

The opening of the 'Appassionata' Sonata is almost inaudible in the documentary, *A Diary for Timothy* (1945).[1] With the newsreader's voice in front, reporting how the Allied in Arnhem withstood days of German attack, the first few notes of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 57, lurk behind and only become clearer towards the end of the main theme.[2] When the theme is repeated immediately in G flat major, what seems synchronized background music turns out to be somebody's performance; the scene shifts from a man listening to the radio to a close-up of two hands gliding over a Steinway & Sons grand piano. The camera slowly zooms out – as the steady beat of repeated low D flat and low C sets up the second theme – and we recognize Dame Myra Hess at the piano, dressed completely in black, playing the sonata with assurance. When she bursts into an arpeggio, the camera zooms out further and shows a stage surrounded by the audience. In the middle of the counterstatement of the main theme, the camera zooms in again and focuses on Hess's expression: frowning slightly, she follows the juxtaposition of *fortissimo* and *piano* by lifting her eyebrows every now and then. The scene is cut at the moment when the steady beat re-emerges, this time in E flat. We see a shot of the concert poster and learn that this performance is one of the National Gallery concerts during the Second World War. The billing is '5th Birthday Concert, Myra Hess'; the date is Tuesday, 10 October 1944, with Elena Gerhardt's recital to take place the next day.

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[1] *A Diary for Timothy*, dir. Humphrey Jennings, in *Humphrey Jennings Collection* (UK: Crown Film Unit, 1945; DVD, Film First, 2005).

[2] Composed in 1805, the sonata has been widely regarded as one of the archetypal examples of Beethoven's heroic style. I am indebted to Charles Rosen's analysis of the sonata in his book, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 192-7.

Before long, we are led back into the Gallery, not towards the stage but into the auditorium. The camera moves slowly from one end to the other, showing rows of listeners, male and female, old and young, military and civilian. Eventually it lingers on an attentive young woman – pinned-up fringe on one side, painted eyebrows and lashes, one hand holding up her chin – just when the lyricism of the A flat major thematic variant unfolds. Yet it does not last long: as the minor mode is reimposed in bar 42, the camera goes back to the pianist, zooming in on her hands. No sooner does Hess start the three trills in bars 44 to 46 than the same newsreader's voice floats in and reiterates the endurance of the Allied in Arnhem: 'For the last three days', his voice has a certain mechanical clarity in the midst of the music at its *pianissimo*, 'they have had no water, very little but small arms and ammunition, and rations were cut to one sixth. Luckily or unluckily, it rained, and they caught the water in their capes and drank that.' The end of his sentence is cut sharply by the explosion of the sixteenth notes of the A flat minor theme in bar 51, and the scene shifts from the concert to a street corner in London: a hose, a small pool of water, a bus, a pedestrian walking by, and incessant rain. Other shots of the city follow – houses in rubble, a man on the rooftop relaying the slates, another group of men busy with more repairs – whilst the sound of raindrops blends into the music. 'It's the middle of October now', the narrator suddenly steps in, 'and the war certainly won't be over by Christmas, and the weather doesn't suit us. And one third of our houses have been damaged by enemy action.' His voice is low, his pace slow. Unexpectedly, he starts to comment on the music: 'They do like the music that the lady was playing; some of us think it's the greatest music ever.' The sixteenth notes of the high treble and the slowly descending bass eventually end on A flat in the *pianissimo* bar 65. 'It is German music', the narrator continues as the main theme,

this time in E major, re-emerges, ‘and we are fighting against the Germans.’ At this moment, there is a montage sequence, during which the scene of urban rubble is overlaid with Hess’s hands on the piano. The narrator announces: ‘There is something you have to think over later on.’ The end of his sentence corresponds to the silence in the latter part of bar 70; when the music shortly resumes, however, the scene shifts to a shot of heavy rain which brings forth a splashing sound of raindrops and obscures the music. The narrator continues his reflection: ‘Rain, too much rain, and it’s even wetter under the earth.’ The camera follows accordingly, moving on to a scene of coal-mining tunnels, accompanied by the E major cadence in diminished volume in bars 73 to 75. But just before the music can resolve into an E major triad, the harsh sound of mine drilling bursts out and dominates the screen.

This unfolding of the ‘Appassionata’ Sonata provides not just a two-and-a-half-minute vignette of wartime London, but also a narrative replete with expressions of political opinions – about war and patriotism, as well as about gender, race, class, and ethics. The narrator’s emphasis on the national identity of Beethoven’s sonata polemically, and boldly, undercuts the propagandist tone one would expect in a work sponsored by the Ministry of Information. Nevertheless, the Britain that the documentary is projecting is still a sanctuary of art, where Myra Hess and Elena Gerhardt, Jewish and German respectively, can continue their lustrous musical careers. Meanwhile, this artistic sanctuary is upheld by the public prominence of women: playing in front of the mixed audience members, Myra Hess, in her black dress, solemn, strong, steadfast, underpins a unified Home Front. Yet if this ‘Appassionata’ passage presents national unity, it also unveils social discrepancies: the overlapping sounds of the music and the rain, the montage of the pianist’s hands and the house rubble, the sharp cut between the concert and the mining-tunnels, the exclusive and the excluded.

All together, these elements suggest that the documentary is testing the boundaries between art and nature, between city and the countryside, and between different social classes. This sense of contested boundaries is also between generations, embodied by the contrast between Myra Hess and the young woman in the audience, one self-assuredly established and the other cautiously docile. Such a generational 'dialogue' also exists between the narrator and his addressee: 'you', the baby Timothy, born in September 1944. For some people, Michael Redgrave's words and accent make the narration snobbish and patronizing; for others, the narrator sounds reflective.[3] All the same, Redgrave's narration presents less an official statement and more a personal conversation; after all, it is a 'Diary'. However, the concept of the diary as a private genre of writing is also being subverted here: the documentary is nonetheless a film for mass audiences, in which the 'diarist' does not engage in introspection, but dwells on delineating the relations between individuals and social and political events. A concert in wartime London, then, signifies not only an occasion of entertainment, but also a moment where personal reflection and public influence, aesthetic experience and political contingencies, become conjoined. This intersection of public and private, this constant negotiation and renegotiation of the position between self and others, is manifested in the way in which the 'Appassionata' Sonata is interwoven into the varying patterns of relationships and contrasts between characters and scenes.

Music is thus at the very centre of this carefully staged and structured passage in *A Diary for Timothy*; it intersects with diverse political discourses and touches on a wide range of themes. As the opening credits show, such is the result of the collaboration between the director Humphrey Jennings (film-maker and the author of *Pandæmonium*

[3] Kevin Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 303; Keith Beattie, *Humphrey Jennings* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 110.

1660-1886), the producer Basil Wright, the composer Richard Addinsell, the narrator Michael Redgrave, the pianist Myra Hess, and the writer E. M. Forster. Scarcely recorded, Forster's contribution to the *Timothy* project is unknown to most literary scholars.[4] Whilst it is now difficult to determine in what ways and to what extent Forster contributed to the final presentation of this 'Appassionata' passage, one might argue that Forsterian ideas underlie the documentary.[5] More importantly, what concerns us here is that this moment from *A Diary for Timothy* encapsulates Forster's alertness to, and embodies his employment of, music as political discourse. As this thesis will argue, music played a significant role in shaping Forster's political vision throughout his life, conceptualizing and representing his ideas of personal relationships and imperialism, national character and literary influence, war and heroism, class and amateurism. In the chapters that follow, I will explore the ways in which Forster attends to, as well as comments on, the contentious relation of music to political contingencies.

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[4] Before Forster agreed to contribute, he attended a viewing of the rough-cut and was given Jennings's 'sketch script' in May 1945. His letter to Basil Wright on 15 May 1945, written after this occasion, critiqued Jennings's choice of having a middle-class baby to anchor the narrative and questioned the documentary's portrayal of Britishness. The next relevant piece of information comes from his letter to Christopher Isherwood on 26 August 1945: 'News at last, and in the Hollywood sense. Having finished my picture with the Crown Film Unit, I am flying to India to attend a conference of writers.' *Letters between Forster and Isherwood on Homosexuality and Literature*, ed. Richard E. Zeikowitz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 136. Apart from these two letters, there are no details related to the project in Forster's journals, diaries, and *Commonplace Book*. There is no correspondence between Forster and Jennings. P. N. Furbank is the only biographer who has recorded, though briefly, Forster's participation in the project. P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 2 vols (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977-78), ii, 256.

[5] It is also, I think, impossible to attribute the documentary's various nuances accurately to each of those involved in the project. Humphrey Jennings would have likely been the person who decided on the sonata. Deeply interested in music, Jennings would also have had the knowledge to do so. It is also possible that having Myra Hess as the pianist was not Forster's idea: Hess had first made her appearance in Jennings's previous documentary, *Listen to Britain* (1942), playing Mozart's Piano Concerto K. 453. Forster might not have had the cinematic knowledge to contribute, technically, to the editing of the 'Appassionata' Sonata, either – that is, the way it was cut in the sequence, interwoven with the narration, and overlapped with the other sounds and voices, diegetically or extradiegetically. Nevertheless, it is arguable that Forster might have made relevant suggestions. For more discussion regarding Jennings's films and their use of music, see James G. Mansell's 'Rhythm, Modernity and the Politics of Sound' and E. Anna Clayton's 'National Identity, the GPO Film Unit and their Music', in *The Projection of Britain: A History of the GPO Film Unit*, ed. Scott Anthony and James G. Mansell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 161-7 and pp. 179-87.

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'I love music', Forster declared at the opening of his 1947 lecture at the Harvard Music Symposium.[6] An ardent and astute musical amateur, Forster's engagement with music was enduring – from the first decade of his life in the 1880s to the last decade of his life in the 1960s when his deafness became a major hindrance to his enjoyment of music – as well as diverse: he was simultaneously a listener, a pianist, a concert-goer, an opera enthusiast, a reader, an occasional music critic, a librettist, a friend of musical professionals, a collaborator with musicians, and, most importantly, a writer who wrote constantly about music.[7] The longevity of his engagement with music, the diversity of his musical activities, the tenacity of music's presence in his daily routine throughout the years – all of these demonstrate that music played an important part in his life. His interest in and knowledge of music were repeatedly noted by his contemporaries; that music influenced his novels was also acknowledged by Forster himself and many others.[8] Whilst some, like Elizabeth Bowen, felt that they possessed inadequate knowledge to comment on the subject, others did elaborate on the significance of music to Forster's fictional writing.[9] Peter Burra, in 1934, called Forster 'a musician who chose the novel because he had ideas to utter which needed a more distinct articulation than music could make'.[10] Wilfred Stone, in contrast, described Forster's work as

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[6] 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism' (1947), in *TCD*, pp. 105-18 (p. 105).

[7] For a detailed biography of Forster's musical taste, piano skills, listening repertoire, concert, ballet, and opera attendances, and relationships with musicians and composers, see Michelle Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm: Music and the Word in E. M. Forster* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), pp.1-23 and pp. 145-50.

[8] In several of his interviews, Forster mentioned music's structural influence on his fictions. See e.g. P. N. Furbank and F. J. H. Haskell, 'E. M. Forster: The Art of Fiction No. 1', *The Paris Review*, 1 (1953), 2-16.

[9] Elizabeth Bowen, 'A Passage to E. M. Forster', in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp. 1-12 (p. 12).

[10] Peter Burra, 'Introduction', reprinted in *PI*, pp. 315-27 (p. 321). Burra's article, 'The Novels of E. M.

'literature turned to music', where abstraction, unworldliness, and idea transcend the existence of human society.[11] Benjamin Britten's tribute to Forster in 1969 as 'our most musical novelist' can be read as the defining summary of Forster's life in music, not just because Britten recounted and indicated all the extensive musical allusions in Forster's oeuvre. Also, by praising Forster for his understanding of music, Britten professionally and authoritatively endorsed all of these musical efforts from a lifelong amateur.[12] Although the tone of Britten's tribute, as Frank Kermode rightly suggests, should always be taken cautiously, Forster's engagement with music, nonetheless, has been made prominent and publicly sealed.[13]

Intriguingly, what Britten did not mention in his tribute is Forster's idea of 'rhythm', a point seminal to most modern criticism of Forster and music. Forster was among innumerable contemporaries employing the term 'rhythm', one of the key words that cut through multifarious disciplines in early twentieth-century culture and recurred in numerous discourses on art and literature.[14] In the last section of *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), Forster 'edges nervously towards' rhythm for something that could lead fictional writing to another dimension.[15] In his definition, there is 'easy' rhythm and 'difficult' rhythm: the former resembles the opening rhythm of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony which 'we can all hear and tap to', whilst the latter is the effect through

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Forster', originally appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After* in November 1934. In 1942, Forster chose it as the introduction to the Everyman Edition of *A Passage to India*.

[11] Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 118.

[12] Benjamin Britten, 'Some Notes on Forster and Music', in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, pp. 81-6 (p. 81).

[13] Frank Kermode points out that Britten's tribute loses a little of its authority 'to some reduction of candour arising from considerations of friendship'. Frank Kermode, *Concerning E. M. Forster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009), p. 29.

[14] An introductory discussion on the topicality of 'rhythm' in the early twentieth century, see Faith Binckes, *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 61-6.

[15] *AN*, p. 112.

which, 'when the orchestra stops', we hear the Symphony 'as a whole', as an 'entity' whose 'three blocks of sound' have been linked together.[16] For Forster, easy rhythm is 'repetition plus variation', exemplified by Vinteuil's *petite phrase* in *Remembrances of Things Past*: Proust's novel, even though it appears 'ill-constructed', 'hangs together because it is stitched internally'.[17] As for difficult rhythm, Forster provides no examples, only suggesting that Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is the work closest to producing this 'rhythmic' effect.[18] Like the end of a symphony when 'notes and tunes composing it have been liberated', the last page of Tolstoy's novel gives one an impression that 'every item […] lead[s] a larger existence than was possible at the time'; it is, Forster suggests, '[e]xpansion' rather than 'completion'.[19] This analogy to musical rhythm as a formal design for fiction becomes, then, an indication of Forster's vision of a new narrative style.

Through the years, literary critics have consistently discussed the affinity between Forster's idea of rhythm and his formalist aesthetic, and have established that Forster's fictional writing is stylistically inspired by, and comparable to, music. There has also been a consensus that the unnamed example of Forster's difficult rhythm can be found in his last novel, *A Passage to India* (1924). This critical trend was, I suggest, mobilized by Forster himself. Through endorsing Peter Burra's article, 'The Novels of E. M. Forster' (1934), which identifies his notion of rhythm as '*leit-motif*', as a literary device of making 'one passage [call] back to another', Forster consciously displaced the focus of critical evaluation of his novels from political subjects to formalistic inventions.[20] Thenceforth critics started exploring the formalist aspect of Forster's

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[16] *AN*, p. 112 and p. 115.
[17] *AN*, p. 115 and p. 113.
[18] *AN*, p. 116.
[19] *AN*, p. 116.
[20] Burra, p. 319 and p. 320. Explaining why he had admired Burra's article, Forster said that 'Burra saw

indebtedness to music, and fine examples adopting this formalist approach are many. E. K. Brown, David Medalie, Frank Kermode, and others have analysed the ways in which Forster employed complicated verbal, thematic, and imagerial variations and repetitions to structure and unfold the narrative of his novels.[21] These critical analyses all demonstrate the influence of musical aesthetic on Forster's concern with fictional form; several of them, too, aptly place such concern in a broader 'Modernist' context of intermedial exchange and genre crossing. Linda Hutcheon, for instance, studies how conceptions of music echo and differ in the critical writings of Forster, Roger Fry, and their mutual friend, Charles Mauron. Whilst she does notice that there is resistance to sheer formalism in Forster's perception of music's transcendence, her study nevertheless reinforces the understanding of Forster's attachment to music as an aesthetic and – however partially – formalist enterprise.[22] Such a reading as Hutcheon's brings Forster into a specific moment of cultural history and weaves Forster's work into a shared context, in which music was perceived as the paradigm of all art and acknowledged, in Daniel Albright's words, as 'the vanguard medium of the Modernist aesthetic'.[23] It also depicts Forster as deeply interested in the

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exactly what I was trying to do; it is a great privilege for an author to be analysed so penetratingly […], but it is unusual to be understood'. 'Forster's Prefatory Note (1957) to the Everyman Edition', in *PI*, pp. 313-4 (p. 313). In his study, Finn Fordham attributes this preference for Burra's article to Forster's conscious attempt to 'modernize' his fiction. Investigating the manuscriptural details and revisions of *A Passage to India*, Fordham suggests that Forster 'was happiest with [Burra's] formalistic, "musical" non-ideological, non-content-driven reading' perhaps because 'it attends to the presumably conscious intention of formal structures that were being made more visible by the author'. Finn Fordham, *I Do I Undo I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 204.

[21] E. K. Brown, 'Rhythm in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*', in *E. M. Forster:* A Passage to India, *A Casebook*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 93-113; David Medalie, *E. M. Forster's Modernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 124-8 and pp. 129-40; Kermode, pp. 39-46. Also, see e.g. Andrea Weatherhead, '*Howards End*: Beethoven's *Fifth*', *Twentieth-Century Literature,* 31 (1985), 247-64, and Judith Scherer Herz, 'Forster's Sentences', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 55.1 (2012), 4-18.

[22] Linda Hutcheon, '"Sublime Noise" for Three Friends: Music in the Critical Writings of E. M. Forster, Roger Fry and Charles Mauron', in *E. M. Forster: Centenary Revaluations*, ed. Judith Scherer Herz and Robert K. Martin (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 84-98.

[23] *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources*, ed. Daniel Albright (Chicago: University of Chicago

non-referentiality of music, in what Brad Bucknell defines as 'the expressive potential [that] go[es] beyond the mere rationality of language', and thus aligns Forster with many of his contemporaries whose use of music was crucial to their representations of the subtlety of human consciousness.[24]

What has received relatively little attention is the politics of Forster's representation of music. Critics have not touched on the subject of music and politics in Forster's work until very recently, and this thesis is much indebted to studies by Mi Zhou, Michelle Fillion, David Deutsch, Bret L. Keeling, Cecilia Björkén-Nyberg, and others.[25] This recent surge of critical interest in reading Forster's use of music as ideological and political engagement is partially, I would suggest, a reflection, and a result, of the changing perception of music in musicology. Encouraged by scholars such as Joseph Kerman and Steven Paul Scher, and manifested by landmark publications such as Lawrence Kramer's *Music as Cultural Practice* and Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings*, 'New musicologists', as they were originally called, challenged music's detachment from politics. They drew attention to music's relation to political contingencies – political in its broadest sense, be it sexual, gender, racial, class, national, or economic. It is this perception of music as attentive to and evaluative of specific historical contexts, as constructing political ideologies as well as constructed by them, that critical musicology – the preferred label now – examines music's place in a contested cultural milieu. And it is exactly because of the impact of critical musicology,

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Press, 2004), p. 1.

[24] Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce, and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 2-3.

[25] These works were all published in the twenty-first century. Other pertinent discussions include Erik Alder and Dietmar Hauck, *Music and Literature: Music in the Works of Anthony Burgess and E. M. Forster, An Interdisciplinary Study* (Tübingen: Francke, 2005), pp. 69-178; Regula Hohl Trillini, *The Gaze of the Listener: English Representations of Domestic Music-Making* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 201-13; and Phyllis Weliver, *The Musical Crowd in English Fiction, 1840-1910: Class, Culture and Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 182-4.

as Phyllis Weliver observes, that literary critics can analyse representations of music not just in aesthetic or stylistic terms. In her thorough and illuminating account of the development of critical musicology and Victorian studies in the last two decades, Weliver demonstrates how this 'disciplinary shift' has given rise to new, contextual readings of literary works that deal with music.[26] Inspired by Weliver, the thesis asks whether twentieth-century representations of music can also be studied on a political level, and whether, specifically, Forster's engagement with music is not only resonant with contemporary formalist aspirations, but also situated in a complex political arena where music's purported apoliticality has to be contested.

Underpinned by these recent musical-literary insights, the thesis is also inspired by, and hopes to participate in, the ongoing re-orientation within modernist studies. What we used to understand as 'Modernism', as writers' formalistic experiment with style and narrative, has been contested by feminist, Marxist, and postcolonial scholars, and its positivism, its links to the establishment of literary studies, and its underlying gender, class, and national presuppositions have been exposed. This leads us to a broader, but also more ambiguous, understanding of early twentieth-century British literature, not as a monolithic aesthetic movement, but as a 'moment' of heterogeneous 'cultural conflict'.[27] This also problematizes, I would suggest, critics' constant effort to label Forster as a 'Modernist' writer. Often, as I have mentioned, they point to *A Passage to India* and to 'rhythm' in *Aspects of the Novel* as examples of Forster's stylistic

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[26] Phyllis Weliver, 'A Score of Change: Twenty Years of Critical Musicology and Victorian Literature', *Literature Compass*, 8.10 (2011), 776-94 (786). Weliver also provides a useful bibliography of musical-literary studies to date.

[27] The term 'moment' is from Raymond Williams's important essay, 'When Was Modernism?', collected in his book, *The Politics of Modernism*, ed. Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989), p. 32. Lyn Pykett, too, contests the demarcation of Modernism in her book, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), pp. 6-13. The phrase 'cultural conflict' is from the title of Ann L. Ardis's brilliant study, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

experimentalism. They describe Forster's writing career as one gradually registering and appropriating formalist ideas, thereby gradually becoming 'Modernist'. Such readiness to evoke musical aesthetics as a paradigmatic means to Forster's 'Modernism' is often less an issue of Forster's actual engagement with music than of shaping the writer into a product of a certain *Zeitgeist*, a way of securing Forster's status in literary history. There is a degree of anxiety in these assessments of Forster, as if without this particular label Forster would have fallen out of favour with literary criticism. (Ironically, even with this label, Forster has been regarded as a second-rate Modernist and has remained peripheral to literary criticism.) Given that the supposed singularity of Modernism has now been deconstructed, is this still the proper approach for Forster scholars? Is it still urgent to delineate a 'Modernist' Forster when the criteria themselves have been shown to be fluid and debatable? That the thesis focuses on the politics of Forster's representations of music is thus a deliberate strategy, not only to shed light on the musical networks reflected and negotiated by Forster, but also to suspend the ready placement of Forster within – to use a phrase from another context – the 'imagined community' of a certain practice of literary experimentalism.[28] I do not wish to dismiss previous formalist readings of Forster's idea of music, but what I propose is that, however consciously formalistic he might be, Forster's use of music is at the same time suggestive of a variety of political ideologies. The thesis is, then, in line with a number of recent studies that consider the political aspect of the representations of music in the writings of many of Forster's contemporaries.[29] Like

[28] The phrase is borrowed from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn (London: Verso, 2006).

[29] See e.g. Emma Sutton, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); *T. S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. John Xiros Cooper (New York: Garland, 2000); and Delia da Sousa Correa, 'Katherine Mansfield and Music: Nineteenth-Century Echoes', in *Celebrating Katherine Mansfield: A Centenary Volume of Essays*, ed. Gerri Kimber and Janet Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 84-98.

them, my discussion attempts to tell a different story of musical-literary modernism.

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In the opening of his essay, 'Not Listening to Music' (1939), Forster confesses that 'during the greater part of every performance […] I wool-gather most of the time, and am surprised that others don't'.[30] His inattention is delineated in detail:

> I fly off every minute: after a bar or two I think how musical I am, or of something smart I might have said in conversation; or I wonder what the composer—dead a couple of centuries—can be feeling as the flames on the altar still flicker up; or how soon an H.E. bomb would extinguish them. Not to mention more obvious distractions: the tilt of the soprano's chin or chins; the antics of the conductor, that impassioned beetle, especially when it is night time and he waves his shards; the affectation of the pianist when he takes a top note with difficulty, as if he too were a soprano; the backs of the chairs; the bumps on the ceiling; the extreme physical ugliness of the audience.[31]

Forster's confession is a telling one, suggesting a perception of music as a device with which he can delineate the surroundings, and as a catalyst in the process of a wide range of association and imagination. One could ask whether Forster has any hierarchy in mind between these distractions and his other much more orthodox ways of listening to music; the 'muddle' of describing a musical experience, nonetheless, has already been demonstrated by this seemingly disjointed and rhapsodic reflection.[32] It is particularly intriguing that, even though this reflection is only a brief one, it is exactly

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[30] 'Not Listening to Music' (1939), in *TCD*, pp. 122-5 (p. 122).
[31] *TCD*, p. 122.
[32] *TCD*, p. 122.

his tendency to 'not listen' to music that becomes the title of the essay. Read with the rest of the essay, in which he discusses the way he distinguishes music that reminds him of something from music itself, Forster's choice to highlight 'not listening' as his primary musical experience suggests his alertness to music's relation to the outside world. His inattention here, whether viewed contemptuously or humorously, thus embodies and anticipates, as we have seen, the argument of critical musicology; the specific context in which music transpires is made prominent by his 'wool-gathering'.

It is in this role as a major part in Forster's musical experience that I propose 'not listening' as a methodological trope in the thesis. I argue that, by 'not listening' to Forster's *music,* a reader's attention is consciously set adrift, let wander to details beside, before, after, or around a conspicuous representation of music. Here, I have found Lawrence Kramer's analysis of 'not listening' particularly inspiring: in *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge,* Kramer argues that 'not listening' should not be regarded as a failure to appreciate music. In response to his own question, 'Am I failing to experience the music when I vary my attention level or simply let it fluctuate[?]', he suggests that 'not listening' is, in fact, a 'more flexible, more plural, more contingent logic of postmodern musical experience'.[33] Adapted to reading music in literature, such a conscious distraction helps to register the political factors in a musical scene, or bring together multifarious textual details surrounding a reference to music. 'Not listening', I propose, thus revises the musical-literary methodology presented by Werner Wolf in 1999. In *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality,* Wolf defines allusions to music in a written text as 'covert' musical-literary intermediality and separates them into two groups: 'thematization' and

[33] Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 65.

'imitation'.[34] For him, 'thematization' can be in textual (e.g. direct references to musical works in a text), paratextual (e.g. titles associated with music), and contextual (e.g. an author's biographical engagement with music) form, while 'imitation' refers to the imaginary dramatization of music and musical aesthetic through written words. To study the 'musicalization' of fiction, Wolf uses 'thematization' as 'flags', which signal the site where an author might be modelling his or her text on a certain musical work.[35] Wolf suggests that 'the mentioning of music or musical terms' in a text merely plays an 'indicative' role and, for him, a 'really musicalized' text contains more than just that.[36] Effective as it may be, Wolf's methodology reveals, I would suggest, a limited understanding of what he calls 'thematization'. Rather than musical works cited or mentioned only randomly by an author, these 'flags' are often extremely suggestive. In the case of Forster, they are, I will suggest, expressive of and responsive to various political opinions. However minute or unobtrusive they are, these references to music are more than mimetic details of contemporary musical culture or random examples from Forster's personal repertoire. They are, I believe, crucial to analyses of Forster's writings about music in political terms, and it is through 'not listening', as we shall see, that their protean implications for political ideologies can be uncovered.

It should come as no surprise that many critics have turned to the Beethoven concert in Chapter 5 in *Howards End* (1910) when discussing Forster's use of music.[37]

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[34] Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 41-5.
[35] Wolf, pp. 51-67.
[36] Wolf, p. 51 and p. 52.
[37] See e.g. Barry R. Westburg, 'Forster's Fifth Symphony: Another Aspect of *Howards End*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 10.4 (1964), 359-65; Andrea Weatherhead, '*Howards End*: Beethoven's *Fifth*'; Anne Foata, 'The Knocking at the Door: A Fantasy on Fate, Forster and Beethoven's Fifth', *Cahiers Victoriens et Édouardiens*, 44 (1996), 135-45; Cecilia Björkén-Nyberg, '"Listening, Listening": Music and Gender in *Howards End*, *Sinister Street* and *Pilgrimage*', in *Literature and Music*, ed. Michael J. Meyer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 89-115; David Deutsch, 'Reconnecting Music to *Howards End*: Forster's Aesthetics of Inclusion', *LIT*, 21.3 (2010), 163-86; and Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 79-92.

It is, as Britten said, the explicit 'musical *locus classicus*' in Forster's work.[38] Yet if we consciously distract ourselves from Forster's vivid portrayal of the concert, 'not listening' to the programme which consists of works by Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Brahms, and Elgar, and 'not listening' to Helen Schlegel's inner thoughts of the hero and the goblins, the elephants and the shipwreck, or her repeated evocation of the sense of 'panic and emptiness', we find what has been bypassed by readers and critics alike for decades. At the end of the chapter, when the Schlegels are back in their house after the concert, Helen jokes that Tibby, her younger brother, 'only cares for cultured females singing Brahms'.[39] This is not only a mocking comment on the artistic, pedantic young man, but also a suggestive example of the richness of Forster's reference to music. In some respect, Brahms's vocal music seems an adequately erudite piece to delineate Tibby's musical taste specifically, aligning, as it does, Tibby – who has just listened to Beethoven's Fifth with a full score on his knees – with the serious and cerebral aspect of German musical canons. It also invites us to imagine whether or not Helen, even though she has missed the second half of the concert as she left abruptly after Beethoven's symphony, is referring to the Brahms in the programme – his 'Four Serious Songs' (*Vier ernste Gesänge*, Op. 121) – when mocking her brother. This raises more questions though, as these songs were written for bass voice and piano rather than for female singers. Did Forster mistake 'Four Serious Songs' for another vocal work by Brahms for women's choir, 'Four Songs' (*Vier Gesänge*, Op. 17)? Or is it simply Helen's parody to have this bass song cycle, which Margaret previously described as Brahms 'grumbling and grizzling', sung by 'cultured females'?[40] Why the adjective 'cultured'? Does it form a commentary on the public appearance of female

[38] Britten, p. 81.
[39] *HE*, p. 40.
[40] *HE*, p. 33.

performers on stage? Or is it an allusion to some At Home fashionable in contemporary London? Or, as both Helen and Margaret advocate women's suffrage, can the adjective be read as Helen's critique of conventional association of 'cultured' women with indoor artistic activities and her implicit allusion to the participation of women from upper-middle classes in widely publicized public protests? Moreover, what is the implication of the tableau of Tibby, a young man anything but manly, listening to a group of singing females? All these questions and discussions – about gender, class, the boundary between public and private, the reception of Brahms in early twentieth-century London – foreground the complicated intersection of music and politics encapsulated by a single reference to music.

Focusing on textual details like this, my thesis attempts to pick up what would have been readily labelled and bypassed by Wolf as 'thematization'. It will look not at Forster's better-known descriptions of music, but at many other brief and overlooked references to musical composition, performance, and consumption in Forster's novels, short stories, essays, letters, diaries, lectures, and broadcast talks. Neither, for example, Lucy Honeychurch's piano performance in *A Room with a View* (1908) nor Clive and Maurice's listening to Tchaikovsky in *Maurice* (*c.* 1913-14, published in 1971) will be extensively discussed, partly because critics have produced compelling studies of these more explicit musical passages.[41] Nor will the thesis venture a musicological analysis of Forster's libretto to Britten's *Billy Budd* (1951).[42] By consciously leaving out the

[41] Lucy Honeychuch's piano-playing has been repeatedly discussed in terms of gender and sexuality: see, representatively, Michelle Fillion, 'Edwardian Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Music in E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View*', *19th-Century Music*, 25.2-3 (2001-02), 266-95; Trillini, pp. 201-13; Mi Zhou, 'Sublime Noise: Reading E.M. Forster Musically' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009), pp. 78-133; and Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 56-78. The significance of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* to the interaction between Clive and Maurice is the focus of Bret L. Keeling, '"No Trace of Presence": Tchaikovsky and the Sixth in Forster's *Maurice*', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 36.1 (2003), 85-101; and Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 93-107.

[42] Critics have examined Forster's collaboration with Britten and Eric Crozier on *Billy Budd*, especially in terms of the opera's homoeroticism and narrative, see e.g. Mary C. Francis, '"A Kind of Voyage", E.

explicit and exploring the unobtrusive, I repeat Forster's habit of 'not listening' and 'wool-gather' – that is, I contemplate what happens *around* the music in a given cultural milieu. This is therefore not a formalist study of Forster's use of music, of the ways in which Forster's text can be 'rhythmically' dissected and mapped out; nor is it a study of how Forster modelled his narrative on certain musical works. What this thesis will bring to the fore are representations of music uncommented upon – and indeed mostly unnoticed – by criticism. My new and original reading of Forster will, I hope, be of interest to literary critics, as well as to musicologists and scholars on the musical life in Britain in the early twentieth century. In light of the widely acknowledged plurality of turn-of-the-century British modern society, I do not wish to propose Forster as the exemplar whose responses to music were representative of the general climate. Nevertheless, we might recall Britten's use of 'our' in his tribute to Forster and consider whether Britten regarded Forster's representations of music as reflecting a spectrum of contemporary musical experiences. Whilst the thesis is thus an interdisciplinary project, I hope it has been made clear that my primary focus is literary analysis rather than musicological study. The thesis inevitably involves discussions of a variety of musical works and performances, but only in so far as they shed light on Forster's representations of, and commentaries on, his musical material. It is, then, from Forster's perspective that we approach these musical works, without any intention to provide musicological evaluation of any of them. Even when Forster's text does subjectively assess the quality of a musical work, a composer, or a performance, I am not concerned with critiquing the validity of his judgment, but with exploring what

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M. Forster and Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*', in *Biographical Passages: Essays in Victorian and Modernist Biography: Honoring Mary M. Lago*, ed. Joe Law and Linda K. Hughes (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), pp. 44-64; Philip Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten: Selected Essays*, ed. George E. Haggerty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 123-37.

underlies his assessment.

In the chapters that follow, the relation between music and politics in Forster's oeuvre is examined in a thematic order. Drawing on postcolonial, national, gender, and class theories, each chapter will juxtapose textual details from a wide variety of Forster's writings, crossing boundaries of genre and chronology. This makes my thesis decidedly different from Mi Zhou's and Michelle Fillion's studies. Both in-depth and persuasive, Zhou's doctoral thesis, 'Sublime Noise: Reading E.M. Forster Musically', and Fillion's book, *Difficult Rhythm: Music and the Word in E. M. Forster*, address the political aspect of Forster's representations of music in a novel-by-novel order.[43] Whilst both works demonstrate the multivalent roles music plays in Forster's work, their analyses privilege longer published novels and leave out allusions to music in Forster's other shorter texts. As a result, they fall short of uncovering the recurrence of particular themes, such as male friendship, national character, anti-heroism, and amateurism, emerging in Forster's commentaries on music throughout his life. To give a more encompassing picture of Forster's engagement with music, and to demonstrate unexpected correspondences between textual details from different periods of time, the thesis then finds it more plausible to adopt a thematic form. The method of 'not listening' also contributes to the thematic order, as it provides some necessary laxity from strict chronology to allow disparate examples to be brought together. I am, however, fully aware of the seeming irony in such a structure: for a study emphasizing the close relation of music to historical and political factors, a thematic order seems to imply an ahistorical conception of Forster's ideology. Yet, as we shall see, the flexible approach to chronology taken by the thesis does not disregard the change or

[43] Zhou discusses three of Forster's novels: *Howards End, A Room with a View,* and *A Passage to India*. Fillion studies all of them, but her analysis of *A Passage in India* is only a brief one.

development of Forster's ideas. What will become evident in the following chapters is that, when assessing Forster's representation of music and the milieu in which it is heard, it is more often a case of working with volatile ideas than with homogeneous beliefs. Forster's references to music, when put together, reveal how frequently they are contingent on external historical and social situations, and are shaped according to specific audiences and to meet particular purposes. An example is my discussion of Forster's Wagnerism in the third chapter, as it overturns the assumption of a static Forsterian ideology and delineates, instead, his shifting attitude towards Wagner in the first half of the twentieth century.

The first chapter focuses on *A Passage to India*, considering Forster's use of music in relation to the novel's concern with friendship and imperialism. It is a deliberate strategy to start with an exploration of the ways in which music functions politically in Forster's most 'rhythmical' novel. It is also a conscious resistance to Forster's directing of critical reception: my discussion, that is, goes against Forster's aforementioned preference for a formalist, 'abstract' reading of *A Passage to India*, and against his consistent dilution of the novel's political resonance with contemporary nationalist movements in India.[44] This is not to vandalize authorial intention, but to suggest that, whether he intended politics as the novel's theme or not, Forster's alertness to and knowledge of the political reality of imperialism is written into the novel. And it is through reading the novel's references to music – especially Western music – that the chapter attempts to delineate Forster's responses to imperial contingencies. To be more specific, it focuses on three Western musical instruments – Ronny Heaslop's viola, the Maharajah's harmonium, and a broken piano – and teases

[44] In 'Three Countries' (1959), for example, Forster said that '[f]or the book is 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'. *HD*, pp. 289-99 (p. 298).

out the ways in which the descriptions of these instruments are suggestive of Forster's vision of friendship in the context of British imperialism. My discussion thus pays particular attention to Forster's pronounced belief in personal relationships.[45] It also considers the way in which the novel represents Forster's ideas of intimacy, homoeroticism, and sexual desire.[46] The chapter suggests that, however formalistic it may be in terms of its significance to the novel's structure and narrative, music is also represented by Forster in relation to his observations on race and sexuality, encapsulating the emotional complexity of personal interaction in colonial contexts.

The second chapter turns its focus from depictions of music in an imperial framework to those in a touristic context, although it will also stress Forster's alertness to the similarities between these two forms of international encounter. Focusing on the description of the performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Forster's first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), the chapter explores Forster's concern with national character and literary heritage. It examines how musical taste and sensibility are portrayed as nationally specific and referential traits, but also as slippery and unreliable indicators of national characteristics. On the one hand, I consider the ways in which a wide array of discourses on vocal music and Italian culture, on operatic convention and touristic behaviour, on cultural consumption and racial caricature, informed – and were worked into – Forster's operatic scene. On the other hand, I look into the rich literary history related to *Lucia di Lammermoor* and explore the ways in which Forster responds to nineteenth-century literary tradition in order to delineate his fictional style

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[45] 'I believe in personal relationships': Forster's monumental statement from 'What I Believe' (1938), in *TCD*, pp. 65-73 (p. 66).

[46] Pertinent discussions of these subjects: see e.g. Joseph Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 83-90; Christopher Lane, *The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 145-75; and Sarah Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 71-91.

in this early stage of his writing career. Instead of making two separate discussions, the chapter emphasizes the interconnection of the two subjects, of Forster's simultaneous negotiation of national and stylistic matrices. My discussion is also an attempt to bring this novel back into critical focus. Compared to Forster's other novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* has received relatively little attention. Scrutinizing this highly worked opera scene, the chapter recuperates the importance of the novel in Forster's oeuvre.

Forster's Wagnerism is the focus of the third chapter. Although Forster never called himself a Wagnerite or a Wagnerian, his writings are suffused with references to Wagner and Wagner's work.[47] His interest in and knowledge of Wagner's music and ideas have been documented, as well as contextualized within the broader cultural movements of British and European Wagnerism.[48] Critics have also discussed a diverse range of Wagnerian allusions in Forster's writings, and explored the thematic, aesthetic, mythological, and formalistic aspects of Wagner's influence on Forster's work.[49] Yet

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[47] Both Oliver Stallybrass and Frank Kermode have, rather inappropriately, labelled Forster as a 'Wagnerite' or a 'Wagnerian'. As Emma Sutton suggests, 'labelling oneself a Wagnerite was an act replete with political (in its broadest sense) resonance' in the 1890s, as it 'place[d] oneself […] in relation to a range of contemporary and antecedent Wagnerians, and in relation to contemporaries uninterested in or hostile to Wagner'. Considered in this context, that Forster never called himself a Wagnerite or a Wagnerian suggests his alertness to the complexity of contemporary Wagnerism. Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 2. For Oliver Stallybrass's comment, see *RV*, p. 233. For Kermode's discussion, see Kermode, p. 46.

[48] Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, p. 5 and pp. 40-3. For British Wagnerism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley.* For European contexts, see *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, ed. David C. Large and William Weber (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[49] Tony Brown, 'E. M. Forster's *Parsifal*: A Reading of *The Longest Journ*ey', *Journal of European Studies*, 12.1 (1982), 30-54; W. J. Lucas, 'Wagner and Forster: *Parsifal* and *A Room with a View*', in *Romantic Mythologies*, ed. Ian Fletcher (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 271-97; Judith Scherer Herz, '"This is the End of Parsival": The Orphic and the Operatic in *The Longest Journey*', in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 137-50; and Peter E. Firchow, 'Germany and Germanic Mythology in *Howards End*', *Comparative Literature*, 33.1 (1981), 50-68. Compared to these articles, John Louis DiGaetani's book, *Richard Wagner and the Modern British Novel* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1978), is an incomplete study of the relationship between literary modernism and Wagner. His chapter on Forster (pp. 90-109) neglects some of Forster's important Wagnerian allusions and oversimplifies Forster's Wagnerism as an application of musical leitmotifs to prose writing. Alexander H. Shapiro's recent article, 'McEwan and Forster, the Perfect Wagnerites', *The Wagner Journal*, 5.2 (2011), 20-45, is equally unconvincing. It unsuccessfully reads characters in *Howards Ends* as modelled on those in *Die Walküre*.

what has been overlooked, and what the chapter will focus on, is the conjunction between Forster's criticism of Siegfried and his rumination on heroism. The discussion will start with an examination of Forster's 1907 novel, *The Longest Journey*, and end with an analysis of his most focused study of Wagner, 'Revolution at Bayreuth' (1954), interspersed with an exploration of a variety of texts, including his three anti-Nazi essays and his unfinished Beethoven Notebook (*c.* 1939-40?). The chapter suggests that Forster was attentive to the political situations in which Wagner was constantly brought into play in the first half of the twentieth century. By looking at his output during and after the Second World War, this is therefore a chapter that consciously brings Forster away from the familiar historiography of Edwardian literature. Although most of his allusions to Wagner in the late 1930s were indeed conceived as polemically in opposition to Nazi uses of the composer, the 'discourse' this chapter maps out was not intended by Forster to be an organized one, still less to make a cohesive political manifesto. Nevertheless, in the context of the contentious and often controversial topicality of Wagner in the 1930s and the 1940s, Forster's repeated commentaries on Siegfried and his insistence on the artistic value of Wagner's work, I propose, can be seen as a personal statement of his political stance.

In the fourth chapter, I turn to Forster's celebration of musical amateurism. Forster's own amateur engagement with music, his anxiety as well as defiance as a musical amateur, and his repeated emphasis on such an amateur status are considered in relation to his ideas of individualism and personal relationships. They are also examined as his attempt to respond to the increasing professionalization of musical discipline.[50] Considering the politics of professionalization, the chapter explores the

[50] Harold Perkin's *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989), provides the necessary historical contexts for my chapter.

gender and class implications of Forster's criticism of musical professionalism. My discussion pays attention to three under-researched characters: Vashti in 'The Machine Stops' (1909), Dorothea in *Arctic Summer* (1911-12), and Risley in *Maurice*. It examines the ways in which Forster undercuts the ideologies underpinning the first two characters' professional status, before looking into the problematic undertone of Risley's amateur interpretation of Tchaikovsky. In so doing, the chapter continues some of the concerns of the first chapter in discussing Forster's preference for the individualistic over the authoritative. Yet it also attempts to dig deeper by attending to the political nuances of Forster's 'democratic' vision: that Forster consistently uses the amateur-professional relationship as a means of delineating his social ideal emphasizes, I propose, the importance of music to Forster's personal ideology.

Perhaps it has become clear that the following chapters, rather than separated, are interconnected with one another. This interconnection suggests how frequently music played a significant part in Forster's observations on a diverse range of political subjects. The intersection of music and politics in Forster's work is not limited in the four areas the following chapters examine. What the thesis attempts to do, then, is to uncover the long lost and neglected, to consider how the external world once left its mark on Forster's records of musical performance and consumption, to observe the ways in which Forster's representations of music participate in political debates, and to explore Forster's enduring, protean interest in the politics of music.

I

Friendship and Imperialism

> If equal affection cannot be,
> Let the more loving one be me.
>
> W. H. Auden, 'The More Loving One'.[1]

On 23 April 1924, the British Empire Exhibition was opened to the public. Two full seasons brought millions of people to Wembley, London, to survey and relish the fruition – physical as well as conceptual – of the Empire's global sovereignty. A crucial event in the interwar years, this 'Empire in miniature' polarized public opinion and was much commented upon within and without Britain.[2] Forster, in his own words, belonged to 'a few highbrows' who would 'make fun' of such an imperial display.[3] He wrote two articles, 'The Birth of an Empire' and 'The Doll Souse', satirizing the Exhibition as confusing and confused. The former article observed an unready Wembley where most exhibits were not yet in place, jibing at the inventive nature of the Exhibition by presenting the event as 'an entertainment', which 'mak[es] history, not keeping to it'.[4] The latter article recorded Forster's confusion at seeing Queen Mary's Dolls' House, using the object to embody the layers of exploitation within the Empire and exposing the capitalistic underpinnings of imperial expansion. Both articles

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[1] W. H. Auden, *Collected Shorter Poems: 1927-1957* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 282.
[2] For a discussion of the background, organization, reception, and impact of the British Empire Exhibition, see Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in* Fin-de-Siècle *Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 134-78.
[3] 'The Birth of an Empire' (1924), in *AH*, pp. 42-5 (p. 45).
[4] *AH*, p. 42 and p. 43.

capitalized upon the occasion of the Exhibition, but chose not to critique the blatant patriotism of the event itself. Instead, they examined the imperial mentality through a study of minute artistic objects. Adopting the perspective of a common visitor, they unveiled the complex interdependence of art and imperialism when it was most unexpected. It was, intriguingly, at this intersection of the artistic and the political that Forster posited his anti-imperialism. For him, the process through which the Exhibition organizers enlisted, catalogued, ordered, and displayed these artworks exemplified the 'high imperial vision', revealing an almost insouciant attitude and self-congratulatory manner towards the unknown, the exotic, the colonized.[5]

These two articles suggest that Forster identified the institutional effort behind the Exhibition, rather than the individual participants in the event, as the target of his criticism. Apart from the Dolls' House and many 'ludicrous' exhibits, there were a number of artworks viewed by Forster as representations of individual artists whose beauty and value were made subordinate to, and thus neglected by, the Exhibition's imperial theme.[6] For instance, the peepshow of Gordon Craig's wood engraving, 'The Storm, *King Lear*', was described as 'indignant' in the corner of an exhibition room, 'with a shawl over its head', 'wrap[ping] itself up more proudly and tragically in its black and gold though not without hopes of being visited in the long run'.[7] There is a degree of optimism in this anticipation that a different occasion in the future would allow the artwork to gain its due recognition. There is, too, an implication of a secret alliance between the gazer and the artwork underlying this description, a moment of mutual understanding in defiance of the overarching narrative of the Exhibition. This very sentiment of one individual for another is also evident in Forster's remark on a

[5] *AH*, p. 43.
[6] *AH*, p. 45.
[7] 'The Doll Souse' (1924), in *AH*, pp. 45-8 (p. 46).

group of exhibits from India: as 'delicate' as they were, 'beauty always does have a rough time in these shows' so 'I wish them happily through [the Exhibition], and a safe return to their homes'.[8] We can speculate as to whether the remark was conceived as a general expression arising out of his idiosyncratic preference for Indian artworks, or as a conscious reiteration of his criticism of the Exhibition and British imperialism. More importantly, it was Forster's personal nod to his link, as well as debt, to a place he had visited. This intimate 'salute' – to borrow a word from the title of one of his essays on 'the Oriental' – demonstrates the centrality of personal relationships in Forster's ideology: recurrent in his oeuvre and widely acknowledged by critics, Forster privileges the individual, the private, the unofficial over the collective, the propagandist, the institutional.[9] What we can see here is that, at Wembley in 1924, the necessity of a personal approach was augmented by the fact that all of the exhibits were incorporated into, and exploited by, the collective vision of the Empire. That Forster's attention wandered between individual artworks is thus a deliberate strategy, a way of establishing his own perspective as a resistance to the official narrative.

It is, more than incidentally, around this negotiation of the private and the public that *A Passage to India* – the novel Forster published in between these two articles – builds its plot. It is also notable that the intersection of art and politics, the relation between individual and institution, and the possibility of friendship in the context of imperialism are, alongside many other subjects, recurring themes in the novel. It is, however, through the representation of another form of art that the novel addresses these themes. Allusions to music in *A Passage to India* are, I propose, one of the means through which Forster represents and explores the emotional complexity of

[8] *AH*, p. 45.
[9] 'Salute to the Orient!' (1921), in *AH*, pp. 245-59.

the attempt to find a 'friend' in the colony. Intriguingly, music was not mentioned in the two articles on the British Empire Exhibition albeit its prominent role at Wembley, as celebratory music was composed for the occasion to be played by military bands and choruses.[10] Virginia Woolf's essay, 'Thunder at Wembley' (1924), for example, describes the Massed Bands of Empire playing in ominous weather conditions. An apocalyptic image, Woolf's description associates military music with violence and destruction, and thus undercuts the pomp and circumstance of such an occasion.[11] My intention in this chapter is, then, to consider whether, similarly, Forster's references to music in *A Passage to India* reflect his anti-imperialism; whether music is represented in relation to the novel's social and racial concerns; and whether these representations of music are simultaneously delineations of a wide range of personal responses to imperial contingencies.

As discussed in the Introduction, critics tend to take a formalist approach to interpreting Forster's use of music in *A Passage to India*. David Medalie, for example, interprets the novel's tripartite design as a literary embodiment of the 'sonata form', with its 'exposition', 'development', and 'recapitulation' constructing a dialectical narrative, which transcends the linearity of traditional storytelling.[12] Whilst it illustrates Forster's, alongside other contemporary novelists', attempt to renew fictional form, such a reading bypasses the novel's diegetic music. References to musical performance and consumption in *A Passage to India* have received little attention – the only exception being Professor Godbole's singing at the end of Chapter 7. Godbole's song

[10] Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 194-208.
[11] Virginia Woolf, 'Thunder at Wembley' (1924), in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (vols i-iv) and Stuart N. Clarke (vols v-vi), 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1986-2011), iii, pp. 410-4.
[12] Medalie, pp. 140-3. This interpretation of the novel's 'sonata form' was already present in earlier readings of the novel: see e.g. Richard S. Cammarota, 'Musical Analogy and Internal Design in *A Passage to India*', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920*), 18.1 (1975), 38-46.

about the refusal of Krishna to come to a milkmaiden's prayer takes place when Ronny, Adela, and Mrs Moore are about to leave the tea-party at Fielding's place. Described as 'the song of an unknown bird', it develops without clear indication of rhythm and melody to the Western ear but appears familiar to Hindu servants, before ending abruptly in the middle of a bar upon the subdominant.[13] The religious, sexual, colonial, and philosophical connotations of Forster's description of the song have been the focus of an eclectic spectrum of critical discussions.[14] The song has also been studied in relation to the novel's narrative and language: its lack of completion has been linked to the novel's open ending and its elusive orality associated with Forster's interrogation of the efficacy of written story.[15]

In her recent thesis on Forster and music, Mi Zhou historicizes the description of Godbole's song by discussing Forster's acknowledgement of the work of Maud Mann. A contemporary Hindu-music advocate, Mann denounced the application of Western musicology, especially notation, to Indian music and emphasized, instead, live performances. Noting Forster's compliment on Mann's sympathetic approach to Indian music in 'The Indian Boom' (1915), Zhou observes the ways in which Mann's ideas underlie the description of Godbole's song and, more broadly, contribute to Forster's representation of India as a 'cacophony'. In addition to Godbole's song, there are the

[13] *PI*, p. 72.
[14] For example, Mary Lago reads the song as an example of Forster's understanding of Hinduism, in *E. M. Forster: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 80-2; Sara Suleri regards Godbole's song as 'synecdochical of the tautological desire that vexes imperial narrative', in *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 141; Judith Scherer Herz calls Godbole's song 'a maze of noises' and observes how the silence after the song produces division between characters and provides no comfort. Judith Scherer Herz, 'Listening to Language', in A Passage to India*: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. John Beer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), pp. 59-70 (p. 65); and John Colmer compares the lyrics of the song to Maurice's calling for Alec in *Maurice* and discusses the two texts' intertextuality, in *E. M. Forster: The Personal Voice* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 123.
[15] See e.g. Charu Malik, 'To Express the Subject of Friendship: Masculine Desire and Colonialism in *A Passage to India*', in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford, pp. 221-35 (p. 232) and Tony Jackson, 'The De-Composition of Writing in *A Passage to India*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29.3 (2006), 1-18 (7-8).

noise at *Gokul Ashtami* (the birth of Krishna), the chanting of Mrs Moore's name, and the echo in the Marabar Caves – the aural 'presence' of Forster's India, Zhou suggests, resists textualization and analysis, and thus undercuts and problematizes the usual epistemological confidence of imperial sovereignty.[16]

What Zhou and other critics have overlooked is the presence of Western music in Forster's descriptions of the auditory aspect of India. This is all the more remarkable given that Forster repeatedly commented on the defamiliarization of Western music in India in his private writings. For example, at *Gokul Ashtami*, Forster described how a band playing 'Night of Gladness' found its music mixed with incessant noise produced by cymbals, harmoniums, and drums.[17] In another account of *Gokul Ashtami*, Forster noted that there was 'a merry polka' played simultaneously with two different tunes of Indian music, and 'these united strains' only marked 'the beginning of the noise'.[18] With Western instruments (such as the harmonium) and Western tunes (such as the polka) being appointed to their new roles in the Hindu celebration, such experiences overturned Forster's epistemology. 'It is the noise, the noise, the noise, the noise', he unleashed his agitation, 'which sucks one into a whirlpool, from which there is no re-emerging. The whole of what one understands by music seems lost for ever, or rather

[16] Zhou, pp. 151-64 and pp. 168-88. Bennett Zon's book on the history of writing about non-Western music in the British Empire provides a useful historical context for Maud Mann's work. Zon notes that early twentieth-century scholars became increasingly alert to the inadequacy of using Western understanding to evaluate Indian music, as well as consistently resisted the practice of fitting Indian musical culture into an evolutionary hierarchy. The ideas and concerns of scholars such as Charles Samuel Myers and A. H. Fox Strangways are strikingly modern, anticipating late twentieth-century ethnomusicological negotiations of and debates on the relation between music and culture. Bennett Zon, *Representing Non-Western Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007). See, also, *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s: Portrayal of the East*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[17] All of these details were worked into the opening chapter of the third part of the novel. See the similarities between Forster's letter to his mother on 28 August 1921 (*HD*, p. 66) and the corresponding passage in the novel (*PI*, p. 276). Forster also acknowledged that *The Hill of Devi* 'contains some of the material utilized in the final section of the novel'. 'Forster's Prefatory Notes (1957) to the Everyman Edition', *PI*, p. 314.

[18] Letter to his mother (23 August 1921). *HD*, p. 63.

seems never to have existed.'[19] It is suggestive, then, that Forster found his understanding of music shattered not at a time when he heard indigenous music, but under the effect of these unexpected, 'unorthodox' uses of Western music. It is also intriguing that, in the novel, such a 'noise' becomes the 'triumph of India', embodying the 'muddle' that troubles 'reason and form', and simultaneously providing the necessary 'spiritual sequence' to Forster's narrative.[20] Whether or not Forster thus generalizes Indian incomprehensibility and reiterates colonial stereotypes is open to question; the prominent presence of Western music in Forster's accounts of India's indigenous culture is, nonetheless, evident.

In addition to these descriptions of Western music being eerily blended into Hindu occasions, Forster's writings also demonstrate that Western music was crucial to 'Anglo-Indians' – that is, it was formative to, and emblematic of, the Britishness of British people in India. This is best exemplified by the performance of the National Anthem in the English Club in Chapter 3 of *A Passage to India*; the patriotic and communal sentiments that the music conjures up are explicit in Forster's description.[21] Such patriotism suggests Forster's alertness to the fact that Western music accrued specifically national and imperial meanings when it was played in British India. What has to be emphasized here, however, is that Forster was also aware that not all genres of Western music were employed in this way. Music that manifested a political overtone was selected exactly because of its political overtone, either to mitigate the nostalgia for 'Old England' or to assert the ownership of the subcontinent. In contrast, art music, and those who engaged in it, were often ostracized. In a 1913 letter to his mother, Forster recounted an incident about 'an artistic "Chelsea" sort of couple', who

[19] *HD*, p. 65.
[20] *PI*, p. 275. *HD*, p. 298.
[21] *PI*, pp. 20-1. For a brief discussion of the National Anthem scene, see Zhou, pp. 168-9.

had just arrived in Lahore, being 'blackballed by the English Club' there. He reported that his friends Malcolm and Josie Darling were the only people who were friends with the outcasts:

> Not many Anglo Indians would encourage a guest to do queer unusual things, still less join in such themselves. Everyone is in such a terror of being out of the ordinary. Classical music, literature, intellectual tastes generally—as a rule all is dropped in a couple of years, and husbands and wives, when their day's work is done, meet other husbands and wives in a dense mass at the Club. One is told that all this has to be, and of course the outsider can't know, but it is refreshing to find people who stand up against it.[22]

Forster's description reveals an anomalous musical culture in British India: while Western music was one of the methods to have a secure, pronounced national identity, 'Classical music', alongside other 'queer unusual things', did not meet this purpose and was thus excluded from the Club routine. His compliment on the Darlings, additionally, displays a preference for individual taste over communal value judgement, which is consistent with his belief in personal relationships. The fact that this was written in a letter, moreover, suggests that Forster intended his addressee – or addressees, as he knew well that his letters were usually circulated among family and friends – to envision the bias and repression within British communities in India.[23] If his description seems simplistic, it could be intentionally so because he aimed not only to satiate the curiosity of those back home but also to influence their political opinions. For Forster, this biased selection of musical repertoire was characteristic of the prevalent and hegemonic imperial norm, which he challenged alongside the Darlings,

[22] Letter to his mother (26 February 1913). *SL1*, pp. 193-4.
[23] My argument here echoes Ambreen Hai's contention that Forster's Indian letters to his relatives are more political than his Indian journals because they were meant to challenge and revise what the addressees thought about India. Ambreen Hai, *Making Words Matter: The Agency of Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), p. 120.

the 'Chelsea' couple, and hopefully, those who would read this letter in England.

Attentive to the mutability and malleability of Western music's significance in relation to the colonial contexts, Forster gave us a different example – though not incompatible with the one seen above – of British engagement with music. In November 1912, Forster, with his travel companions Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and R. C. Trevelyan, went to Peshawar to visit Kenneth Searight, a young officer with whom they became acquainted on board a ship to India. Their first evening was a party at the mess, and Forster recorded in his journal how the Cambridge-educated trio was surrounded by a group of welcoming soldiers and officers:

> Band—which had waited for me to play "Roast Beef of Old England"—performed during evening, and they danced—[Searight] far the best and inspiring them. […] Bob danced and scrummed, I felt not to know them well enough, tho' they would have drawn me in. Once "in" with the military they take one to their bosom. No gradations between hauteur and intimacy as is natural with unreflecting men. I imagine these are good specimens—all young and merry and some able. [24]

Here, the musical references are to patriotic music and perhaps also to dance music. It is not clear whether any art music was played, but it is evident, once again, how Western music was involved in the construction of the national identity of the British in the colony.[25] What differentiates this account from Forster's other descriptions of Western music in India is that, underlying the hegemony of imperial patriotism, there were moments of individual bonding. In this account, Western music accompanies, and perhaps also facilitates, such moments, augmenting the exuberance of hospitality that goes beyond class differences, beyond the barrier between the learned and the military.

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[24] Diary entry from Forster's 1912 Indian Journal (8 November 1912). *HD*, pp. 140-1.
[25] It is worth noting here that the reference to the march, 'Roast Beef of Old England', reveals the problematic Anglocentrism in delineations of Britishness.

Forster's relishing, almost homoerotic, gaze at those around him becomes apparent towards the end of the account: for him, this distinctively British assembly comprised nothing but individual men searching for intimacy.[26] This homosocial cordiality is a sharp contrast to the heterosexual compactness of the aforementioned Club in Lahore, where 'husbands and wives' congregated and dominated. If Western music unified, implicitly forcibly, British people in India, this account illustrates that it also allowed personal relationships to blossom. That is, it provided an alternative space to the official, hierarchical world of British imperialism and set in motion different patterns of private interaction, such as the male friendships depicted here.

In Forster's work, the trope of friendship, especially male friendship, has been the focus of a number of critical studies; its relations to Forster's views on sexuality, national identity, and class have also been extensively discussed. Joseph Bristow, for example, identifies male friendship as a recurring motif in Forster's novels: Forster constantly searches for a synthesis of 'the aesthete and athlete, trusting that the intellectual man can and should refine the sensibility of the cricket-playing son of the empire, while the vigorous hearty type may reciprocally virilize the scholarly fellow'.[27] Such a model, Bristow suggests, allows Forster to write against the contemporary concept of effeminacy and represent male homoeroticism in a publishable form.[28] This recurs in *A Passage to India* in the form of the interracial friendship between Aziz and Fielding, which, as Bristow observes, goes beyond postcolonial terms of colonial and colonized, and between them 'yearnings for imperial domination and homophile

[26] Forster was conscious of the homoeroticism in his enjoyment of this evening in Peshawar: the letter to his mother, in which he recounted this evening, only mentioned that the party became 'friskier and friskier'. *SL1*, p. 155. Another account of this evening is in his biography of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, in which Forster draws the attention less to his homoerotic sentiments but to Dickinson's almost avuncular popularity among the soldiers. *GLD*, pp. 114-5.
[27] Bristow, *Effeminate England*, p. 57.
[28] Bristow, *Effeminate England*, pp. 55-99.

comradeship coalesce and dissipate at once'.[29] Sarah Cole also looks into the centrality of friendship in the novel: 'friendship dominates as both subject and organizing trope' in *A Passage to India,* but 'the novel's inquiry into friendship essentially concludes where it began: with a qualified, regretful "no."'[30] Revisiting the interaction between Aziz and Fielding, Cole teases out the intricacy of the desire and frustration of male friendship within a colonial framework, suggesting that, with the dissipation of the Hellenic, aestheticized ideal of male-male bonding in the twentieth century, 'the ambitious idea of making friendship into the catalyst for racial harmony collapses under the weight of imperial difference'.[31]

Such a precarious balance of friendship in the novel between individual desire and institutional order, I suggest, is manifested in Forster's representations of Western music, too. The musical 'soundscape' Forster shaped and modulated for the novel is not simply descriptive of two cultures incompatible with each other.[32] Rather, it is often charged with emotions, emotions of individual characters' which do not always conform to the racial and colonial incompatibility on the surface. The representations of Western music in the novel, I propose, present a scenario fraught with curiosity and hesitation, enthusiasm and frustration, intimacy and disorientation. The central character in this scenario is neither Aziz nor Fielding, but Ronny Heaslop, to whom the chapter pays particular attention.

The portrayal of Ronny in particular, and of British officialdom in *A Passage to India* in general, is frequently studied in light of Forster's anti-imperialism. Although critics have explored its historical, ideological, and psychological facets, Forster's

[29] Bristow, *Effeminate England*, p. 87.
[30] Cole, pp. 71-91 (p. 81 and p. 90).
[31] Cole, p. 82.
[32] I borrow the term 'soundscape' from R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1997).

'English Club' is often read as his satiric exaggeration of bigoted imperialism. For example, a contemporary reviewer described the novel's characterization of the British as 'bitten with disdain'.[33] On publication of the novel, previous and current British officers in India also, unsurprisingly, criticized Forster's characterization of Anglo-Indians as inaccurate and unfair.[34] In a recent study, Mohammad Shaheen alludes to *Aspects of the Novel* and argues that Forster's British characters are 'flat' because Forster found imperialism 'flat enough to invite no exploration into its existential order'.[35] As Shaheen argues, imperialism, for Forster, was 'not a subject for any aesthetic contemplation to warrant fictive rendering'.[36] This critical trend of reading Forster's British characters, especially those who hold office in the fictional Chandrapore, as negative and superficial is reductive. It is also simplistic to use Forster's overall anti-imperialism to assume that his characterization of the British lacks nuances. The chapter aims to redress this bias by unveiling the unexplored depth in the characterization of Ronny. More specifically, I consider references to three Western musical instruments – Ronny's viola in Chapter 5, the Maharajah's harmonium in Chapter 8, and the broken piano in the European Guest House in Chapter 36 – all of which are related, directly or indirectly, to the City Magistrate in Chandrapore. Examining Forster's descriptions of these instruments, I explore the ways in which they reflect Ronny's uneasy navigation through a cluster of emotional and political factors during his own 'passage' to India. My discussion, then, does not stage yet another

[33] H. W. Massingham, 'The price of India's friendship', *New Leader*, 27 June 1924, cited in *E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Philip Gardner (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 207-10 (p. 208). Describing Forster's characterization of Aziz as 'touched with sympathy', Messingham's review presents a dichotomized understanding of the characters in the novel. Such a perceived dichotomy partly contributed to the public's interest in the novel after its publication. See Furbank, ii, 122-30.
[34] See Furbank, ii, 125-30.
[35] Mohammad Shaheen, *E. M. Forster and the Politics of Imperialism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 16 and p. 89.
[36] Shaheen, p. 86.

interrogation of Forster's adequacy to write about, or speak for, the 'subaltern'. Rather, it focuses on Ronny, asking whether he is also searching for a friend. Additionally, my discussion augments recent inquiries into 'things', showing that, for all its non-materiality, music is no less embedded in the 'material qualities' of musical instruments.[37] Through recovering the social and historical relations hidden in the viola, the harmonium, and the piano, I contemplate the hidden character of Ronny Heaslop.

More than frequently, Ronny Heaslop is read as a typical British imperial officer in India, whose English public-school background predetermines his propriety, but also his insensitiveness and complacency. Examples of such a reading are many: Ronny is regarded as the epitome of the imperial system, his personal flaws the synecdoche for the inherent evil of the Empire. Constantly, he is placed in contrast to Fielding, as the following passage by Benita Parry demonstrates:

> The obtuse, coarse, arrogant and bellicose deportment of Anglo-Indians, as realised in the novel, is the very negation of those decencies defined through Fielding […]. When Fielding [in the end] aligns himself with the rulers of India, he is submitting to the fact of imperialism, deferring to a mode of behaviour and feeling made and needed by an aggressive political system and conceding that his liberal principles and hopes of doing good in India exist only by favour of a Ronny Heaslop.[38]

This perceived dualism of Ronny and Fielding, of the former's 'white man's burden' and the latter's humanistic understanding, and of the official world of the Empire and the unofficial interaction between individuals, results, as I have suggested, from an

[37] I am indebted to Elaine Freedgood's brilliant study, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[38] Benita Parry, 'The Politics of Representation in *A Passage to India*', in A Passage to India*: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. John Beer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), pp. 27-43 (p. 34).

oversimplification of the novel's portrayal of the British. It has been fostered too, I believe, by critics' possibly embarrassed reluctance to consider a character of whom Forster apparently did not approve. Yet Ronny is more than just 'a typical imperialist'.[39] The fact that he plays the viola, I will argue, suggests his complicated character, and it is through discussing the reference to the instrument that I attempt a different reading of Ronny.

Chapter 5 of *A Passage to India* is centred on the Bridge Party at the English Club, in which, as numerous critics have recognized, Forster produces a multivalent 'contact zone', where colonial and racial impressions, stereotypes, and conventions overflow.[40] During the party, the Anglo-Indians ignore their Indian guests, occupying themselves with informal conversation about the recent performance of *Cousin Kate*. Their attitude is observed by the narrator:

> They had tried to reproduce their own attitude to life upon the stage, and to dress up as the middle-class English people they actually were. […] Save for this annual incursion, they left literature alone. The men had no time for it, the women did nothing that they could not share with the men. Their ignorance of the arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity of proclaiming it to one another; it was the public-school attitude, flourishing more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England. If Indians were shop, the arts were bad form, and Ronny had repressed his mother when she inquired after his viola; a viola was almost a demerit, and certainly not the sort of instrument one mentioned in public.[41]

The English Club in Chandrapore is similar to the one in Lahore, which had banished the 'Chelsea' couple; it entertains itself with artistic mediocrity while accommodating only those who join in the consensus. Whilst critics have discussed how Forster's satire

[39] The phrase is from Shaheen, p. 16.
[40] I borrow the phrase from Mary Louise Pratt's influential study, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4-7.
[41] *PI*, p. 34.

lies in the warm reception of *Cousin Kate*, the reference to Ronny's unspeakable viola has not been commented upon and seems nothing but another example of the Club's opposition to art and culture.[42]

A preliminary interpretation might suggest that Ronny's disengagement with the viola serves to uphold the intactness of imperial manliness crucial to those who hold office in the colony. For Ronny, his viola may all too easily conjure up an aura of auditory fineness, artistic delicacy, domestic leisure, and emotive susceptibility, and thus it endows him with a certain femininity detrimental to his public authority. He does not mention – and does not want others to mention – his viola in the Club perhaps because 'India isn't a drawing-room'; because he is not 'a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man' but 'a servant of the Government'; and because he fears that the disclosure of his (private) musical habit would undercut 'such power as [he has] for doing good in this country'.[43] The viola, alongside 'Grasmere, serious talks and walks', may therefore belong to 'the callow academic period of his life', which Ronny believes he has 'outgrown' when he reflects on his service in India at the end of the second part of the novel.[44] Ronny's 'progress', then, follows the making of the imperial hero, and his resistance to his mother's question about the viola can be read as the starting point of such a making. As Jonathan Rutherford suggests, '[t]he strenuous exertions of the imperial hero, his refusal to contemplate, to think or to pause, suggest that his adventures involved a compulsion to escape the idleness and comfort of domesticity'.[45]

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[42] As Elaine Showalter suggests, the ignorance of the Anglo-Indian women of the anti-feminist content of *Cousin Kate* indicates their subscription to traditional notions of marriage and motherhood when they live in India. Elaine Showalter, '*A Passage to India* as "Marriage Fiction": Forster's Sexual Politics', *Women & Literature*, 5.2 (1977), 3-16 (6).
[43] *PI*, pp. 43-4.
[44] *PI*, p. 246.
[45] Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Race, Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997), p. 12.

Ronny may not necessarily regards himself as a 'hero', but he certainly subscribes to this idea, and ideal, of imperial manliness by dismissing personal relationships, domestic inactivity, intellectual development, and – as a crystallization of all of these qualities together – his viola. As Jenny Sharpe suggests, compared to contemporary England, the imported domestic lifestyle in Forster's English Club is underpinned by a stringent, anachronistic gender politics.[46] Such domesticity evokes leisure and familiarity, but it also augments alertness to, and anxiety about, the clarity of gender allocation in the British community. As the instrument, and Western art music in general, has the potential to problematize Ronny's gender role, it is, then, unmentionable.[47]

However, Forster's phrase, 'the sort of instrument', is an explicit invitation for readers to reflect on the characteristics of this particular instrument's connotations. The novel's manuscripts, additionally, give us pause for thought: rather than a viola, it was originally a violin with which Ronny would be associated.[48] What prompted Forster to make such a revision? What are the differences between a viola and a violin? Why is a viola a 'demerit'? Given the different ways the two string instruments were, and perhaps still are, perceived, the change is, I suggest, to echo Ronny's subordinate but necessary role in the imperial system. From a violin to a viola, Ronny plays his part as a cog in the gigantic imperial machine, as if Forster had intended him not to play the first theme. Histories of the viola are inseparable from, and often appendant to, those of the violin; nowadays viola jokes – stereotypes about violas and viola players – are still

[46] Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 121.
[47] As Ambreen Hai notes, silence, or the inability to explain something, characterizes the novel's representation of Anglo-Indian rhetoric: throughout the novel, this 'unspeakability of Anglo-Indian codes' results in numerous abrupt changes of topics or fruitless discussions. It underpins the imperial structure of political domination, but it also aggravates the problem of communication. Hai, p. 165.
[48] *MSS-PI*, p. 49.

prevalent within musical groups. Although nineteenth-century composers became increasingly interested in the instrument's darker timbre and grander sonority, the viola was less used than the violin as a solo instrument. Used in orchestral music, the viola was either assigned to completing a chord or to accompanying the subject performed by others; a concerto would rarely be written for the instrument. More widely employed in chamber music, the viola had an important place in the string quartet and quintet, but even then the prominent role still went to the violin. When it came to works where fewer instruments were involved, like sonatas or trios, the viola was, once again, bypassed.[49]

In *A Passage to India*, such a subsidiary role for the viola seems perfectly compatible with Ronny's position as the City Magistrate: in Chandrapore, he is one of the officers under the command of Mr Turton, the District Collector. The fact that Ronny appropriates his superiors' 'phrases and arguments' sounds also like a viola reiterating or harmonizing the melodic line.[50] The way he behaves – 'He always showed deference to his superiors' – seems a reminder of the viola's gentle alto or tenor.[51] Or, if unsympathetically caricatured, the viola's 'characterless' tone is reflected, in this respect, by Ronny's mediocre colonial performance and his unremarkable appearance.[52] We cannot help but wonder whether, for Ronny, it would have been less of a 'demerit' if he had played the violin: the viola, frequently characterised as feminine as a result of its structural relation to the other, principal, 'male' instrument, augments Ronny's anxieties about gender norms in the Club. That being said, Ronny is

[49] David D. Boyden and Ann M. Woodward, 'Viola', in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 24 April 2013]
[50] *PI*, p. 28.
[51] *PI*, p. 178.
[52] In Turton's conversation with Mrs Moore, we learn that Ronny, though a 'dignified' 'sahib', has not had any specific merits. As for his appearance, it is, according to Aziz, one without 'physical charm'. *PI*, p. 20 and p. 144.

to Chandrapore what the viola is to chamber music; his duty, though nondescript, is after all indispensable. His role in the Empire is collaborative in nature: alongside the Superintendent of Police, Ronny maintains the operation of a legal system imported from and imposed by the centre of the Empire. If the Turtons are 'little gods' in Chandrapore, Ronny is the one who makes this godly image palpable, since his work is 'to dispense justice fearlessly' while being 'surrounded by lies and flattery'.[53] Secondary but loyal, undistinguished but necessary, Ronny is thus aligned with an instrument that is more compatible with his official responsibility and more emblematic of his characteristics.

It is, then, in this role as a collaborative instrument in chamber music that the viola invites our further speculation. Does Ronny have his viola in India? This seems affirmative, or his mother would not have made the inquiry. Does he still play it? Forster leaves this unspecified in the novel, but it is likely that, if Ronny does play, he does so in an ensemble. If such is the case, Ronny's viola is only unmentionable in public, but known – perhaps secretly – by several others in the Club. This detail is confirmed in the manuscripts – 'only a few people knew he had one' – but deleted in the final published version.[54] An insidious knowledge amongst a few people, Ronny's viola, then, suggests that there is some private engagement with Western art music beneath the surface impression of total ignorance of the arts; it also suggests the existence of heterogeneous personal interactions underlying the monolithic political world of British imperialism. Those who know of Ronny's viola and knowingly participate in these exclusive moments of domestic musical practice may be more than conscious of the way their music contradicts the gender norms of British India. They

[53] *PI*, p. 23 and p. 44.
[54] *MSS-PI*, p. 49.

may also be aware that the surreptitious musical enjoyments should never intersect with their imperial roles; in public, the British officials still have to show their unalloyed loyalty when the National Anthem is played by the Club's band. Ronny's reaction to his mother's question is thus possibly motivated by a broader concern, not just with his own unmentionable musicality, but over a secret that affects more than an individual. And perhaps these anxieties about the Club's gender norms can be elaborated. As critics have demonstrated, music became closely associated with sexuality, especially homosexuality, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, not only in literary texts and musical commentaries, but in religious and scientific – evolutionary, psychiatric, and sexologist – writings as well.[55] Whilst it is possible, then, to ask whether Ronny and others' sexuality is encoded in their unmentionable engagement with music, I do not wish to state emphatically the causality between musical secrecy and homosexual desire.[56] The unspeakable viola, nonetheless, undercuts the presumption of Ronny's heterosexuality and augments the novel's homoeroticism.

In any case, Ronny stops his mother from asking after his viola. What is particularly telling is that Forster describes this incident differently in the manuscripts and in the published text: he changes from an adjective phrase, 'been \quite/ vexed with', to a single verb, 'repressed'.[57] In so doing, Forster transforms Ronny from a passive listener to an active doer. The nuance lies in that, in contrast to the repeated

[55] See, representatively, Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 24-56; Joe Law, 'The "Perniciously Homosexual Art": Music and Homoerotic Desire in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Other *Fin-de-Siècle* Fiction', in *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, ed. Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 173-96, especially pp. 182-3; Emma Sutton, '"The Music Spoke For Us": Music and Sexuality in *Fin-de-siècle* Poetry', in *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, ed. Phyllis Weliver (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 213-29.

[56] On the parallel between musicality and homosexuality, and a manifesto of queer musicology, see Philip Brett, 'Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet', in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 9-26.

[57] *MSS-PI*, p. 49.

allusions to Ronny's deference to his superiors, his assertiveness in front of Mrs Moore marks a moment when he stops behaving like a viola: no longer a viola subordinate to a violin, he momentarily asserts himself before being told what to do. Whether or not this (Freudian?) interaction between mother and son can be read biographically is debatable; the exchange regarding the viola is underpinned by the negotiation of personal interest and imperial ideal, and Ronny's assertiveness is a decision made after reflecting knowingly on the boundary between public and private. Perhaps there is again a note of complacency in his reaction to his mother's inquiry, an assertiveness he has picked up during his 'passage' to *becoming* an imperialist. This incident is, then, a rite of passage for Ronny. Whatever reason lies behind his resistance to the disclosure of the viola, the reference to the instrument certainly unveils an unfamiliar aspect of Ronny's characterization: instead of being surrounded by Indian pleaders, he has taken on the role of a violist, making music with his musical compatriots.

Unlike Ronny's viola, the harmonium in Chapter 8 undergoes several transitions of ownership and is intriguingly public:

> "If I didn't snatch like the devil, I should be nowhere. He doesn't want the car, silly fool! Surely it's to the credit of his State I should be seen about in it at Chandrapore during my leave. He ought to look at it that way. Anyhow he's got to look at it that way. My Maharani's different—my Maharani's a dear. That's her fox-terrier, poor little devil. I fished them both out with the driver. Imagine taking dogs to a Chiefs' Conference! […] The harmonium—the harmonium's my little mistake, I own. They rather had me over the harmonium. I meant it to stop on the train. Oh lor'!"[58]

[58] *PI*, p. 83.

The speaker is Miss Derek, who has stolen a car from her employer, the 'Mudkul State' Maharajah; her addressees are mainly Ronny and Adela, but the Nawab Bahadur, an established Muslim, is also onboard. The latter three are given a lift by Miss Derek; they were picked up by her from a car accident, a confusing event in which those involved could not determine whether it was a hyena into which the car had rushed. As one of the minor characters in the novel, Miss Derek is different from the officers and their families in Chandrapore: unmarried, she works in a Native State as a companion to the Maharani. Forster might have drawn upon his personal experiences in Dewas for the characterization of this anomalous British existence in India: not a tourist but a 'freelance', Miss Derek is neither affiliated to nor detached from the imperial system.[59] It is this ambiguous role in the Empire, though, that allows, and perhaps also spurs, Miss Derek to take liberties with her employers' possessions. At first, the harmonium seems also one of the spoils, but her explanation quote above reveals that the instrument is rather unwanted by her. In the manuscripts, this mistaken possession is more clearly stated: the harmonium is 'popped […] on board without [her] noticing'.[60] Yet the harmonium's appearance in the car is no coincidence; the prominence of the instrument in this scene and throughout the chapter is a device with which Forster brings several subplots together. The harmonium, I would suggest, alludes to, as well as embodies, the conflict between Western material civilization and Indian indigenous culture.

After its introduction into India in the middle of the nineteenth century, the harmonium was widely disseminated and frequently used in indigenous musical performances. Portable, foldable, and easy to play, the harmonium provided

[59] *PI*, p. 83.
[60] *MSS-PI*, p. 120.

'heterophonic contrapuntal texture for vocal music' in a wide variety of musical styles. By the early twentieth century, however, the instrument's inability of conveying authentically the intonation of Indian music drew large criticism from Indian nationalists.[61] As we have seen in his description of *Gokul Ashtami*, Forster was clearly aware of the instrument's popularity and its frequent use in Indian traditions. While more will be discussed regarding Forster's interest in the flexible intonation of Indian music, my emphasis here is on his alertness to the influence of Western material culture on India. The harmonium was one of the many imports from Europe, and later it was widely manufactured in India too: India was, then, the market as well as the factory. The Empire's economic exploitation of the colony, with its overarching capitalistic purpose, was manifested in the dissemination of the instrument. In the novel, the recurrence of the harmonium – in Miss Derek's car and in *Gokul Ashtami* – suggests that, for Indians, British imperialism appears not only as political domination or racial segregation, but also as an invasion of foreign objects.[62] It brings actual, tangible changes – as the harmonium in *Gokul Ashtami* does – to rituals that have been practised for centuries, but it also has an impact psychologically. What the Maharajah's harmonium suggests is an enchantment with 'the Western', and a subscription to a value system of technological modernity and capitalistic ownership. As Miss Derek's account indicates, the harmonium seems one of the things – alongside the car and the fox-terrier – that the Maharajah brings along to a Chiefs' Conference; though unspecified, such eagerness to appear more Westernized and more 'advanced' than other rajahs and princes is almost conspicuous. The harmonium, then, becomes not

[61] Barbara Owen and Alastair Dick, 'Harmonium', in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 24 April 2013]

[62] My reading therefore opposes recurrent suggestions that the novel fails to address the economic aspect of British imperialism. See e.g. Hunt Hawkins, 'Forster's Critique of Imperialism in *A Passage to India*', *South Atlantic Review*, 48.1 (1983), 54-65 (59-60).

only a token of status and wealth, but also an indicator of modernity and Westernization. The Maharajah's harmonium thus reflects the junction between art and commerce, between cultural novelty and economic accessibility, between imperialism and the percolation of capitalism.

What has also been worked into this junction is, I suggest, Forster's long, almost anxious, observation on the ways in which contemporary Indians tackled the idea of 'the Western'. During and after his visits to India in 1912 and 1921, Forster repeatedly wrote about the influence of Western culture on Indians; he depicted how, for all of them, Hindus and Muslims alike, Western 'culture' – including material imports, habits, thoughts, religious outlooks, social norms, political structures, and many other subjects – posed a significant and inevitable problem. Several of these articles, many of which are in the form of book reviews, were reprinted in the essay collection, *Abinger Harvest* (1936), under the heading, 'The East'.[63] Among them, the short essay, 'Advance, India!' (1914), is particularly telling. It describes a local wedding in Simla, in which a 'rationalistic' family defied Islamic doctrines by, for example, not veiling the bride.[64] The genesis of the essay is a request from the bridegroom's brother, who hoped that Forster's report of this Westernized ceremony could show that Muslims in India had made 'a great step forward against superstition'.[65] What Forster depicted is, however, an occasion full of confusion, negotiation, and compromise: 'It was depressing, almost heartrending, and opened the problem of India's future.'[66] For Forster, only when the usual evening prayer of the orthodox took place regardless of the ongoing Western popular tune on a gramophone

[63] The rest of Forster's 1913 and 1914 Indian articles are reprinted in a collection published posthumously. See *AEOW*.
[64] 'Advance, India!' (1914), in *AH*, pp. 298-301 (p. 298).
[65] *AH*, p. 301.
[66] *AH*, p. 299.

did he find 'beauty' in this oddly Westernized ceremony: the unintended synchronicity of music and religion, the lack of self-consciousness in the prayers' movement, the practice of a tradition in the face of social reforms – all of these elements presented 'a memorable act'.[67] Ideologically, this description suggests Forster's scepticism about Indians' conscious, and conscientious, Westernization.[68] Style-wise, the description demonstrates that it is around the gramophone that Forster delineates the diverse and localized responses of Indians to specific aspects of Western civilization. While the gramophone, as a recording device, was powerfully influential on Indian musical culture and contemporary anthropological studies, what concerns us here is that this imported musical object is central to Forster's delineation of the ways in which Indians negotiated with Western culture.[69]

The harmonium, I suggest, plays a similar role in the novel. On the one side is the Maharajah, who, as I have suggested, relies on imported goods to define his modernization. On the other side is the Nawab Bahadur. Following Miss Derek's explanation about why the harmonium is in the car, the Nawab Bahadur gives an 'oration' on how to modernize India.[70] A prominent, educated Muslim, he laments over Hindu superstition while eulogizing the 'reason and orderliness' of British India.[71] Although he speaks to show deference to the British onboard (the narrative's satiric

[67] *AH*, p. 300 and p. 299. There are, additionally, two more accounts of this wedding, one in Forster's journal, and the other in a letter to his mother on 21 November 1912. See *HD*, p. 145 and *SL1*, pp. 159-60.
[68] Ian Baucom reads Forster's preference for the traditional in relation to contemporary tourism, national identity, and the memory of the Mutiny. He regards this account as a touristic tendency to search for the 'authentic': 'Forster transforms the bodies of the orthodox into souvenirs […] that he can collect and preserve in the materiality of text.' Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 120.
[69] See e.g. Gerry Farrell, 'The Early Days of the Gramophone Industry in India: Historical, Social and Musical Perspectives', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 2 (1993), 31-53; and Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), especially Chapter 4: 'The Gramophone Comes to India', pp. 111-43.
[70] *PI*, p. 85.
[71] *PI*, p. 84.

tone is also explicit in the description of this unstoppable outburst), the Nawab Bahadur nevertheless presents an alternative approach to Western culture: it is education and rationality, instead of Western material culture, that the Nawab Bahadur emphasizes and values. Indeed, here he is not commenting on the harmonium, but it is evident that the instrument is situated between the two different Indian attitudes towards Western civilization. Around the harmonium, we see the diffraction of Indians into the Hindu and the Muslim, the Anglicized and the traditional, the materialistic and the spiritual. The fact that Forster uses a Hindu ruler and an Islamic elite to exemplify this discrepancy of contemporary India suggests, too, his concern with the ways in which religious differences produced inner contradictions in the subcontinent. Like the gramophone, the harmonium represents and augments the topicality of social 'advance' in Indian perceptions of and negotiations with the West.

It is intriguing, then, that the harmonium is also referred to in the Nawab Bahadur's impression of Ronny. When he is talking, the Nawab Bahadur is aware that he is boring the British trio – Miss Derek, Ronny, and Adela – in the back seat: he 'suspected that his audience felt no interest, and that the City Magistrate fondled either maiden behind the cover of the harmonium'.[72] Casting the instrument as a medium through which a courtship traditionally takes place, the Nawab Bahadur is only half correct: while Ronny is behaving properly when the Nawab Bahadur entertains his suspicion, what the older man suspects does resonate with details in a previous scene and also foreshadows what will subsequently unfold. What occurred in the past is before the car accident: 'owing to a jolt', Adela's hand touched Ronny's, 'and one of

[72] *PI*, p. 85.

the thrills so frequent in the animal kingdom passed between them'.[73] As a result, the awkwardness that had lasted since the breakup of their prospective marriage disappeared. Later, the two British characters again touch each other's hand at the moment when the Nawab Bahadur gets out of the car: 'His hand, which he had removed to say goodbye, touched Adela's again; she caressed it definitely, he responded, and their firm and mutual pressure surely meant something.'[74] These exchanges of touches chart the reconciliation of Ronny and Adela, first filling up the silence where conversation failed and later precipitating the closeness of the couple. The nascent eroticism contained within these exchanges, the reciprocity of physical demonstrations of passion and understanding, and the surreptitious nature of these moments all underline the importance of the body to the restoration of the relationship between the two characters.[75] Yet it is also an irony that, no sooner does their conversation resume, than the connection built up by the touches seems lost, and to Adela and Ronny's surprise, they find themselves unexpectedly engaged. It has become evident, then, that all the characters, incidents, objects, and allusions during this journey in the car are involved in a series of misunderstandings, misperceptions, and miscommunications. And central to these discursive patterns of faltering personal relationships is, I suggest, the harmonium – it was made central, in fact, by Forster's revision: in the manuscripts, it was originally a 'shawl' to which the Nawab Bahadur refers in his suspicion of Ronny's impropriety.[76] Whether it was a revision due to

[73] *PI*, p. 79-80.
[74] *PI*, p. 85.
[75] In her analysis, Ambreen Hai notes the importance of 'touch' to all personal relationships in the novel: how touch, or the rejection of it, epitomizes the acceptance of or resistance to understanding and communication. Regarding this particular moment between Ronny and Adela, she captures the sexual undertone, but interprets it as a moment of solidarity between the two characters against the threatening racial Other. Hai, p. 186.
[76] *MSS-PI*, p. 123.

Forster's sudden recognition of the harmonium's ready usefulness in the car, or it was an intended detail to endow the instrument with added significance, the harmonium is right at the centre of the scene, constantly intersected with, and related to, a diverse range of political subjects.

It is possible, then, to speculate whether it is the etymology of the term 'harmonium' that Forster is exploiting. One of the derivatives of Latin *harmonia*, the etymology of 'harmonium' is the same as that of 'harmony'.[77] Yet, if the presence of the harmonium evokes a sense of harmony, what we have seen is, in many ways, a parody of such an evocation. Perhaps there is a sense of sadness in Forster's parody of harmony: for how many times in the novel does misunderstanding creep in when the characters think that they have shown goodwill and understanding?[78] In a broader historical context, the importation of the harmonium was also underpinned, and thus doomed, by a similar projection of goodwill; the imperial aspiration to create a colonial world materialistically in harmony with Western society by disseminating the fruition of Western civilization, reveals the very negligence of the incompatibility of the harmonium with Indian musical culture. It is to this incompatibility, to the failure of Western musical instruments in India, that we will now turn.

When he arrived in Dewas in 1921, Forster soon discovered that the Native State was

[77] *OED.*
[78] My reading is thus parallel to, but also different from, that of Sara Suleri, who identifies 'disappointment' as a running trope in the novel. Whilst Suleri reads the novel as a series of disappointments for the imperial's erotic desire, I suggest, additionally, that disappointment is mutual for both races and prevalent in every single personal relationship depicted in the novel. This disappointment takes place on a linguistic level, too. Gillian Beer has written elegantly on how the novel's repeated use of negation sends implications for Forster's ideologies. Suleri, pp. 132-48. Gillian Beer, 'Negation in *A Passage to India*', in A Passage to India: *Essays in Interpretation*, ed. John Beer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), pp. 44-58.

in disarray. Writing to his mother, Forster said:

> Life here will be queer beyond description. The New Palace […] is still building, and the parts of it that were built ten years ago are already falling down. You would weep at the destruction, expense, and hideousness, and I do almost. […] I can't start now on the inside of the palace—two pianos (one a grand), a harmonium, and a dulciphone, all new and all unplayable, their notes sticking and their frames cracked by the dryness. I look into a room—dozens of warped towel-horses are stabled there, or a new suite of drawing-room chairs with their insides gushing out.[79]

This account can be read literally as well as symbolically: it indicates that Western objects either malfunctioned because of the Indian climate or were mishandled by Indians, while it suggests that the imported civilization, as a whole, never worked in India. There is frustration in Forster's tone here, an anxiety about the situation if what he viewed as the familiar and the regular was simply unable to survive the environment. There is also helplessness: as the Maharajah's secretary, Forster found it futile to attempt to ameliorate the situation.

More importantly, this catalogue of broken instruments was likely to be the source for an important scene in Chapter 36 in *A Passage to India*. In the novel's penultimate chapter, the first sentence reads: 'All the time the palace ceased not to thrum and tum-tum.'[80] It is remarkable, then, that, when Indian music is represented as at its most lingering, it is the sound of a broken piano that can be heard in the middle of the chapter. It is the piano in the European Guest House in Mau, 'played' by Aziz. Knowing that Fielding is out on a boat with his family to see the celebration of *Gokul Ashtami*, Aziz intentionally chooses that moment to visit the Guest House. Once inside,

[79] Letter to his mother (21 April 1921). *HD*, p. 32.
[80] *PI*, p. 294.

he finds two letters on a piano and, out of vindictiveness, opens them. One letter is from Ronny to Fielding, with several references to Ronny's half-brother, Ralph Moore; the other is from Adela to Stella, Ronny's half-sister and now Fielding's wife. Both letters are written with ease:

> It was all "Stella and Ralph", even "Cyril" and "Ronny"—all so friendly and sensible, and written in a spirit he could not command. He envied the easy intercourse that is only possible in a nation whose women are free. These five people were making up their little difficulties, and closing their broken ranks against the alien. Even Heaslop was coming in. Hence the strength of England, and in a spurt of temper he hit the piano, and since the notes had swollen and stuck together in groups of threes he produced a remarkable noise.
>
> "Oh, oh, who is that?" said a nervous and respectful voice; he could not remember where he had heard its tones before. Something moved in the twilight of an adjoining room. He replied, "State doctor, ridden over to inquire, very little English," slipped the letters into his pocket, and to show that he had free entry to the Guest House struck the piano again.
>
> Ralph Moore came into the light.[81]

This 'remarkable noise' emphatically accelerates the plot, paving the ground for the meeting between Aziz and Ralph, an encounter which recalls the theme of interracial friendship and foreshadows the reconciliation between Aziz and Fielding. While it is surprising that critics have neglected this pivotal moment in their analyses of the novel, it is also insufficient to read the scene just biographically as a mere fictionalized rendition of Forster's personal discovery of the broken instruments in the palace. Given its importance to the plot, how are we to interpret these sounds produced by piano notes 'stuck together in groups of threes'?

This 'noise' is, I would suggest, perturbing, especially to those who root their understanding of music in Western musicology. A unit of three consecutive piano keys

[81] *PI*, pp. 298-9.

combines two minor seconds and one major second. The chromatic semitone in the middle part of it produces two minor seconds with its neighbouring keys respectively, while the two keys outside form a major second which is itself discordant and needs to be resolved. If a major or minor second is regarded as 'imperfect' compared to the 'perfect' fourth, fifth, and octave, this unit is doubly, or triply, 'imperfect'. Played together, the unit does not belong to any traditional chords in the Western tonal system; it does not belong to a diatonic scale but is part of a chromatic one; it is neither concordant nor stable. Yet, given that there are multiple units of three keys stuck together, it is likely that what Aziz produces is a discordant sound but with concordant possibilities between individual notes, inexplicable at its first strike but suggestive of potential chromatic chords. It is possible, then, that Forster attempts to delineate an ambiguous sound that is simultaneously foreign to the traditional notion of harmony and resonant with contemporary concepts of chromaticism.[82] Another possibility is the effect of overtones: when more than two consecutive piano keys are pressed together, each key's fundamental frequency overlaps and produces a sensation of amplified harmonic sonority.[83] The 'noise' might also be read as the effect of quarter-tones, a pitch a piano usually cannot create. When pressed together, two neighbouring piano keys bring forth a pitch between the two fixed pitches and form an interval half a semitone.[84] Whichever way we interpret the 'noise', it is evident that it is characterized

[82] The *Grove Music Dictionary* offers the following definition: 'Based on an octave of 12 semitones', a chromatic scale is 'opposed to a seven-note diatonic scale' and 'consists of an ascending or descending line that advances by semitones'. In studies of harmony, 'chromatic' is 'applied to notes marked with accidentals foreign to the scale of the key in which the passage is written'. Chromaticism flourished in the nineteenth century, with the works of Schubert and Chopin and, most famously, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, as representative examples. George Dyson and William Drabkin, 'Chromatic', in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 24 April 2013]
[83] Murray Campbell, 'Overtone', in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 24 April 2013]
[84] Julian Rushton, 'Quarter-tone', in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 24 April 2013]

by an uncertain tonality and productive of an effect strangely jarring and alarming, if not instantaneously repulsive, to the Western ear.

This characteristic of the 'noise', then, becomes resonant with the way Forster perceived and described Indian music. Like numerous contemporaries, Forster felt shocked, confused, and uncomfortable when he heard Indian music, especially Indian singing, for the first time.[85] My attention here is, however, not on the correspondence between Forster's and others' confusion, but on those characteristics of Indian music he identified as the cause to such experiences. For Forster, the flexible intonation of Indian music particularly alarmed him. In his description of a performance of *Nautch*, for example, Forster noted that 'the musicians seemed out [of] tune'.[86] The account reveals his difficulty in pinning down the tonality of Indian music, and suggests an experience of recognizing something but hesitating to state his recognition. This sense of hovering between knowing and unknowing recalls his description of Godbole's song: it is 'the illusion of a Western melody' that particularly baffles its English listeners.[87] With its indeterminable intervals and unconventional chord construction, the 'noise' of the broken piano seems to suggest a similar tonal effect. Would it be possible, then, that Forster is endowing the 'noise' with an 'Indian' quality? If so, does it imply that the piano, a Western instrument, has been Indianized?

Given that Aziz becomes more and more explicitly nationalistic towards the end of the novel and has the agency to 'play' the piano, it seems possible to offer a political reading of the scene and the 'noise'. Approaching the instrument, which epitomizes the malfunctioning of Western civilization in a colonial environment, Aziz uses it to make a strong and assertive response to British colonizers. Read closely alongside Chapter 2,

[85] See Zhou's discussion, pp. 165-7.
[86] Letter to his mother (6 November 1912). *SL1*, p. 150. Brackets are the editors'.
[87] *PI*, pp. 71-2.

the novel's penultimate chapter is constructed in a similar pattern, in which Aziz's engagement with Western music is depicted in relation to his physical movement. In Chapter 2, Aziz informed Mrs Moore that he was not allowed to enter the English Club, whereas in Chapter 36 we see this once outsider inside the colonizer's territory. While Aziz can only hear the sound of an orchestra floating out from the Club in Chapter 2, here he makes the sound himself, with the piano under his control. This combination of spatial and musical negotiation, then, results in the 'noise', which not only problematizes Western understanding of music but also challenges the imperial identity associated with the piano. The political significance the instrument accrues in India is thus reconfigured by Aziz's entry to the Guest House and Indianized thenceforth. An example of the 'subaltern' being heard, Aziz's punch on the piano seems an allusion to contemporary Indian nationalism.

If the 'noise' seems to express political sentiments akin to those of Indian nationalism, it also registers, more implicitly, a longing for a friend in the colony. In order to identify this undertow of emotions, we have to look at the drafts of this scene in the manuscripts. As Oliver Stallybrass has observed, it took Forster more than one draft to determine how to present this pivotal scene. In the version regarded by Stallybrass as the one closest to the published text, the description of the scene only differs slightly from that in the novel. Yet, one of the textual variances is, intriguingly, that the adjective for the 'noise' is not 'remarkable' but 'amazing'.[88] This brings us to another version, which comprises several passages on a number of verso pages of the manuscripts (for the novel, Forster only wrote on the recto pages). Stallybrass have reconstructed these pages to form a coherent narrative, which he regards as Forster's

[88] *MSS-PI*, pp. 550-1.

earlier fragment of Chapter 36. This version differs significantly from the published text:

> He walked in, vaguely curious. <A> \The/ piano was open. He touched it and since the notes had stuck together in groups of two and three, produced a \most/ curious noise. "\Oh! Oh!/ <What do you want> \Do you speak English/?" said a voice that he knew—a nervous respectful voice: he could not think where he had heard it before.
>
> "Vary vary slightly" he replied, thumping the piano with his fist, and turning round saw something move in the unlit room behind him. Mr Moore emerged, holding his chin, and apparently very sorry for himself.[89]

This fragment shows how the event would unfold if there were no letters involved: Aziz would not become angry and he would directly touch the piano keyboard. Perhaps because of his relative gentleness, the 'noise' would be 'curious' rather than 'remarkable'. The punch on the piano would happen anyway, even if deferred. Whilst Aziz's performance of his Indian identity – faking his accent, for example – invites more examination from a postcolonial perspective than it is possible to give it here, my emphasis is on the repetition of 'curious'. The adjective describes the subject (Aziz) as well as the object (the piano sound), suggesting a relation where interest is exuded from both ends. Such a relation echoes what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a text in which 'curious' is one of the adjectives that recur conspicuously; 'curious', Sedgwick suggests, connotes 'a built-in epistemological indecision or doubling', evoking 'the excess, "wrought" intensiveness of [a] knowledge-situation' where desire and impulse draw the subject and the object close to each other, and encapsulating 'the responsive, all but paranoid mutuality attributed to gay

[89] *MSS-PI*, p. 542.

recognition'.[90] Such an untold reciprocity of appeal between the subject and the object, I suggest, is similarly condensed in Forster's repetition of 'curious' in this earlier draft of the broken-piano scene. The repeated adjective, that is, produces a similar site of intense homoeroticism, one that accommodates both thrills and anxieties between the 'curious' player and the 'curious' sound.

From 'curious' via 'amazing' to 'remarkable', Forster's revision suggests a neutralization of the character of the 'noise'; or, to recall the possible political reading of the scene, Forster's revision seems to prioritize the nationalist correspondence and mute the homoerotic nuance. I propose, however, that, instead of being left out, homoeroticism is written into Forster's description of the 'noise' and into the context of the scene in the published version. Susan McClary famously contends: 'chromaticism, which enriches tonal music but which must finally be resolved to the triad for the sake of closure, takes on the cultural cast of "femininity."' Just because of this association with femininity, chromaticism is linked to excess eroticism.[91] The 'noise', left as unresolved, embodies such excess or aroused desire, and sexuality is thus inscribed in the very discord Aziz produces. Moreover, the fact that this discord plays an important role in the unfolding of a continuous search for, and a sudden discovery of, a male friend suggests that it is homosexual desire that has been sustained throughout the scene. One of the items that lead to the 'noise' is Ronny's letter to Fielding, in which Ronny admits that 'It is about time we made it up properly'.[92] This plea of reconciliation from one man to another is followed by the encounter between Aziz and Ralph, a moment of a blossoming male friendship. This encounter has been widely

[90] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (New York: Harverster Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 174.
[91] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 16.
[92] *PI*, p. 298.

acknowledged as the prelude to Aziz and Fielding's memorable ride in the final chapter, and Ralph Moore – a 'prolongation' of his mother – as an agent for transforming Aziz's attitude.[93] What remains under-discussed is the actual interaction between Aziz and Ralph: the diction of their conversation and, more importantly, the physical exertion during their hand touch give this moment of friendliness a homoerotic undertone.[94] The contrast between a forceful Aziz and a timid Ralph, the recurrence of words such as 'unkind' and 'pain', the symbolism of Ralph's bee-sting and Aziz's ointment – all of these details suggest something of the erotic, even masochistic, pleasure of the encounter. The 'remarkable noise' in the published text is, then, situated between two examples of male bonding and described in direct relation to homosocial, or homoerotic, interaction. Compared to the recurrence of 'curious' in the earlier draft, this published version produces a subtler allusion to the condition of male intimacy in the colonial world.

There is a suggestive narrative here of the continued relevance of Ronny to the novel's representations of Western music. His silence over the viola, his non-existent impropriety behind the harmonium, and his wish for reconciliation expressed in the letter on the piano – together, they seem to chart his 'passage' in the novel. It is a passage starting from a longing for private collaboration and interaction, via precarious, even illusive, formation of personal relationships, to a never-ending search for mutual understanding between individuals. This 'passage' is not a physical transformation or relocation, but a process of emotional and political sophistication as a British imperial

[93] The term 'prolongation' is from E. K. Brown, p. 95. On Ralph Moore, see also Colmer, p. 161 and p, 164.
[94] A pertinent discussion on the subject of touch can be found in Santanu Das's brilliant book, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), which explores multifarious delineations of tactile (or haptic) sensations in First World War writings and their relations to sexuality, masculinity, trauma, and memory.

officer. We may well wonder, then, whether Ronny's viola is symbolic on a formalist level, too – that is, whether Forster made Ronny a viola player because he conceived the character's 'passage' not as the main theme of the novel, but as one of the subplots. Indeed, Ronny's self-complacency and insensitivity, and the system he represents, are being criticized throughout the novel, but there is ambiguity in his characterization as an individual, as a 'bachelor' – as he describes himself in his letter to Fielding – in the end.[95] Juxtaposed with the (homoerotic) encounter between Aziz and Ralph, Ronny's single status, read alongside his unresolved negotiations of the boundary between public and private, seems to augment his untold, and unquenched, desire for a friend in India.

During another festival in 1921, music was, once again, incessantly played in Dewas to celebrate the birth of a baby of the Maharajah. 'The unfortunate [mother and her baby] have to listen to music outside their door for nearly fifteen days', Forster wrote.[96] Different forms of music – both Indian and Western – were performed, but a surprise came:

> at 3.0 a.m. something unusual aroused me—the music became beautiful[.] […] I am as far as ever from understanding Indian singing, but have no doubt that I was listening to great art, it was so complicated and yet so passionate. The singer (man) and the drummer were of almost equal importance and wove round the chord of C Major elaborate patterns that came to an end at the same moment—at least that's as near as I can explain it: it was like Western music reflected in trembling water, and it continued in a single burst for half an hour.[97]

[95] *PI*, p. 298.
[96] Letter to his mother (9 May 1921). *HD*, p. 45.
[97] *HD*, pp. 45-6.

In Forster's account, the indeterminacy of tonality becomes the music's appeal. The flexible intonation of the singing is admired for its spontaneity, complexity, and expressivity; it is, overall, a 'beautiful' experience. But it is the comparison with Western music that invites more discussion. The description, 'Western music reflected in trembling water', delineates the difference between Indian and Western music not as an absolute dualism but as a pair close to each other, with shared, or comparable, characteristics. Whilst the word 'reflection' connotes secondariness and derivativeness, and suggests a hierarchy in Forster's attitudes towards Western and Indian music, 'trembling' tellingly captures the tonal nuances of Indian music. The adjective also evokes the bodily sensation of getting in touch with the 'foreign': it outlines a body susceptible to, and automatically responsive to, an external stimulus, and the imagery of water associates such 'trembling' with a fluidity that is rippling as well as ongoing. The very uncertainty Indian music conjures is expressed through this undulation of the familiar Western musicology, and the self-reflexive aspect of this experience creates an unstable, but also almost titillating, effect: an epistemologically challenging process through which the similarities and differences between Indian and Western music are reconfigured.

Such a sensation is, I would suggest, similar to the emotional complexity encapsulated in the representations of Western music in *A Passage to India*. The descriptions of the viola, the harmonium, and the piano delineate the desire for and anxiety about personal relationships in the context of British imperialism; they unveil, in particular, Ronny's previously unrecognized negotiation of public duty and private longing. Music is, then, formative to Forster's exploration of friendship, especially male friendship, in the novel, as a form of private interaction resistant to, and critical of,

the political dichotomy of colonizer and colonized. Even though the novel's ending gives us a tableau of friends drifting apart, such an exploration is underpinned by a persistent wish that looks forward to a different future. Perhaps the word 'trembling' encapsulates that wish as well: it recalls the emotional complexity of personal relationships; it embodies the precarious connection that falls so easily into misunderstanding; and it evokes the palpitating desire for a friendly touch that underlies an encounter between individuals.

Here, and throughout Forster's work, we see how often a musical experience is described as an occasion of personal bonding, as a moment when an individual reaches out, sometimes physically, to another individual. The touch, or the absence of it, punctuates Forster's depictions of music. Such is the case of the encounter between Aziz and Ralph, which takes place after the 'remarkable noise'. It is also the case in *Maurice*, as Clive tries to court Maurice through the playing of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, and in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, as Philip and Gino meet each other during the performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Both episodes depict music as a site that accommodates, displays, and even fuels demonstrations of understanding, friendliness, and (erotic) ardour. Yet the main difference between the two is whether these demonstrations become physically intimate – that is, whether the desired touch does occur. In *Maurice*, the Tchaikovsky episode is replete with Clive's subtle, but also conventional, allusions to closeted homosexuality.[98] These allusions are interspersed with descriptions of Maurice and Clive's interaction as a physical, sometimes violent, contest, which never transforms into an understanding touch.[99] In contrast, at the

[98] See Bret L. Keeling's article and Michelle Fillion's chapter on *Maurice*.
[99] For example, on the way back to their college, Maurice orders Clive to let him help with the records by speaking 'roughly' to the latter before 'jerk[ing] the records from under [Clive's] arm'. Also, when Clive insists on playing the symphony in the right order, he tells Maurice, 'You'll tear [the record], let

climax of the opera, Philip's hands are 'seized affectionately' by Gino's, and he is helped into the Italian's opera-box, where he 'tr[ies] feebly to disengage his hands'.[100] It is to this Anglo-Italian friendship that the following chapter turns: it will look into the nascent homoeroticism in this encounter, but, more importantly, it will delineate the ways in which music, here Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammemoor,* becomes a means of exploring and commenting on national character and literary heritage.

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go'. *M*, p. 26.
[100] *WA*, p. 96 and p. 97.

II

National Character and Literary Heritage

> One might compare Europe to a ship and England to a little boat, tugged in its wake. It is a very splendid little boat, but it does not come first.
>
> E. M. Forster, 'Pessimism in Literature'.[1]

In 1913, Forster read a paper, 'The English Character', to a group of Indian students at Cambridge.[2] He was one of the numerous contemporaries delineating Englishness in the early twentieth century: in thinking of the qualities of Englishness as characteristics, Forster followed up, and reflected on, Victorian discussions of the nation's unique 'personality'.[3] 'Having little knowledge of politics and none of Economics or Science', Forster proposed 'psychology' as his main subject, to which his – a novelist's – observation on English people might be able to contribute.[4] What he wished to offer was 'in no sense a lecture', but 'an information [*sic*] collection of notes':

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[1] 'Pessimism in Literature' (1907), in *AEOW*, pp. 129-45 (p. 132).
[2] This is the early draft of 'Notes on the English Character' (1926), an article much better known among Forster scholars nowadays; it becomes almost formulaic (and banal) for critics to use this 1926 article to illustrate Forster's criticism of public-school spirit and English insensitivity. Interestingly, Forster cut out the paper's opening (quoted here) when he revised the 1913 paper into 'Notes on the English Character'.
[3] On late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses on Englishness, see Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 175-225. On the topicality of 'character' – individual as well as national – in Victorian England, see Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 91-118, especially pp. 107-8. Additionally, Patrick Parrinder argues that the topicality of national character in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was intertwined with and indebted to the rise of the novel. Patrick Parrinder, *Nation and Novel: The English Novel from its Origins to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 21-2.
[4] 'The English Character' (1913), in *AH*, pp. 404-9 (p. 404).

> We are approaching the same subject though from different points of view. We are alike students of the English Character. What I have to say may help you, and what you say will certainly help me. Some people think that discussions of this sort are useless, because they must consist of generalizations and one cannot generalize about a whole nation. I do not quite agree. Within limits one can. The generalization must be applied cautiously no doubt. There are plenty of individuals whom it won't fit, and it will not exactly fit anyone. But it is better than nothing. It gives one a start.[5]

Forster's approach to national character is, in many respects, strikingly modern. His understanding of national character as a discursive subject is resonant with Peter Mandler's recent argument that the history of national character is characterized by its inconsistency and fluidity. As Mandler suggests, ideas of national character are contingent on and reflective of their specific contexts; discourses on national character are shaped to compete against other expressions and ideologies, and are modulated when time and place change.[6] In the passage above, Forster's modesty, or caution, reflects his alertness to the protean nature of national character, to the availability of multifarious approaches to the subject, and to the impossibility of defining – in his case – the English character. Yet his modest tone becomes more assertive when it comes to the ineluctability of generalization in discussing national character. As Parry Anderson observes in the early 1990s, such generalization, 'in principle so indefensible, yet in practice so unavoidable', causes the transition of critical focus from character to identity within studies of national politics.[7] This methodological weakness, however, is

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[5] *AH*, pp. 404-5.
[6] Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 2-7.
[7] Parry Anderson, 'Nation-States and National Identity', *London Review of Books*, 13.9 (1991), 3-8 (6). I adopt Manfred Pfister's definition of national identity: 'National identity is not some naturally given or metaphysically sanctioned racial or territorial essence that only needs to be conceptualised or spelt out in discursive texts; it emerges from, takes shape in, and is constantly defined and redefined in individual and collective performances.' Manfred Pfister, 'Introduction: Performing National Identity', in *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 9-28 (p. 9).

here described as strength. Forster's tentative approval of cautious generalization expresses a similar logic to that underlying his acceptance of democracy later: 'two cheers for Democracy […] are quite enough: there is no occasion to give three'.[8] For him, generalizing national characteristics is not perfect, but at least it lays the groundwork for encounters between individuals from different nations.

This cautious attitude towards generalization, this self-consciously inadequate application of stereotypes to delineations of a wide range of national characteristics, traits, and behaviours, is manifested in Forster's first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. In particular, it is employed and interrogated in Forster's description of the comical, almost riotous, performance of Donizetti's opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Considering the relationship between music and nationality, the chapter explores the ways in which musical taste, sensibility, and knowledge were perceived as nationally specific and referential, and how such perceptions informed Forster's description of the opera scene. Forster uses Donizetti's *Lucia*, that is, to accommodate, display, and augment national stereotypes of musical characteristics: the novel's characters, as well as the narrator, are all involved in the project of musical stereotyping during which different national identities collide with, but also become interdependent on, each other. English and Italian musical traits, German musical aesthetics, French operatic conventions, Scottish exotic appeal, American cultural vulgarity, and, more broadly, the perceived dichotomy of Northern and Southern European musical practices – all of these are alluded to, explicitly or implicitly, in this depiction of the opera performance. Yet these allusions, like the aforementioned compromised attitude towards generalization, also register Forster's self-consciousness: this multinational collision, or

[8] *TCD*, p. 67.

interdependence, is simultaneously a lesson of cautious generalization, of the very instability of national stereotypes.

My discussion, then, broadens previous analyses of the novel's portrayal of international encounter.[9] Many critics have analysed the ways in which the novel produces volatile contrasts between English social convention and its Italian counterpart.[10] It is volatile, I will explore, partially because generalization, which is vital to delineations of national character, is simultaneously valorized and de-valorized in the novel, especially in the opera scene. And underlying the Anglo-Italian encounter on the surface is a much more convoluted narrative about multinational relations of musical consumption, cultural appropriation, and touristic exploitation. Forster's resistance to tourism and scepticism about anti-tourism have been discussed by critics, but what requires more attention is his conceptualization of tourism as another form of colonialism.[11] In exploring how Forster conceptualizes this parallel, my discussion challenges previous interpretations of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* as one of Forster's 'suburban' novels.[12] The novel, I will argue, satirizes more than English provincialism and social norms, as the opera scene, plus an unobtrusive reference to 'the coon song' in the subsequent chapter, is suggestive of a problematic colonial and racial hierarchy. Forster's cross-national comedy in an operatic mode is thus, I believe, a highly worked scene, inviting scrutiny of the ways in which musical, national, economic, and racial factors are all brought into play.

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[9] This theme of international encounters forms a thematic correspondence with Henry James's *The Ambassador* (1903). See S. P. Rosenbaum, 'Towards a Literary History of *Monteriano*', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 31 (1985), 180-98 (183-5).

[10] See e.g. Colmer, p. 56, and Lauren M. E. Goodlad, 'Where Liberals Fear to Tread: E. M. Forster's Queer Internationalism and the Ethics of Care', *Novel*, 39.3 (2006), 307-36.

[11] For a detailed study of Forster's negotiation of the concept of 'the touristic', see James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 285-331.

[12] The label 'suburban' comes from Mary Lago, who separates Forster's novels into two groups – the Suburban Novels and the Indian Novel – in her book, *E. M. Forster: A Literary Life*.

My approach to the opera scene, then, differs significantly from Michelle Fillion's recent biographical reading. As Fillion suggests, the scene re-incarnates Forster's personal experience in Italy in 1903; Forster's memory of the coloratura, Luisa Tetrazzini, is transformed into the after-effect of the opera on the characters.[13] Much of her reading is valid, but it bypasses the complexity of musical and national politics. More importantly, it also overlooks the fact that Forster had inherited, and was deliberately engaging with, the rich literary history of Donizetti's *Lucia*. The two staple works in this history are Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), on which Donizetti's opera was based, and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), in which the opera's crucial role became monumental in nineteenth-century European literature. Whilst critics have read Forster's opera scene in relation to these literary predecessors, they often reiterate, rather than investigate, the relationship.[14] The significance of Forster's 'dialogue' with Scott and Flaubert was, I suggest, less about the reworking of the same material, and more about the implications – stylistic as well as ideological – of such a reworking. What concerns the chapter is less an issue of correspondence and intertextuality, than of Forster's purpose to write after Scott and Flaubert, to confront intentionally the Bloomian anxieties posed by the two eminent novelists. This brings us to re-consider how 'modern' Forster's first novel was: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* has long been sidelined in the discussion of Forster's stylistic experimentalism, and frequently analysed only in social and gender terms.[15] Questioning this critical premise, the chapter asks whether, like *A Passage to India*, the novel is underpinned by Forster's

[13] Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 24-38.
[14] See e.g. Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera: The Extravagant Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 156-66.
[15] Santanu Das elegantly summarizes the social and gender aspects of the novel: 'Forster views English comedy through a cross-cultural lens while the compulsory heterosexuality of bourgeois fiction encounters transgressive eros.' Santanu Das, 'E. M. Forster', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists*, ed. Adrian Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 345-60 (p. 350).

concern with fictional form. Through an analysis of the opera scene's link to Scott's and Flaubert's texts, the chapter considers Forster's attitude towards the nineteenth-century novel and explores his responses to the significance and influence of literary heritage.

As an opera outing in the novel often, in Cormac Newark's words, 'signal[s] narrative potential', so we see how the *Lucia* scene plays a crucial part in the unfolding of the plot: 'So this strenuous day of resolutions, plans, alarms, battles, victories, defeats, truces, ended at the opera.'[16] Forster's irony lies in that, instead of rounding off the eventfulness, the opera scene sets more events in motion. The opera performance itself is punctuated with various incidents in the auditorium, and the occasion, as indicated in the previous chapter, leads up to the unexpected reunion between Gino and Philip. This reunion has been read as a suggestive example of Philip's homoerotic longing and has been aligned with other homoerotic moments in the novel.[17] On the one hand, this reunion with Gino results in Philip's euphoric, but also illusive, epiphany after the opera; on the other, it troubles Caroline and prompts her secret visit to Gino the next day. Her visit is the starting point of a day packed with action: what follows are Philip's visit, the two men's short but cordial negotiation, Harriet's abduction of the baby, the Herritons' rash departure, the carriage accident, and the baby's death – all of these

[16] Cormac Newark, *Opera in the Novel from Balzac to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5. *WA*, p. 92.
[17] Margaret Goscilo, 'Forster's Italian Comedies: Que[e]rying Heterosexuality Abroad', in *Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature*, ed. Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 193-214 (pp. 196-8); and A. A. Markley, 'E. M. Forster's Reconfigured Gaze and the Creation of a Homoerotic Subjectivity', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 47.2 (2001), 268-92 (275-8). For a discussion of the homoeroticism in Philip and Gino's physical contact – Gino's inadvertent push in Chapter 2 and the two men's fight in Chapter 9 – see: Bristow, *Effeminate England*, pp. 66-7.

events are chronologically woven into a tight and compelling narrative. Gino's mourning, the two men's fight, and the subsequent reconciliation in the mediation of Caroline also seem to be propelled by the same narrative energy released from the opera scene.

The proximity of comedy and tragedy, vitality and death, friendliness and violence makes the high spirits in the opera scene extremely conspicuous.[18] The exuberance of music and laughter is characterized as Italian: the Italian listeners, as the narrator observes, attend to the music 'with tappings and drummings, swaying in the melody like corn in the wind'; they 'hailed their brothers and sons in the chorus, and told them how well they were singing'.[19] Noisier and noisier, the audience becomes riotous during Lucia's mad scene, when the *prima donna* temporarily steps out of her character and flirts with young male admirers while receiving applause: 'The house exploded', the narrator reports.[20] As Alan Wilde memorably describes it, the opera scene is 'Forster's Italy at its best'.[21]

This portrayal of a relaxed, passionate, susceptible, noisy, even unruly, local audience reiterates the idiosyncrasies of Italian musical traits. The novel's 'Italian' audience, that is, recalls and echoes a long history of a variety of commentaries on Italian intoxication with music, especially with opera. Baedeker's 1900 edition of *Central Italy*, which Forster might have been using while travelling around Italy in the early years of the twentieth century, cautioned British tourists that Italians 'seldom

[18] Richard Keller Simon describes the contrast as a 'moment of comic celebration' versus a 'moment of melodramatic crisis'. Richard Keller Simon, 'E. M. Forster's Critique of Laughter and the Comic: The First Three Novels as Dialectic', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 31 (1985), 199-220 (204-5).
[19] *WA*, p. 94.
[20] *WA*, p. 96.
[21] Alan Wilde, *Art and Order: A Study of E. M. Forster* (London: Peter Owen, 1965), p. 19.

observe strict silence during the performance of the music'.[22] In a pseudo-official tone, Baedeker repeated a view widely circulated since the age of the Grand Tour: for a British tourist, to attend a performance in Italy was to be surrounded by noisy Italian people.[23] Hector Berlioz, once escaping from a house of clamorous Italian opera-goers himself, attributed such a characteristic to Italians' imperviousness to 'the evocative, poetic side of music, as well as to any conception at all lofty and out of the common run'.[24] Italians, as Berlioz declared, enjoyed music 'solely for its physical effect' and treated music as nothing but 'a sensual pleasure'.[25] Compared to German listeners' interest in complex orchestration and well-designed harmony, Italian audiences showed an 'exclusive appetite for everything that dances and is gay and brilliant'.[26] In this regard, Italians were 'devoid of [the] faculty which to others makes the expressive variety of music'.[27] For Berlioz, it was without a hope for any improvement, partly because Italian composers continued to produce works that catered to Italian public taste, partly because such a distinct Italian musical trait was 'a natural and immutable consequence of the national physiology'.[28] Berlioz's juxtaposition of German musical traits with Italian musical idiosyncrasies was typical of nineteenth-century European commentaries on the differences between Northern and Southern musical cultures. As Emma Sutton observes, the dichotomy of 'the Northern' and 'the Southern', of the sophisticated and cerebral 'playing North' and the spontaneous and visceral 'singing South', was widely applied to a variety of late nineteenth-century discourses on music;

[22] Karl Baedeker, *Italy: Handbook for Travellers: Second Part: Central Italy and Rome*, 13th edn (Leipsic: Baedeker, 1900), p. xxiv.
[23] Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 175-80.
[24] Hector Berlioz, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, ed. and trans. David Cairns (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p. 209.
[25] Berlioz, p. 209.
[26] Berlioz, p. 210.
[27] Berlioz, p. 210.
[28] Berlioz, p. 209.

contemporary British writers, artists, and musicians reiterated, and sometimes parodied and critiqued, this dichotomy to define their own aesthetics.[29]

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the contrast between German and Italian musical characteristics, between 'the Northern' and 'the Southern', is similarly filtered through a British – English, more accurately – perspective: 'Italians don't love music silently, like the beastly Germans', Philip informs Caroline before the opera.[30] The stereotype of noisy Italian listeners is juxtaposed with that of their serious, or uptight, German counterparts, a British cliché, too, in contemporary perceptions of German audiences. The widely acknowledged German musical supremacy was accompanied by perceptions of the seriousness, accuracy, and diligence of German musical engagement. The adjective 'beastly' is indicative of Philip's preference for 'the Italian': the animalistic connotation of the adjective marks 'the Germans' as brutish and unnatural, which, in contrast, suggests that Italians' noise during musical performances is a natural human reaction.

Philip's Italophilia, I suggest, is informed by Lord Byron's portrayal of the Continent. Byron's *Childe Harold* is in the Herritons' family library: in Chapter 1, after receiving the news about Lilia's engagement in Monteriano, Mrs Herriton 'looked up the place in *Childe Harold*, but Byron had not been there'.[31] As Barbara Schaff suggests, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English reception of Byron was influenced by, and intertwined with, that of Italy: while Byron's writing about Italy in his literary work and in his letters augmented his appeal to English readers and

[29] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 186-8. See, also, Emma Sutton, '"English Enthusiasts": Vernon Lee and Italian Opera', in *Exiles, Émigrés and Intermediaries: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. Barbara Schaff (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), pp. 375-402.
[30] *WA*, p. 90.
[31] *WA*, p. 11.

increased his popularity, Italy was Byronized and perceived as doubly exotic.[32] That Philip is likely to have read *Childe Harold* (1812-1818), that he may have Byron's words in mind, suggests the Byronized quality of his imagination of Italy. Yet such a quality was well exploited by contemporary tourism. In another article, Barbara Schaff notes that, in the case of John Murray's *Handbooks to Italy*, Byron's texts were liberally incorporated into matter-of-fact guidelines, which 'not only provided tourists with cultured, elitist, anti-touristic gestures in the emerging age of mass tourism […] but also appropriated, familiarised and marketed Italy as a product of English Romanticism'.[33] Philip's admiration for Italian culture – his belief that 'Italy really purifies and ennobles all who visit her' – projects the Romantic vision of Italy, but it is also a vision made popular – and thus made conventional – by the combination of touristic guidebooks and literary texts.[34]

If Byron's work shapes Philips's Italophilia, Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad* (1880) – another book Mrs Herriton consults in the family library – contributes to Philip's ideas of German concert behaviour.[35] In Twain's novel, the 'tramp' attends a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, during which his reaction to the opera in the midst of German serious appreciation of the music produces the humour. As Emma Sutton observes, the *Lohengrin* performance is represented as 'a microcosm of national traits and political relations', as a site where 'the national and racial self-image of the Anglo-American commentator is inherently vulnerable to the "foreign" qualities aroused by

[32] Barbara Schaff, 'Italianised Byron – Byronised Italy', in *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel, pp. 103-21.
[33] Barbara Schaff, 'John Murray's *Handbooks to Italy*: Making Tourism Literary', in *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, ed. Nicola J. Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 106-18 (p. 106).
[34] *WA*, p. 4.
[35] Mrs Herriton discovers that 'Nor did Mark Twain visit [Monteriano] in the *Tramp Abroad*'. *WA*, p. 11.

Wagner's late-Romantic affective music'.[36] Opposite this Anglo-American identity is the construction of 'the Germans': German psychological, aesthetic, and military traits are manifested in the tramp's depiction of the German audience around him.[37] The fact that Twain's novel is in the Herritons' library and that Philip may have read it suggests the influence of the tramp's experience on Philip's perception of German listeners as 'beastly'. Philip's adjective, then, alludes partly to the unnatural silence of the musically spellbound German audience in the *Lohengrin* performance, partly to the 'hurricanes of applause' under the influence of Wagner's overpowering music, and partly to the unreserved support for singers who have long lost their once-renowned voice.[38] However, if there is influence, the contrast between Philip's one-word critique of German musical characteristics and the tramp's pages-long clueless observation also suggests friction. The very succinctness of Philip's verdict on German listeners dissociates him from the tramp's artistic innocence, or ignorance. In this respect, Philip's oblique allusion to *A Tramp Abroad* evokes the cliché about American cultural vulgarity as a means of asserting his own sophisticated and superior musical sensibility. This negotiation of 'the American' suggests that, on the one hand, Forster's novel presents a wider scope than its European setting; on the other, the political undercurrent of Philip's explicit denigration of German musical traits is a complicated multinational 'dialogue' between disparate musical stereotypes.

'The Germans', here and throughout the novel, are repeatedly referenced in a negative way. Gino's close friend, Spiridone, for example, mentions that a German smuggler was trying to bribe everyone in the custom-house: 'Non era simpatico', he

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[36] Emma Sutton, 'Foreign Bodies: Mark Twain, Music and Anglo-American Identity', *Symbiosis*, 8.1 (2004), 109-19 (112 and 116).
[37] Sutton, 'Foreign Bodies', 111-2.
[38] Mark Twain, *A Tramp Abroad* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1912), p. 66.

concludes.[39] Germans are represented as fastidious ('A German lady […] had given [a local girl] one [half penny] that very spring'), pedantic (Giotto did not come to Monteriano – 'German research having decisively proved'), and obtuse (Gino 'would take down his felt hat, strike it in the right place as infallibly as a German strikes his in the wrong place').[40] It seems that the narrator and most of the characters share this habit of remembering and employing stereotypes of German characteristics to define their Italianness or Italophilia. Such is the way the narrator describes the décor of the opera theatre:

> So rich and so appalling was the effect that Philip could scarcely suppress a cry. There is something majestic in the bad taste of Italy; it is not the bad taste of a country which knows no better; it has not the nervous vulgarity of England, or the blinded vulgarity of Germany. It observes beauty, and chooses to pass it by. But it attains to beauty's confidence.[41]

The triangulated comparison of English, German, and Italian 'bad taste' reinforces the stereotypes of these three national characters: shifting into present tense, the narrator's generalizations about 'the English' and 'the Germans' is a narrative strategy, a way of emphasizing the uniqueness of Italian culture. Whilst the narrator's differentiation of degrees of 'vulgarity' is evidently semi-satiric, such a strategy presupposes the (English) reader's knowledge of these stereotypes and thus paradoxically reveals the affinity of English and German cultures. In other words, the satire only works when the reader is familiar with what the narrator terms as the 'blinded vulgarity of Germany', and the narrator's dominant Italophilia can only be conveyed when the reader understands his generalization about German characteristics. Whether Forster's attitude was pro-Italian

[39] *WA*, p. 39.
[40] *WA*, p. 83, p. 80, and p. 48.
[41] *WA*, p. 93.

and anti-German is debatable, but the novel's consistent use of national stereotypes about Germany in delineations of Italian idiosyncrasies suggests that, compared to the 'foreign' Italy, there are more similarities than differences between English and German cultures.[42]

In the novel, the characterization of Lilia is associated with, but also defined against, these German qualities. As the narrator informs us, if Gino stands for 'the Latin man', Lilia represents 'the northern woman', and the conflict between the two is not only a clash of 'personalities' but also a 'struggle' of 'national' differences.[43] The personal encounter of the young Italian and the English widow is thus elevated to an international level. The generalized 'northern' aspect of Lilia's characteristics is attested, in particular, by her blond hair, but she also embodies, I suggest, the gradations within the Northern cultures. Lilia is often portrayed as an incomplete embodiment of the stereotypes about German exactness. During Spiridone's visit after Gino's invitation, for example, 'she played on the humming piano very badly, and he sang, not so badly. Gino got out a guitar and sang too, sitting out on the loggia.'[44] Whilst this brief description reiterates, satirically, the aforementioned musical dichotomy of 'the Northern' and 'the Southern', Lilia's unaccomplished piano skill seems a failed performance of Austro-German instrumental virtuosi. The reception-room where her piano is placed, moreover, is devalued as insufficiently German: 'adorned with horsehair chairs, woolwork stools, and a stove that is never lit—German bad taste

[42] As Petra Rau suggests, 'writing about Germany was often a way of thinking about the condition of England' in the first half of the twentieth century; images of 'the Germans' often contained, simultaneously, augmented otherness and strange familiarity. Petra Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans, 1890-1950* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 10.
[43] *WA*, pp. 50-1.
[44] *WA*, p. 42.

without German domesticity broods over that room'.[45] Assessing Lilia's degree of German-ness, the narrator re-emphasizes the incompatibility between 'the Latin man' and 'the northern woman'. Yet such an assessment can also be interpreted as Forster's informed jibe at contemporary English anxieties about German modernity – that is, the narrator's emphasis on Lilia's association with, and lack of, certain German qualities is parodic of contemporary popular notions of German efficiency and progression.

After the opera, Caroline's visit to Gino brings us once again to the reception-room, and it is at this point that the disparate national characters are implicated in a problematic power structure. Stereotypes about Italian, German, and English characteristics, I suggest, do not just litter the novel, but are implicitly arranged in a racial and colonial hierarchy. The room, 'sacred to the dead [Lilia]', is described from Caroline's point of view:

> A coon song lay open on the piano, and of the two tables one supported Baedeker's *Central Italy*, the other Harriet's inlaid box. And over everything there lay a deposit of heavy white dust, which was only blown off one memento to thicken on another.[46]

The three objects reflect three aspects of Lilia. Whilst the Baedeker recalls her original role as a tourist who travels to Italy for 'a change of scene', Harriet's inlaid box emblematizes Lilia's tie to a particular form of Englishness; Harriet's (comically portrayed) stiff patriotism, when combined with her pious Protestantism, amounts to extreme antipathy to Catholic Europe: 'I condemn the whole lot', she once proclaims.[47]

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[45] *WA*, p. 31.
[46] *WA*, p. 100.
[47] *WA*, p. 6 and p. 78.

Yet the most striking, perhaps disturbingly so, is the coon song.[48] Extremely popular in America and in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, coon songs, often sung by female 'coon shouters' in blackface performances, were a staple routine in contemporary theatre and music-hall programmes. Borrowing ragtime elements of syncopation and anticipating American jazz, coon songs explored, exaggerated, and exploited every conceivable black characteristic; the lyrics of coon songs frequently incorporated imagined dialects and accents of African Americans, and delivered clichés of black people as a race that was ignorant, lazy, and promiscuous for comic use.[49] Explicitly racist, Lilia's songbook, then, associates her with colonial power and highlights her whiteness. It implies her unrefined taste and artistic vulgarity, but her interest in coon songs can also be a deliberate gesture, a way of defying the Herritons and the cluster of social and cultural values they have advocated. This is not to presume that the Herritons are informed enough to reflect on the racism of coon songs; in fact, we might well speculate that, given the popularity of coon songs in Britain, it would have been likely for the Herritons to mingle with patrons from other social classes at a coon song performance. In interpreting Lilia's songbook as her resistance to middle-class conventions, I read the reference in relation to Philip and the others' attendance at Donizetti's opera. Lilia's selection of an overtly 'low' musical entertainment, that is, contrasts sharply with the 'high' culture with which the rest of the Herritons are usually associated.

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[48] Carole Slade is the only critic who has noticed this passage, but she only discusses briefly the significance of the Baedeker and the inlaid box and does not comment on the coon song. Carole Slade, 'E. M. Forster's Piano Players', *University of Windsor Review*, 14.2 (1979), 5-11 (8-9).

[49] Sam Dennison, 'Coon Song', in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 4 May 2013]. For a detailed study of the socio-psychological aspect of the 'coon song craze' in America in the 1890s, see James H. Dormon, 'Shaping the Popular Image of Post-Reconstruction American Blacks: The "Coon Song" Phenomenon of the Gilded Age', *American Quarterly*, 40.4 (1988), 450-71.

Like the harmonium in *A Passage to India*, Lilia's coon song, alongside the Baedeker and the inlaid box, are not indigenous but 'imported'. Together, they present a suggestive tableau of the parallel between touristic and colonial consumption in the age of British imperial expansion. The acquisitive nature of tourism – whether it is souvenir, memory, or knowledge that a tourist is looking for – was a catalyst for the transformation of the destination, voluntary or involuntary. To fulfil such acquisition, the touristic destination became economically and psychologically reliant on and subservient to the tourist's subjective projection.[50] This transformation of the touristic destination is specifically thematized in one of Forster's short stories, 'The Eternal Moment' (*c*. 1904).[51] In the story, Miss Raby, returning to the Italian town which inspired her novel and which became popular among tourists because of her novel, discovers that tourism has changed the place drastically: 'The whole population was employed, even down to the little girls […]. Vorta had taken to the tourist trade.'[52] Tourism is, in the story's narrator's words, '[a] vast machinery', and its implied economic, psychological, and hierarchical dominance influence both tourists and locals.[53] In this respect, the tourist is to the destination not dissimilar from what the colonizer is to the colony. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, such a similarity is reflected, I would suggest, in the copresence of the Baedeker and the coon song. The consumption of Italy within British tourism parallels that of African American culture within the composition, performance, and dissemination of coon songs. On the one side is the songbook, providing entertainment in the form of caricaturing and appropriating

[50] I am indebted to Mary Louise Pratt's discussion regarding the correspondence between touristic experience and imperialistic expansionism in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*.
[51] Perhaps it is also worth noting that, like *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 'The Eternal Moment' explores different forms of international encounter and similarly unfolds its plot around English, Italian, and German national relations.
[52] *MS*, p. 169.
[53] *MS*, p. 174.

the African American identity. On the other side is the Baedeker, which, as its preface indicates, aims 'to aid [a tourist] in *deriving* enjoyment and instruction from his tour in one of the most fascinating countries in the world'.[54] Both are closely related to, as well as augmented by, imperial expansion and colonial domination.

If the tableau of the coon song and the Baedeker hints at the colonial undertone of British tourism in Italy, it also reminds us how often 'the Italians' were delineated in racial terms. To be more specific, 'the Italians' had been frequently associated with Africa, sometimes even physically portrayed as Africanized, since the Age of Exploration; given the intermediate geography of the Italian Peninsula between Europe and Africa, Italy was viewed by Northern Europeans not only as the location of the Mediterranean legacy but also as the vestibule to the 'dark' exotic.[55] In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the narrator and the characters are both symptomatic of this tendency to 'darken' Italians. It is best exemplified by the skin colour of Lilia and Gino's baby, as Gino exclaims: 'Who would have believed his mother was blonde? For he is brown all over—brown every inch of him.'[56] This hybrid brownness suggests a perception of 'the Italians' as black, and the affinity between Italy and Africa is thus emphasized. Similarly, Forster's juxtaposition of the songbook and the Baedeker de-Europeanizes 'the Italians' and associates the 'Italian' race with American blacks. This association also appears in the novel's manuscripts: *Lucia* is described, through Philip's free indirect speech, as 'the finest rag in the world'.[57] Among the multiple definitions of the

[54] Baedeker, p. v. My emphasis.
[55] As Nelson Moe notes, the *Mezzogiorno* (Southern Italy), in particular, became the object of exotic fetishism. The cultural geography of the area was simultaneously represented as '"Africa" and *terra vergine*, a reservoir of feudal residues, sloth, and squalor on the one hand and of quaint peasants, rustic traditions, and exotica on the other'. Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 3.
[56] *WA*, p. 111.
[57] *WA*, p. 165.

word ‘rag’, John Colmer adopts the meaning of a student fund-raising charity event in Cambridge.[58] Since the term is applied to the opera, I suggest that the much more appropriate interpretation of ‘rag’ should be ragtime music. We might stop to ask whether this comparison reflects Forster’s, or other contemporaries’, antipathy to Italian *bel canto*, but perhaps its eventual deletion suggests that Forster found it too much a mischievous derision of Donizetti’s opera. This association of Italian opera with African American music, nonetheless, ‘darkens’ Italian musical culture and characterizes ‘the Italians’ as racially foreign to the novel’s English characters, and to Northern Europeans more broadly.

Yet this perception of a non-white ‘Italian’ race becomes ambiguous if we consider the blackface convention in the performance of coon songs. Symbolically, a coon song on stage insinuates disjunction between appearance and content, and the multilayered images and identities provide much of the performance’s humour and caricature. Although there is no reference to any actual singing of coon songs in the novel, it is tempting to suggest that the music during the previously discussed visit of Spiridone is from Lilia’s songbook. It is equally tempting to suggest that, moments after the description of the reception-room from Caroline’s point of view, the entrance of a singing Gino involves the coon song:

> The voice of her adversary was heard at last, singing fearlessly from his expanded lungs, like a professional. Herein he differed from Englishmen, who always have a little feeling against music, and sing only from the throat, apologetically.[59]

Here, the passage reiterates the stereotype of the ‘singing South’; it also subscribes to a

[58] Colmer, p. 60.
[59] *WA*, p. 101.

widely circulated disparagement of English musicality. More importantly, whilst most critics recalls the opera and suggest that Gino here is singing an excerpt from *Lucia*, the textual proximity between this passage and the reference to the coon song makes it also possible that he is singing Lilia's racist song.[60] The possibility that either of these Italian characters might be singing the coon song, then, prompts us to ask whether the stereotyped blackness of 'the Italians' is simply a performance and thus problematizes the racial stereotype about Italy. It debunks, too, the perception of Italy as consumed by British tourism: an object of consumption at first indeed, Italy seems to espouse the set of colonial and imperial values brought in from Northern Europe, and becomes a 'consumer' of black culture.

Although it would be misleading to claim that this reference to the cong song thus reflects contemporary Italian ambition for imperial expansion after the *Risorgimento* (the Italian unification), its ambivalence does suggest the potential incongruity between surface and content. The presence of the coon song in the novel invites us to look under the surface vivacity and simplicity of Forster's representation of Italy, to realize that '[s]he, too, could produce avarice, brutality, stupidity—and, what was worse, vulgarity'.[61] This uncertainty of otherness, this fluidity within the novel's portrayal of international encounter, has recently been interpreted as Forster's emphasis on the importance of 'an ethos of ongoing epistemological revision'.[62] My reading attempts to examine the role music plays in such a process, during which national characteristics are delineated as well as undermined. If the opera scene, as I have demonstrated, draws on stereotypes about the spontaneity of the Italian character and the seriousness of the German character, it simultaneously undercuts the validity of

[60] For example, Goscilo, pp. 197-8.
[61] *WA*, p. 55.
[62] Goodlad, p. 330.

these stereotypes. It is on this note that we return to the opera scene.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the stereotyped Italian audience becomes atypical if we consider what is being performed on stage. To Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), a tragic *opera seria* based on Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the excess hilarity in the novel seems an inappropriate response.[63] Even Berlioz, who perceived Italian music as 'always laughing', had to add a footnote to suggest that there existed another type of Italian music that 'sighs and wails' and 'goes [to] the other extreme'.[64] Perhaps more than incidentally, Berlioz's example in this footnote is Donizetti's *Lucia*, some parts of which, as the French composer concluded, 'have an admirable pathos'.[65] *Lucia di Lammermoor* was, and perhaps still is, perceived as representative of Italian *bel canto*. The melodramatic 'wronged bride' theme, the meticulously conceived and structured double arias and duets, and the demanding coloratura of Lucia's madness all ensure and sustain the popularity of the opera.[66] In nineteenth-century France, in particular, the opera enjoyed sensational reception: its premiere in 1837 was received

[63] For a discussion of the style and innovation of Donizetti's *opera seria*, see Winton Dean, *Essays on Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 187-203.
[64] Berlioz, p. 210.
[65] Berlioz, p. 210.
[66] The phrase 'wronged bride' is from Jeremy Tambling, 'Scott's "Heyday" in Opera', in *The Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe*, ed. Murray Pittock (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 285-92 (p. 290). The *Grove Music Dictionary* defines 'coloratura' as '[f]lorid figuration or ornamentation' in vocal music and identifies the etymology of the word as related to that of 'colour'. Owen Jander and Ellen T. Harris, 'Coloratura', in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline> [accessed 4 May 2013]. Regarding the opera, I am also indebted to the relevant subject entries in the *Grove Music Dictionary*: William Ashbrook, 'Lucia di Lammermoor ('Lucy of Lammermoor')', and Mary Ann Smart, 'Donizetti, (Domenico) Gaetano (Maria): Biography'. Critics have examined the thematic and stylistic complexity of the opera: on the psychological depth of *Lucia*, for example, see Deirdre O'Grady, *The Last Troubadours: Poetic Drama in Italian Opera, 1594-1887* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 142-52. Recently, the opera particularly draws the attention of feminist musicologists: see e.g. Mary Ann Smart, 'The Silencing of Lucia', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 4.2 (1992), 119-41.

with 'enthusiasm [which] bordered on hysteria'.[67] Such fervour in France was augmented when, in 1839, Donizetti staged a French version of the opera, the French *Lucie*, which made a lasting impact on French culture thenceforth.

In many respects, the famous opera scene in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* resulted from, and contributed to, the popularity of the opera. Closing the novel's second part, Emma Bovary's attendance at a performance of Donizetti's *Lucie* with her husband, Charles, facilitates her downfall. Her rapturous, erotic, disturbed, and almost abandoned reactions to the opera, her fantasy about the leading tenor, her unexpected reunion with Léon, her subsequent adultery – all of these details became emblematic of the stereotypes about opera-box literature, and Emma Bovary's experience became *the* experience.[68] We might well suggest that, compared to the farcical moment in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Emma Bovary's experience seems more appropriate, and thus appears 'normal' given the opera's content. Yet the very anomaly of Forster's opera scene is, I believe, intentional: in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Forster revises, and meticulously as well as playfully subverts, the Flaubertian version of the opera. His revision, or subversion, I argue, can be understood as 'queering' Flaubert's text, partly because the heterosexual seduction between Emma and Léon is transformed into, as previously discussed, Philip and Gino's homoerotic touch. But it is also queering on a more comprehensive scale, or, in Michael Warner's definition of the contested term, a 'thorough resistance to regimes of the normal'.[69]

In every detail, Forster's opera scene is a complete inversion of Flaubert's text.

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[67] Ashbrook, *Donizetti and His Operas*, p. 137.
[68] On opera-box literature conventions, see Ruth A. Solie, *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 187-218. For a detailed discussion of Flaubert's description of the opera scene, see Newark, pp. 78-109.
[69] Michael Warner, 'Introduction', in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. vii-xxxi (p. xxvi).

Instead of a female spectator, Philip occupies the centre of the narrative. The counterpart to Emma's unknowing husband is Philip's unknowing sister, Harriet. Whilst Emma relishes her fantasy by focusing on the tenor, Philip (as well as the narrator and thus the readers) sets his sight mainly on the *prima donna*, a tendency perceived by several critics as characteristic of male homosexuals.[70] Moreover, there are spatial and class inversions. Unlike Flaubert's urban setting, Forster's theatre is in a small town. Rather than an opera box, where Emma carries herself 'as haughtily as any duchess' and looks downward at 'the crowd all herding into the passage on the right', Foster's English characters are in the pit, neglecting the Baedeker's advice that British tourists should always reserve their seats in a box.[71] Unlike Flaubert's bourgeois 'seat-holders', the rows of smiling businessmen whom Emma observes from afar, Forster's English characters find themselves surrounded by Italian locals who are, as previously shown, noisy and excited.[72] Both texts use the narrative device of unexpected reunion, but while Emma receives Léon, who walks up to her box after the interval, Forster's Philip is taken by an arm, 'sho[oting] over the balustrade into [a] box'.[73] Class segregation, then, becomes utopian democracy, as the upper middle-class Englishman is dragged upward to join Gino, a dentist's son, and his friends. The adulterous secrecy of Emma and Léon is substituted by public cordiality among the group of male youths. Philip's meeting with Gino thus rounds off, as well as embodies, all the inversions: the heterosexual encounter is homoeroticized, the spatial arrangement reversed, the class discrepancy defied, and hence the 'normal' Flaubertian version queered.

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[70] Goscilo, pp. 197-8. Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993), pp. 101-2.
[71] Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, trans. J. Lewis May (Norwalk: Easton Press, 1978), p. 220. Baedeker, p. xxiv.
[72] Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, p. 221.
[73] *WA*, p. 97.

It is extremely intriguing, then, that when Forster's opera scene does explicitly allude to Flaubert's novel, it is a highly self-referential allusion. Describing Harriet's cluelessness at the opera, the narrator comments that she, 'like M. Bovary on a more famous occasion, was trying to follow the plot'.[74] It is the same satiric, judgmental voice as the one assessing Lilia's German quality, but its self-deprecation is evident in its comparative vocabulary, only deceptively so. Hidden within the novel's whole-scale subversion of Flaubert's opera scene, the narrator's self-deprecating reference to *Madame Bovary* becomes an acknowledgement of, as well as a jibe at, the monumental work. It reveals, then, a more flippant and less respectful attitude towards Flaubert than, for instance, Henry James's in the 1870s:

> It is not in the temper of English vision to see things as M. Flaubert sees them, and it is not in the genius of the English language to present them as he presents them. With all respect to "Madame Bovary," "Madame Bovary" is fortunately an inimitable work.[75]

For Forster, not only was Flaubert's novel not 'inimitable'; it was open to subversion, too. The self-deprecating narrator is itself a playful subversion of the notable Flaubertian 'author', who 'must be like God in the universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere'.[76] The point of view of the Forsterian narrator is similar to Flaubertian omniscience, but the God-like detachment is replaced with intrusion, judgment, and satire, all of which serve to augment the elusiveness of the text.[77] Forster's text, then,

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[74] *WA*, p. 95.
[75] Henry James, 'Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert: The Minor French Novelists' (1876), in *Henry James: Literary Criticism*, ed. Leon Edel, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), ii, pp. 159-83 (p. 168).
[76] Flaubert's letter to Louise Colet (9 December 1852), in *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert: 1830-1857*, ed. and trans. Francis Steegmuller (London: Belknap Press, 1980), p. 173.
[77] Paul B. Armstrong comments on the slipperiness of the Forsterian narrative voice: 'the narrator is not the author but a device that an anxious, proud writer can use to transform the contradictions he personally feels into socially useful games. It is then up to readers to play along with these games if they

combines knowledgeable and playful reworkings of his Flaubertian source, paying homage to Flaubert's meticulousness in novel-writing as well as emulating, challenging, and undercutting the very monumentality of the literary giant. It is worth stressing the fact that *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was Forster's debut novel. Using *Madame Bovary* as his literary material was thus a deliberate strategy to align himself with those who conscientiously treated novel-writing as a serious vocation. Yet the way he moulded Flaubert's opera scene into his comic version also suggests that, perhaps, Forster did not value Flaubert as much as he did other Continental novelists, such as Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Proust.[78]

If writing *Lucia* meant a negotiation with Flaubert's opera scene, it also caused Forster to glance back at another pre-eminent nineteenth-century novelist. As mentioned earlier, Donizetti's *Lucia* was based on Sir Walter Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*.[79] To many of Forster's contemporaries, Scott appeared to be the opposite of Flaubert: the sprawling plot of Scott's novels showed imaginative spontaneity and suggested a creative process different from Flaubert's scrupulous literary labour. Virginia Woolf, for example, commented on this difference between the two writers in one of her essays, 'Scott's Character' (1921):

> When it came to writing [Scott] had merely to turn on the tap and the accumulated resources rushed out. That this is not the way in which the works of Flaubert were produced is certain; but is also probable that genius of a certain type must work unconsciously, like a natural force

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can and will.' Paul B. Armstrong, *Play and the Politics of Reading: The Social Uses of Modernist Form* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 126.

[78] See *Aspects of the Novel* and 'Our Second Greatest Novel?' (1943) in *TCD*, pp. 216-9, for Forster's admiration for Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Proust.

[79] On the numerous adaptations of *The Bride of Lammermoor* prior to Donizetti's *Lucia*, see Jerome Mitchell, *The Walter Scott Operas: An Analysis of Operas Based on the Works of Sir Walter Scott* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1977), pp. 105-41.

> which issues unchanged, almost unnoticed by its possessor.[80]

Scott's 'unconsciously' creative process and Flaubert's highly conscious modulations of textual details were elsewhere seen by Woolf as the two different stages of literary genealogy: 'We may say that Scott is childish and Flaubert by comparison a grown man.'[81] Such an evolutionary evaluation of the two writers was conducive to Woolf's inheritance of, and resistance to, her literary predecessors from 'that vantage ground'.[82] For early twentieth-century British novelists, if the works of Scott (as well as Flaubert) augmented their anxieties about literary precursors, there were also opportunities to use these works to delineate their own aesthetic aims.

For Forster, Scott represented not his aesthetic root but a reference point for his declaration of independence from Scott's literary style. In his 1927 Clark Lectures on the aspects of the novel, he made a relentless critique of Scott's fame:

> Scott is a novelist over whom we shall violently divide. For my own part I do not care for him, and find it difficult to understand his continued reputation. […] He is seen to have a trivial mind and a heavy style. He cannot construct.[83]

Calling Scott merely a 'story-teller', who reminded readers of their 'early happiness', Forster criticized Scott's lack of 'artistic detachment' and 'passion', and censured his stylistic negligence.[84] On *The Bride of Lammermoor* in particular, Forster considered it 'a novel that professes to be lean and tragic'.[85] It is possible to argue that his criticism

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[80] Virginia Woolf, 'Scott's Characters' (1921), in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, iii, pp. 301-4 (p. 303).
[81] Virginia Woolf, 'On Re-reading Novels' (1922), in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, iii, pp. 336-46 (p. 343).
[82] Woolf, 'On Re-reading Novels', iii, p. 343.
[83] *AN*, pp. 20-1.
[84] *AN*, p. 22 and p. 21.
[85] *AN*, p. 23.

of Scott's ponderosity, or the sheer length of Scott's novel, is embodied by the novella-like succinctness of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*; we might also suggest that the aforementioned proximity of high spirits and death, or the mutability of human life, is the method that the novel adopts to convey a sense of the tragic. I do not wish, however, to state over-emphatically that *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, written more than two decades before the Clark Lectures, was conceived as a purposeful response to Scott's work. Rather, my attention is on whether the opera scene, in which Scott's presence is as inescapable as Flaubert's, registers Forster's evaluation of Scott, and if so, how such an evaluation is written into the scene and to what extent Forster's first novel negotiates the cultural status Scott possessed.

Scott is explicitly referred to in the opera scene: playing down Harriet's concern about the notoriety of foreign theatres, Philip says, 'But this is an opera—*Lucia di Lammermoor*—Sir Walter Scott—classical, you know.'[86] The familiarity of Scott's name results in Harriet's assenting to join Philip and Caroline at the opera. With the three dashes, Philip's persuasion is structured in a syntactically ambiguous way. The three consecutive nouns linked by the dashes signal parenthetical apposition and suggest equivalence, but the dash between '*Lucia di Lammemoor*' and 'Sir Walter Scott' can also be construed as signifying merely the close relationship between the two nouns. What is more ambiguous is the adjective 'classical'. Linked by another dash to the three nouns, it appears to describe the opera: the 1835 opera is 'classical', or nineteenth-century, rather than contemporary or modern. The adjective can also be ascribed to Scott's name: Scott is 'classical', or canonical, in comparison to twentieth-century writers. In either case, though, Philip's persuasion is knowingly misleading: as

[86] *WA*, p. 92.

Harriet grows confused and wonders 'what ha[s] become of Walter Scott', Philip's enjoyment of the opera suggests his awareness that Donizetti's adaptation and Scott's original novel are not equivalent.[87] He is being naughty, luring Harriet to associate 'classical' with 'classic', or even 'classy', while savouring the very ambiguity of the adjective inwardly. Perhaps the author himself is having fun as well, using 'classical' in this ironic sense to jibe at the obsoleteness of the opera and Scott's work. The adjective becomes, then, a euphemism for outdated-ness, a grand banner under which past, 'canonical' artworks are gathered and enshrouded. The self-referential irony of 'classical' mischievously dispatches Scott and his works to the past while associating *Where Angels Fear to Tread* with the modern and the new. To demarcate Scott's work in this way suggests Forster's resistance to, and indeed challenge of, Scott's popularity and continuing relevance to early twentieth-century writers.

The allusions to Flaubert and Scott thus indicate Forster's familiarity with the literary history of *Lucia di Lammermoor* on the one hand, and his concern with *his* own style on the other. What we have seen is not just a young novelist preoccupied with the significance of nineteenth-century literary heritage, but a self-conscious writer acutely alert to his contemporary literary landscape, to modern critical trends and movements, and to the cultural arena in which he had to distinguish himself from others. Forster was searching for a suitable style as early as 1901, when his failure to 'invent realism', to 'imagine others equally commonplace', led him to 'have a try at imagination pure & simple'.[88] Whether or not Forster's understanding of 'realism' is up to modern critical standard, whether or not his works did completely rely on imagination thenceforth, it is

[87] *WA*, p. 95. Forster noted the differences between the opera and the novel himself. In his Aldeburgh lecture in 1948, he commented: 'Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* owns only the mildest obligations to Sir Walter Scott.' Forster, 'George Crabbe and Peter Grimes' (1948), in *TCD*, pp. 166-80 (p. 177).
[88] Letter to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (15 December 1901). *SL1*, p. 51.

evident that, at the very beginning of his literary career, Forster was attentive to, and evaluative of, the style and form of his fiction. The motivation behind his attention and evaluation is, I would suggest, his dissatisfaction with available narrative methods, which is revealed by the subversion of the Flaubertian source and the resistance to Scottian canonicity in the opera scene. Such an attempt to renew fictional form, to search for a more appropriate narrative device, to revise, or even invent, a literary style in order to represent his social and cultural vision makes Forster's first novel more 'modern' than has been previously considered. In its narrowest definition, the 'formalism' of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is, of course, not groundbreaking in comparison to, say, that of *Ulysses* or *To the Lighthouse*. Neither does it declare a manifesto of literary ideology and cultural iconoclasm like Wyndham Lewis's 'men of 1914'.[89] Yet the novel encapsulates Forster's responses to the past and his distinction from that past. The novel is underpinned, that is, by an awareness of the necessity of confronting literary and intellectual traditions for ideological as well as stylistic purposes. Perhaps the rupture between him and his literary predecessors is unclear, and perhaps there is an absence of will to contest and eclipse other aesthetic trends, but *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is 'modernist' in its embodiment of 'a response to difficulties or limitations within existing novelistic form'.[90]

The opera scene thus plays an important part in Forster's search for his own narrative style. Intriguingly, Benjamin Britten regarded 'operatic' as the key technique with which Forster shapes his first novel. Britten said:

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[89] I am indebted to Ann Ardis's illuminating analysis of the relations between literary modernism and English studies, and how Wyndham Lewis's 'men of 1914' represented only a specific type of literary and aesthetic ideology in a contested cultural arena. Ardis, pp. 78-113.

[90] Morag Shiach, 'Reading the Modernist Novel: An Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*, ed. Morag Shiach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-14 (p. 8).

> Music is used superbly, not so much to colour a character as to push on the action, towards the end of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Here one may perhaps observe that the construction of Forster's novels often resembles that of the "classical" opera (Mozart—Weber—Verdi) where recitatives (the deliberately un-lyrical passages by which the action is advanced) separate arias or ensembles (big, self-contained set pieces of high comedy or great emotional tension).[91]

In Britten's commentary, the opera scene's narrative energy and emotional intensity differentiate the scene from the rest of the novel. Forster's ability to accelerate and decelerate the narrative pace, to quicken his characters' actions and move them back and forth between England and Italy while pausing every now and then to build up encounters and confrontations, is considered similar to a 'classical' (how carefully Britten used the term) opera. This comparison suggests a perceived contrast between operatic and episodic, between temporal flexibility and temporal exactness, between psychological eventfulness and historical ordering. Britten's observation on the operatic quality of Forster's fiction, then, not only links the opera scene to the excessive and the extreme – qualities consistently perceived as synonymous with the term 'operatic' – but also resolutely identifies the structural design of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* as something unique. Perhaps this operatic quality was the reason why C. F. G. Masterman, one of the first reviewers of the novel, noted that Forster's story is 'told with a deftness, a lightness, a grace of touch'.[92] Perhaps this operatic, or scenic, quality also contributed to the repeated use of terms such as 'comedy' and 'tragedy' in contemporary commentaries on the novel.[93] Whether or not Britten's interpretation

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[91] Britten, p. 82.
[92] C. F. G. Masterman, 'review', *Daily News*, 8 November 1905, cited in *E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Philip Gardner, pp. 52-5 (p. 55).
[93] For example, Virginia Woolf regarded the opera scene as 'a masterpiece of comedy'. Virginia Woolf, 'The Novel of E. M. Forster' (1927), in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, iv, pp. 491-502 (p. 493). As for 'tragedy', a contemporary reviewer commented that the story is 'swept almost into tragedy while

captures Forster's authorial intention is open to debate. The novel's narrative style, as I have suggested, marks a conscious divergence from that of Forster's literary predecessors, especially from that of Scott's or Flaubert's works.

This stylistic concern is intertwined with delineations of French and Scottish characteristics. Like the invocation of German musical traits, 'the French' in the opera scene are defined against the idiosyncrasies of Italian musical characteristics. The reference to *Madame Bovary* efficiently evokes French sentimentalism against Italian ingenuousness, and French *liaison* against Italian frivolity. In contrast, 'the Scottish' are delineated and placed alongside 'the Italians' as an entity of cultural consumption. Forster's awareness of the Scottish spectacle on the stage of *Lucia di Lammermoor* is manifested in the description of the opera's opening scene: 'Harriet […] had been coughing ominously at the drop-scene, which presently rose on the grounds of Ravenswood, and the chorus of Scotch retainers burst into cry.'[94] The defamiliarized Scott is made doubly exotic by the Scottish setting of an Italian opera, which, from a postcolonial perspective, demonstrates how the real Scotland is reduced, simplified, and packaged into an inauthentic spectacle ready to be consumed by foreign interest.[95] Just as a coon song relies on the imagined characteristics of African Americans, the operatic adaption of Scott's novel evokes the imagined Scottish identity on stage. In both cases, the exoticism of otherness augments the appeal, and the appropriated culture, African American and Scottish respectively, is consumed by entertainment and

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scarcely knowing it'. Anon., 'Unsigned review', Bookman, October 1905, p. 41, cited in *E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Philip Gardner, pp. 43-4 (p. 44).

[94] *WA*, p. 94.

[95] Continental and English composers' interest in Scotland has a long tradition which can be traced back to the textualization and distribution of Scotch songs. While James Macpherson's 'translation' of the Ossian poems and Scott's *Waverley* novels both created high enthusiasm for Scottish legacies, the appeal decreased after improved transportation boosted Scottish tourism. The romance, then, died down once direct contact was made possible. See Roger Fiske, *Scotland in Music: A European Enthusiasm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

art. Both involve geographical transmission, and are reflective of concurrent imperial and colonial relations. However different Donizetti's *Lucia* and a coon song may be in terms of genre and reception, one cannot help but wonder whether the textual proximity of the opera and the coon song is deliberate, not only to problematize, as I have discussed, the stereotypes about Italian characteristics, but also to reflect these problematic national elements of the opera. It would be an overstatement to claim that the comic effect of the opera scene derives, too, from that of a coon song performance, but several parallels exist between the two genres, all of which suggest the significance of the reference to the coon song to Forster's description of the opera performance.

One of the parallels is, I would argue, that, like a coon song performance, the opera scene presents a self-consciously performative relationship between performers and audiences. Forster's description, that is, exposes the way operatic conventions underpin and dominate this performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Monteriano. As mentioned earlier, the humour of a coon song performance is built on the audience's awareness of the layers of performance on stage; a performance can elicit humour only after the audience knowingly responds to the performed racial characteristics. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the opera performance is described similarly as a knowingly collaborative project on both sides of the stage: 'The singers drew inspiration from the audience, and the two great sextets were rendered not unworthily.'[96] As Alexandra Peat observes, this mutual effort, this dynamics in the theatre, 'elides the distinction between the performers onstage and the members of the audiences, creating the impression of constantly shifting perspectives'.[97] On which side, then, does the real performance take place? Who are the real performers? The excessive hilarity of the audience during

[96] *WA*, p. 95.
[97] Alexandra Peat, *Travel and Modernist Literature: Sacred and Ethical Journeys* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 84.

Lucia's mad scene seems an equally performative act, and the conductor, almost too knowing and too composed, waits until the incident is over to 'rais[e] his baton' and let 'Lucia di Lammermoor resum[e] her song of madness and death'.[98] This knowledge of operatic conventions is also shared by the audience, as the narrator comments on their attitude towards the 'clothes-horse' over which Lucia performs her aria: 'It was very ugly, and most of the flowers in it were false. Lucia knew this, and so did the audience; and they all knew that the clothes-horse was a piece of stage property, brought in to make the performance go year after year.'[99] The fact that the touring opera company visits the town regularly over the years and the local audiences are familiar with their performances contradicts Philip's perception of Italian musical characteristics as spontaneous and natural. After the opera, Philip exclaims to Caroline: 'Did you ever see a really purple sky and really silver stars before?'.[100] The irony lies in that the 'real' Italy he believes he has observed during the opera is but a self-conscious performance of operatic conventions; that Italians' musical responses taken by him as representative of the Italian national character are only for the occasion; and that such generalizations of national characteristics, as he soon learns, do not fit any individual.

It is possible, then, to discern the uneasiness underlying the opera scene's references to stereotypes about different national characters. If the opera scene suggests the intersection of musical and national characteristics, it also illuminates the instability of these characteristics. As the chapter has suggested, the stereotypes of the Italian musical character are highlighted as well as problematized throughout the opera scene and by the reference to the coon song. Since the stereotypes of the other national characters are defined either alongside or against 'the Italians', they become relatedly

[98] *WA*, p. 97.
[99] *WA*, p. 95.
[100] *WA*, p. 98.

precarious. The exploration of national character in the opera scene presents, then, a lesson of cautious generalization: Forster's observation in 'The English Character' that generalization, inadequate but useful, needs extra caution when it comes to real individuals propels the multinational encounter in the opera scene and produces much of the novel's humour and agony. Yet such an application of generalization is intended to encourage people to cross geographical boundaries and to approach other individuals more directly. There is a sense of urgency, perhaps despair as well, in Forster's encouragement: 'The nations of the world', as he concluded 'The English Character', 'must understand one another, and quickly, for physical events—science, politics, economics—are throwing them into one another's arms.'[101] This was 1913, not long before the outbreak of the First World War. Perhaps, back in 1905, the international political situation still allowed Forster to present stereotypes about disparate national musical traits in a farcical manner in order to rival the novelistic styles of his literary predecessors. In this respect, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is an ambitiously crafted text, in which Forster takes on the role of a serious and informed novelist, working a generous number of political as well as literary factors into a memorable opera scene.

In 'Sunday Music', an article he wrote in Egypt in 1917, Forster revisited the intersection of music and nationality. A Red Cross officer in Alexandria between 1915 and 1919, Forster dedicated most of his writing to journalism, publishing twenty-five newspaper articles, including two series, 'Our Diversions' and 'Alexandria

[101] *AH*, p. 409.

Vignettes'.[102] This journalistic output, I suggest, represents Forster's conscious practice of non-fiction writing. Indeed, Forster started writing about history at Cambridge in the previous century and published book reviews before the First World War; his travel writing also appeared during his trips to Italy and to India. Yet his Egyptian articles mark his first attempt to experiment consciously with a variety of non-fiction genres within a short period of time, not excluding those which he had previously tried but including a wider range of others, such as biographical writing, film review, and music criticism.[103] As an example of the last, 'Sunday Music' is about one of his concert experiences in Alexandria.[104] It is another noisy occasion, where children of different nationalities chase after each other, adults read or chat, and even sparrows chatter more lively than usual: 'do not expect to hear', Forster says, 'Sunday music at San Stefano [a casino] is for the eye'.[105] The congregation of multinational audiences embodies the wartime cosmopolitanism in Alexandria; the noise and the visual enjoyment of music evoke the stereotypes about the Mediterranean vivacity and vitality. The experience once again ends up in a farcical moment: the audience only realize that the music is

[102] Nine of these articles were included in Forster's 1923 pamphlet, *Pharos and Pharillon*, published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press. Except for 'The Scallies', an article on a vaudeville-like performance in Alexandria, the rest of them were subsequently put aside when Forster was preparing *Abinger Harvest* in the early 1930s, and were therefore never reprinted in Forster's lifetime. These articles were gathered and reprinted in 1988 in a single volume: *The Uncollected Egyptian Essays of E. M. Forster*, ed. Hilda D. Spear and Abdel-Moneim Aly (Dundee: Blackness Press, 1988). For a discussion of Forster's Egyptian articles, see Miriam Allott's introduction to the Abinger Edition: 'Editor's Introduction to *Pharos and Pharillon*', in *AL*, pp. 180-1.

[103] I regard Forster's three essays on Eliza Fay, written also during his stay in Alexandria, as his first attempt at biographical writing. These three 'impressions' of Eliza Fay's time in Egypt and India are based on quotations from Fay's own letters, which are interspersed with Forster's commentaries on Fay's characteristics and writing styles, as well as on contemporary political situations in Egypt and India. In 1925, the Hogarth Press published a new edition of Fay's letters, with introduction and notes by Forster, which were mostly revisions of these three earlier essays. As for Forster's film review, see his 1917 article 'Diana's Dilemma' (*PT*, pp. 180-3). It is not film review *per se*, but more like a satiric critique of Hollywood romantic conventions. Nevertheless, the article is Forster's first commentary on films.

[104] Compared to his accounts about his stay in India, Forster's engagement with music in Alexandria also took many forms, though mostly with Western music only. There are several other music-related articles in addition to 'Sunday Music', including 'A Musician in Egypt' (1917) and 'Handel in Egypt' (1918). The latter, I suggest, can be read as one of Forster's early drafts for the trial scene in *A Passage to India*.

[105] 'Sunday Music' (1917), in *PT*, pp. 184-7 (p. 184).

'only traversing a soft passage' in the middle of their applause.[106]

Similarly, this vivid delineation of the 'Mediterranean' quality is juxtaposed with an invocation of Germanic characteristics. All of the details of the concert in Alexandria are compared to those of an opera performance Forster attended in Munich in 1905:

> Up in the Sanctuary if you think of that building as a church […] sat the band from the Kaiser's Imperial Yacht, performing with sailory precision the Fire Music from *The Valkyrie*, and down in the auditorium sat squadron after squadron of awe-struck Germans, masticating silently, and among them sat I.[107]

The seriousness of the German (musical) character, the cliché of German musical disposition, and the instrumental fineness of Austro-German traditions are reiterated. As the explicitly military vocabulary indicates, they are immediately associated with German militarism and aggression. In contrast with the opera scene in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 'Sunday Music' delineates an explicit situation of international collision, with references to 'the physical events' – as Forster termed in 'The English Character' – up front. More importantly, it is Wagner's music here. Wagner's work was repeatedly linked to German military expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and this link could only become poignantly clear during the First World War.[108] Forster describes how he accidentally made a slight noise during the performance, and the result was: 'I might as well have dropped a bomb. Hisses broke out, scowls, exclamations of horror and rage. I had insulted Germany's Kaiser, her

[106] *PT*, p. 186.
[107] *PT*, p. 184.
[108] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 162-3.

Navy, and her Art.'[109] Forster's sarcasm cuts through all the German stereotypes overflowing in this brief sentence: the 'bomb' that Forster imagined he might have dropped is an imagined retaliation, a moment of guilty pleasure in his recollection. 'It is better to be inattentive with Latins and Levantines than to attend with Teutons', Forster declares; for him, the Alexandria concert provides what the Munich performance lacked: 'Enjoyment'.[110] Here, the contrast between 'the Northern' and 'the Southern', between puritanical seriousness and epicurean spontaneity, is once again brought into play. Yet we may well wonder whether Forster's declaration is genuine; after all, the article is written in a scathingly ironic tone. It seems that his preference for Mediterranean inattentiveness over Teutonic attentiveness is less an issue of making a musical judgment than of attacking German imperial expansion.

Forster's reference to Wagner invites further discussion. Earlier in the war, Forster commented on the futility of banning German music: 'we at the outbreak of war tried to banish Beethoven and Wagner from our concert halls. We could do that, but we could not stop them from playing inside our heads whenever some chance sound reawoke their immortality'.[111] Whether linked satirically to German militarism, or associated with the contest of cultural freedom back in Britain, Wagner remained a focal point in Forster's commentary on music and nationality during the First World War. Yet the highly politicized status of Wagner would only become – as the following chapter will explore – increasingly overwhelming with the emergence of Nazism and the political repercussions surrounding Bayreuth. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Wagner was a thorny subject that Forster could not simply criticize or advocate. It is to this problem of Wagner that we will now turn.

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[109] *PT*, pp. 184-5.
[110] *PT*, p. 185 and p. 187.
[111] 'The Functions of Literature in War-time' (1915), in *AEOW*, pp. 176-83 (p. 182).

III

The Problem of the Wagnerian Hero

> I resent the power of Percival intensely[.]
>
> Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*.[1]

On 10 September 1940, Forster published *Nordic Twilight*, a pamphlet defending the British war effort as the only way to protect culture and civilization. 'Hitler's Germany is the villain', Forster declared, not only because of its racial atrocity or military aggression, but also because of its cultural totalitarianism.[2] Its censorship on communication, its appropriation of artworks for governmental use, its establishment of centralized agencies to control artists, its destruction of Germany's and other nations' philosophical, historical, artistic, and scientific legacies – all of these were regarded by Forster as the biggest threat to civilization and humanity. For him, these re-interpretations (and falsifications) of European culture embodied and reinforced Nazi Germany's worship of the State, but they also revealed the deep sense of 'the Tragic' within German national culture. A belief that 'there must lie ahead for herself or for someone an irreparable disaster', this was, Forster suggested, 'the mentality of Wagner':

> [P]erhaps the present war may be considered as a scene (we do not yet know which) out of the *Nibelung's Ring*. I listen to Wagner to-day with unchanged admiration and increasing anxiety. Here is a world in which

[1] Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, ed. Michael Herbert and Susan Sellers, with research by Ian Blyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 29. The speaker here is Louis.
[2] E. M. Forster, *Nordic Twilight* (London: Macmillan, 1940), p. 10.

> someone must come to grief, and with the maximum of orchestration and scenery. The hero slays or is slain, Hunding kills Siegmund, Siegfried kills the dragon, Hagen Siegfried, Brunnhilde [*sic*] leaps into the flames and brings down the Halls of Earth and Heaven. The tragic view of the universe can be noble and elevating, but it is a dangerous guide to daily conduct, and it may harden into a stupid barbarism, which smashes at problems instead of disentangling them. It hopes to destroy; if it fails, it commits suicide, and it cannot see that God may be wanting it to do neither. Göring, perched up in a castle with his drinking cups and plunder, and clamouring for Fate, is a Wagnerian hero gone wrong, an anachronism which has abused the name and the true nature of Tragedy.[3]

The violence and slaughter in Wagner's *Ring* cycle, and the absence of compromise and the fetish for the extreme, were perceived by Forster as emblematic of the flaw of the German character. Continuing his Wagnerian comparison, Forster viewed Hermann Göring, the deputy director of Nazi Germany, 'not as Hagen but as Kundry: under a curse'.[4] The Nazis' use and abuse of Wagner's work was, then, a characteristic practice and an extended manipulation of this innate tragic sense: 'Wherever they encounter variety and spontaneity the Nazis are doomed to attack.'[5] In Forster's opinion, the Wagnerian scenario of victory and death reflected and augmented the Nazis' totalitarianism.

It is intriguing, then, that this extended allusion to Wagner was completely deleted when, two weeks later, Forster revised the pamphlet into three broadcast talks. The pamphlet's title, with its explicit allusion to *Götterdämmerung*, was also changed into a matter-of-fact one: 'The Nazis and Culture'. What, we must stop to ask, was the rationale for such a revision? Perhaps Forster thought that the Wagnerian allusion was too long and complicated to fit into the script of the broadcast talks; the whole section

[3] Forster, *Nordic Twilight*, pp. 10-1.
[4] Forster, *Nordic Twilight*, p. 12.
[5] Forster, *Nordic Twilight*, p. 12.

was too cumbersome to be elaborated in spoken word, and the musical allusion too convoluted to be conveyed succinctly and properly on air. (Or, was he presuming that the majority of his listeners might not be able to grasp the Wagnerian allusion?) It is also possible that the revision was to make his argument more concise as well as more precise. The main target of his criticism was the Nazis' governmental intervention in and exploitation of culture; without the essentialist reading of the tragic German disposition, his argument still worked. Yet, all the practical considerations aside, could the revision also be political? Could the contentious and controversial status of Wagner in the 1930s and the 1940s, that is, have possibly influenced Forster's revision? Would it be possible that it was an intentional hush, a thoroughly conscious endeavour to hold back from referring to a composer whose name was almost synonymous with the Nazi regime? In comparison to the Edwardian years, during which Forster made numerous Wagnerian allusions in his fiction and non-fiction writings, the 1940s witnessed Forster's uncharacteristic silence on the subject: apart from *Nordic Twilight* and a passing reference to Wagner in 'The C Minor of that Life' (1941), an essay mainly concerned with Beethoven, he did not refer to Wagner in his writings until 1954, the year when he attended the Bayreuth Festival and made a radio broadcast, 'Revolution at Bayreuth'. Was Forster's silence on Wagner, then, a result of his alertness to, or a sign of paranoia about, the close link between Wagner and the Nazis? Hitler's admiration for the composer and his close relationships with Wagner's descendents were publicized and widely noted; the Third Reich's nazification of Wagner's music and the Bayreuth Festival was also well known.[6] The theory that Wagner fuelled the

[6] For Hitler's admiration for Wagner and his attachment to the Wagners, see Ian Kershaw, *1889-1936: Hubris* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999), pp. 20-3, pp. 39-40, pp. 41-3, p. 251, and p. 617; for Bayreuth in the 1930s, see Chapter 5 in Frederic Spotts, *Bayreuth: A History of the Wagner Festival* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); for the nazification of German musicology during the wartime, see Pamela

Nazi project of racial cleansing was repeatedly endorsed by historians and musicologists immediately after the war, although it has also been disputed by modern scholars in the past two decades.[7] Whilst at present we have the privilege to look retrospectively into the incongruity between Wagner's work and Nazi ideology, for a contemporary British person the association of the two might have seemed so overwhelmingly obvious that it obscured any such incongruity.

This topical currency of the Wagner-Hitler connection influenced the reception of Forster's last reference to Wagner before *Nordic Twilight*. In January 1939, Forster was the first contributor to 'How I Listen to Music', a series of talks on the BBC. In his talk, later reprinted in *Two Cheers for Democracy* as 'Not Listening to Music', Forster discussed briefly how he once enjoyed Wagner:

> With Wagner I always knew where I was; he never let the fancy roam […]. In those days [music] was either a non-musical object, such as a sword or a blameless fool, or a non-musical emotion, such as fear, lust or resignation. […] I translated sounds into colours, saw the piccolo as

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M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); for the nazification of a specific work of Wagner, see Thomas S. Gray, 'Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* as National Opera (1868-1945)', in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 78-104; for Wagner's followers and their relations with National Socialism, see David C. Large, 'Wagner's Bayreuth Disciples', in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, ed. David C. Large and William Weber, pp. 72-133.

[7] For studies on the relationship between music and Nazism, see *Music and Nazism: Art under Tyranny, 1933-1945*, ed. Michael H. Kater and Albrecht Riethmüller (Laaber: Laaber, 2004), especially Hans Rudolf Vaget's article 'Hitler's Wagner: Musical Discourse as Cultural Space', pp. 15-31; for the Nazis' Germanization of music and their failure, see Pamela M. Potter, 'Music in the Third Reich: The Complex Task of "Germanization"', in *The Arts in Nazi Germany: Continuity, Conformity, Change*, ed. Jonathan Huener and Francis R. Nicosia (New York: Berghahn, 2006), pp. 85-110; for an investigation into Nazi control of music and theatre, see Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); for the counterpart projects regarding music and nationhood in Britain in the Second World War, see Robert Mackay's 'Safe and Sound: New Music in Wartime Britain' and Nick Hayes's 'More Than "Music-While-You-Eat"? Factory and Hostel Concerts, "Good Culture" and the Workers', both in *'Millions Like Us'?: British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 179-208 and pp. 209-35.

> apple-green, and the trumpets as scarlet. The arts were to be enriched by taking in one another's washing.[8]

The passage seems a parody of the transition of European artistic trend in the early twentieth century; its past tense indicates a change of Forster's musical taste. Yet for the art critic R. H. Wilenski, the series' second contributor, Forster's unguarded appreciation of Wagner was unscrupulous. As Wilenski suggested, when the composer was 'a crafty or threatening antagonist who is out to soothe, irritate or assault my nerves and senses and deprive my will and intellect of their control', extra caution was necessary. Wilenski called Forster's method of listening 'foolhardy' because Forster's consciousness 'will be scaled by the invader' and Forster the person will be transformed into 'the distressing spectacle of an intelligent adult head-nodding and foot-wagging without direction from his mind and will'.[9] With its patronizing tone, its metaphors of musical affectivity as pathologizing force and military invasion, and its alarmist emphasis on self-control and will-power, Wilenski's commentary reiterates the debilitating effects of Wagner's music delineated by numerous predecessors and contemporaries, and reflects his own overlapping concern with the imminent war against Germany.[10] We do not know whether or how Forster reacted to this commentary, but it is evident that Wagner was, in the late 1930s, a topic highly contentious and sensitive. By the time when he revised *Nordic Twilight*, Forster was likely to have known how much controversy a single reference to Wagner would produce.

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[8] *TCD*, pp. 122-3.
[9] R. H. Wilenski, 'How I Listen to Music', *Listener*, 2 February 1939, p. 281.
[10] See Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, Ch. II, 'The Pathology of Pleasure: Decadent Sensibility and Affective Art' (pp. 57-87), for an analysis of a variety of discourses on the debilitating effects of Wagner's music.

His silence on Wagner is particularly conspicuous when one considers the significance of music to Forster throughout the war and the diversity of his wartime musical activities. On the day when Britain declared war on Germany, Forster played the adagio of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 28, Op. 101, the first entry in his unfinished Beethoven Notebook.[11] This project to annotate all of Beethoven's piano sonatas, to obtain 'a vision of Beethoven […] through playing him as well as listening to him', provided Forster a diversion from the war, a symbolic retreat through which he could temporarily receive comfort and forget cruelty.[12] Additionally, Forster was an ardent supporter of the National Gallery concerts and went to London regularly to listen to the chamber music performed by Dame Myra Hess and many other professional musicians. As the scene from *A Diary for Timothy* delineated at the opening of this thesis demonstrates, the National Gallery concerts were one of the central cultural events for war-stricken Londoners. In a broadcast talk to India in 1943, Forster considered the concerts a timely reminder that 'in the heart of a war and close to destruction, great music is being upheld'.[13] Here, as Forster specifically emphasized, 'great music' was German music: works by Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, Schumann, and, more importantly, by Mendelssohn and Bloch, were performed and, metaphorically, preserved in Britain. In marked contrast to the Nazis' persecution of Jewish composers, the National Gallery concerts made a political statement which Forster acknowledged and transmitted to his radio audience: 'They ban German culture. We don't.'[14] Building on, as well as moving away from, the widely circulated notions of German musical supremacy and, as the previous chapter suggested, of the German character as

[11] Diary entry (3 September 1939). *JD*, ii, 89.
[12] Letter to Forrest Reid (30 September 1940). *SL2*, p. 182. For a discussion on the motivation and the timing of this Beethoven project, see Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 110-1.
[13] 'New Year's Greeting' (6 January 1943), in *BBC*, pp. 217-21 (p. 218).
[14] *BBC*, p. 218.

aesthetically and musically sophisticated, the National Gallery concerts centralized Britain as the principal musical scene in wartime Europe, displacing Germany from its musical traditions. Forster's broadcast talk, then, used the National Gallery concerts to characterize Britain as the stronghold of human civilization and defined the war as a battle between continuation and annihilation. Despite the propagandist tone, the broadcast demonstrates that music, especially German music, played an important role in justifying and solidifying the British war effort.[15] Yet Forster's participation in and advocacy of these wartime musical activities, in which German music had a prominent part, only highlight the absence of Wagner in his writings during and after the war.

To many of Forster's contemporaries, allusions to and evaluations of Wagner were one of the means through which the national and racial myths constructed by the Nazis could be contested and dispersed. By claiming the right of interpretation, that is, anti-Nazi intellectuals, musicians, and writers re-assessed the value of Wagner's music and criticized Wagner's anti-Semitism whilst challenging the Nazis' exploitation of Wagner over the years. Thomas Mann, for example, consistently formulated his polemics on German totalitarianism through evaluating Wagner's work during his exile in the States.[16] Similarly, Virginia Woolf explored and critiqued contemporary dictatorship and militarism through structural and thematic allusions to Wagner's

[15] On Forster's BBC broadcast as propaganda, see Mary Lago, Linda K. Hughes, and Elizabeth MacLeod Walls, 'The General Introduction', in *BBC*, pp. 1-47 (pp. 24-5). On the role of the BBC during the wartime and the corporation's relationships with British audiences, see Siân Nicholas, 'The People's Radio: The BBC and its Audience, 1939-1945', in *'Millions Like Us'?*, ed. Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, pp. 62-92.

[16] Thomas Mann decided to go exile after his 1933 speech, 'The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner', at The Goethe Society of Munich for the fiftieth anniversary of the composer's death. The speech caused an almost unexpected national controversy against Mann because of his criticism of Wagner's artistic dilettantism. This did not stop him from commenting on Wagner though, as he continued his scrutiny of Wagner in 'Richard Wagner and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*' (1937) and 'To the Editor of Common Sense' (1939). Thomas Mann, *Pro and Contra Wagner*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), pp. 91-148, pp. 171-94, and pp. 196-203.

tetralogy in *The Years* (1937).[17] Also, Theodor Adorno's socialist and musicological study of Wagner, though published post-war, was first conceived in the late 1930s as an exploration of, as well as a resistance to, Nazism.[18] These examples demonstrate that 'Wagner', as a subject, was a point of contention between Nazism and anti-Nazism. If Forster had sought to establish his political ideology against Nazi Germany, uncovering the problematic national and racial elements in Wagner's music dramas would have been the short cut to the goal. *Nordic Twilight* did exactly that, but the subsequent revision consciously renounced such methodology and thus produced a hiatus in Forster's Wagnerism.

This hiatus was, I would suggest, a considered decision, one in which Forster's decades-long rumination on heroism played an important part. Forster's denunciation of fascism in the late 1930s, especially in his famous 1938 essay, 'What I Believe', has been extensively discussed; the statement about his anti-patriotic loyalty to friendships has also been much quoted and analysed in numerous critical studies. His championing of personal relationships is underpinned by his celebration of individualism, not as exceptionalism, but as display of individuality. Whilst more will be discussed in terms of Forster's ideas of individualistic engagement with music, what needs to be emphasized here is that Forster's notion of individualism underscores freedom and idiosyncrasy, thus envisioning a community which embraces a spectrum of individualities. His anti-fascism, then, is a rejection of uniformity, of the loss of the individual in a totalitarian regime. Even though a dictator is the utmost demonstration of individualism, a 'great man', as Rachel Bowlby notes, 'resemble[s]', rather than

[17] Jane Marcus, *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 49-51.
[18] Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, with foreword by Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2009). Žižek's foreword briefly discusses the background of Adorno's work, p. viii.

'differ[s] from', every other: 'his greatness is a function of his life's proceeding not exceptionally or idiosyncratically, but along well-known, recognisable lines.'[19] Forster's notion of individualism, then, simultaneously celebrates the plurality of individualities and resists the replication of 'Great Men' conventions.

Yet it is exactly because of this distrust of 'Great Men', as Michelle Fillion suggests, that Forster's Beethoven project remained unfinished. As Fillion has observed, the project was abandoned because Forster's withdrawal into Beethoven's piano sonatas instead forced him to confront the symbolic heroic quality with which a century of criticism had endowed Beethoven and his music; in the rise of Nazism, Beethoven became 'an object of cautious love, but no longer a subject for criticism'.[20] Fillion's reading usefully unveils the contradictions and conflicts underlying Forster's Beethoven project, but its depiction of the Notebook as 'doomed from the start' risks overstressing Forster's 'failure': it implies a characterization of the project as an ill-fated attempt which faltered when the association of Beethoven with the Nazi form of hero-worship became overwhelming.[21] To avoid such a disabling characterization, I find John Lucas's evaluation of Forster's polemical writings in the 1930s as '*deliberately* frail' and 'quietly devastating', particularly stimulating.[22] Arguing for Forster's 'enabling modesty', Lucas observes how Forster's language 'refuses to shift towards the rhetoric of public occasion [and] remains steadfastly that of the private

[19] Rachel Bowlby, 'Jacob's Type', in *Feminist Destinations and Further Essays on Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 85-99 (p. 88).
[20] Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, p. 117, also pp. 108-9 and pp. 115-6. See also Zhou, pp. 1-4. For studies on Beethoven and heroism, see e.g. Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Nicholas Mathew, *Political Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 17-58.
[21] Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, p. 109.
[22] John Lucas, 'E. M. Forster: An Enabling Modesty', *EREA*, 4.2 (2006), 34-44 (35 and 42).

conversationalist'.[23] The significance is therefore twofold: stylistically, Forster 'resist[ed] the rhetorical flourish that will either aggrandize or demonise'; ideologically, Forster kept himself at a slight angle to any political causes and campaigns.[24] It is this refusal to adopt the enemy's weapon to counterattack, this quiet resistance to the permeation of divisive politics and public grandiosity, this constant wariness of the sectarian and dogmatic nature of political movements, that enables us to read the incompleteness of the Beethoven Notebook not as a failure, but as Forster's restraint. The unfinished Notebook, I suggest, marks Forster's discreet decision not to participate in, and therefore not to augment, the topicality of heroism in a decade where newspaper headlines were dominated by 'Great Men'. In so doing, Forster did not resort to the easy distinction between heroism and anti-heroism, and remained independent from the multifarious concurrent 'isms' of political ideology.

Forster's silence on Wagner, I will propose, sends out implications similar as those of the unfinished Beethoven project. This chapter explores, broadly, how Forster resisted hero-worship and attempted to redefine the 'heroic' in the first half of the twentieth century, and, more specifically, the relation of such resistance to his responses to Wagner. Focused on his criticism of Siegfried, the chapter examines the ways in which Forster searched for an alternative to the Wagnerian scenario of hero and villain, victory and defeat, transcendence and death – that is, as we have seen in *Nordic Twilight*, a less extreme ideology than the 'tragic' view represented in Wagner's tetralogy. Forster's Wagnerism was, I suggest, an uneasy negotiation of the Wagnerian

[23] Lucas, 'E. M. Forster', 42.
[24] Lucas, 'E. M. Forster', 36. Also pertinent to this discussion of Forster's writings in the 1930s is Paul B. Armstrong's article, in which Armstrong analyses Forster's indirect, oblique style: 'Forster's indirection is […] a way of acknowledging that his discourse is necessarily entangled in the workings of power it criticizes.' Paul B. Armstrong, 'Two Cheers for Tolerance: E. M. Forster's Ironic Liberalism and the Indirections of Style', *Modernism/Modernity*, 16.2 (2009), 281-99 (285).

hero, an enduring exploration of a complex web of discourses on Wagner's anti-Semitism, posthumous reception, and links to the Nazis. These discourses, stylistically and ideologically protean and complicated, are themselves discursive topics with a diverse range of critical associations. The chapter concentrates, consequently, on Forster's combined attention to Wagner and heroism because the underlying Forsterian ideology is not just idiosyncratic, but in many ways representative too: it recurred throughout Forster's oeuvre and also influenced a younger generation of writers. Christopher Isherwood, for example, called Forster an 'anti-heroic hero, […] and the vast majority of people on this island aren't even aware that he exists'.[25] My discussion is intended, then, as a close reading of an aspect of Forster that not only had an important part in his work but also continued to produce repercussions in the later years of his life. It turns first to Forster's characterization of Stephen Wonham and Stewart Ansell in *The Longest Journey*, considering the 'heroic' quality of the two characters in relation to the novel's Wagnerian allusions. The second part of the chapter examines two of Forster's essays before the outbreak of the Second World War, 'What I Believe' (1938) and 'Post-Munich' (1939). It considers the ways in which they, like *Nordic Twilight*, use Wagnerian metaphors to undercut conventional notions of heroism to make sense of the political crisis in the late 1930s. The last part discusses Forster's 'pilgrimage' to Bayreuth in 1954, reading his experiences at this post-war, de-nazified Wagnerian sanctuary as the symbolic end of his negotiation of Wagner and heroism.

[25] Christopher Isherwood, *Down There on a Visit* (London: Methuen, 1962), p. 177.

Wagner's music dramas are not wanting in heroes, and these heroes are staple figures consistently referred to and commented on within Wagnerism.[26] Among them, Siegfried is the champion. In *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), for example, George Bernard Shaw regarded Siegfried as 'a born anarchist, the ideal of Bakoonin, an anticipation of the "overman" of Nietzsche'.[27] For Forster, however, Siegfried was never a hero. In 1905, when he was attending his first *Ring* cycle in Dresden, Forster wrote to his Cambridge friend Arthur Cole, comparing the character to an ill-educated college fellow: 'He ought never to have got his fellowship: […] his subsequent achievements confer little credit upon the institutions from which he draws his salary. To insist on marrying [his] half-aunt on both sides and then totally to forget her […] is all that Siegfried does after gaining the Ring, the Tarn cap, and the Sword.'[28]

This jibe at Siegfried is elaborated in 'Pessimism in Literature', a paper Forster read at the Working Men's College in 1906.[29] The paper's primary concern is the absence of happy ending in contemporary fiction: 'the modern mind […] has detected the discomfort and misery that lie so frequently beneath the smiling surface of things.'[30] These idiosyncrasies of 'modern' literature are, Forster suggested, those of the *Ring* cycle: 'Wagner can give us tragedy, and the disquieting passion of human love […]. What he cannot give us is the poetry of laughter—the laughter that once filled the earthly paradise of Olivia's garden.'[31] In some respect, this evaluation anticipates the previously quoted passage from *Nordic Twilight*, in which Wagner's predilection for

[26] I am indebted to Simon Williams's reading of Wagner's heroisms in *Wagner and the Romantic Hero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[27] George Bernard Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 2nd edn (London: Constable, 1908), p. 48.
[28] Letter to Arthur Cole (11 April 1905). *SL1*, p. 68.
[29] The paper was then published in the *Working Men's College Journal* in 1907.
[30] *AEOW*, p. 142.
[31] *AEOW*, p. 143.

the tragic in the *Ring* cycle is criticized for its extremity. In the paper, Forster's focus is Wagner's failure to conjure up joy on stage:

> I am thinking of a scene that is intended to be perfectly joyful—to present, on a heroic scale, the cheerfulness, the high spirits, the audacious laughter that are so splendid and magnificent in life. The scene in question is the opening scene of *Siegfried*. In life the youthful Siegfried would be quite an agreeable person. We should like to know him—at all events we should like to think of him at a public school. "Boys will be boys," we should murmur, when he laughed and shouted, and bullied and jumped to and fro in the most distracting way. But the youthful Siegfried on the stage is intolerable. […] It is that he is a bounder in a more fatal sense—neither a hero nor a school boy, but a cad. […] In spite of the jolliest music, the youthful Siegfried will not do […]. Wagner has failed […] [a]nd the failure is so grave that it does much to spoil the whole of the opera. We cannot believe in Siegfried as a hero. Siegmund was a hero, because he was unhappy. Hagen is a hero, though heroically evil. But Siegfried remains to the end an upstart boy, who marries a woman ten times better than himself.[32]

Forster's assessment of these Wagnerian heroes suggests a set of criteria based on the scale of the character's aspirations, emotions, and actions; it does not necessarily matter whether the character is good or evil. The reference to Siegmund's unhappiness suggests Forster's awareness of the stereotypes about the Romantic hero, and perhaps there is a slightly satiric undertone in his emphasis on such emotional indulgence. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Forster, throughout his life, showed an unflinching admiration for Siegmund: the character was described as a 'glorious' 'intruder' to Valhalla in 1905; five decades later, Forster found Siegmund sexually arousing in *Die Walküre* in Bayreuth.[33] In contrast, Siegfried is denounced as a character with unbearable immaturity, limited aspirations, and unbound violence. Here, Forster's commentary associates Siegfried with the studentish and the unrefined – or, more

[32] *AEOW*, pp. 143-4.
[33] *SL1*, p. 68. Diary entry (11 August 1954). *JD*, iii, 123.

specifically, with the public-school type of insensitivity of which Forster was particularly critical.

Forster's use of the term 'cad' invites more discussion. The term denotes Siegfried's vulgarity in the scene specified in the passage: Siegfried – loud, uncivilized, and intimidating – bullies Mime the dwarf by forcing the latter to forge a sword and to reveal his parentage. The term also connotes sexual duplicity, implying male ill-treatment of women and perhaps thus recalling Siegfried's betrayal of Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung*. Its class connotations are no less suggestive: originally applied contemptuously by Oxford collegians to low-class town people, the term found its way into general vocabulary of suburban England, with its modern sense as an insulting or chiding appellation to those whose behaviour has brought disgrace to their social class.[34] It is in this sense that, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Philip calls Gino a 'cad'. In this respect, then, the term 'cad' mocks Siegfried for dishonouring his godly blood. Intriguingly, in *The Longest Journey*, a novel Forster finished around the same time as 'Pessimism in Literature', 'cad' is the prefix with which Forster mischievously names a fictional stream and its surrounding area in rural Wiltshire. Moreover, Stephen Wonham, a 'hero' growing up in this 'Cad-' area, was once named Siegfried.[35] Forster specified this genesis of the Stephen character in 1960, although the name 'Siegfried' does not survive in the extant manuscripts; as Elizabeth Heine suggests, Forster's 1960 recollection 'may have […] transformed intention into execution, or recalled some lost draft'.[36] This mythic model, nevertheless, opens up readings of the character's

[34] *OED*.
[35] Forster mentioned that 'Stephen was at one time called Harold and at another Siegfried' in the introduction to the 1960 Oxford World's Classics edition of the novel. *LJ*, p. lxix.
[36] *LJ*, p. xiv. Elizabeth Heine also notes that, although passages in which Stephen appears as Siegfried cannot be found in the extant manuscripts, one of the discarded Harold chapters, marked as 'XIV', contains a fantasy adventure of the character, in which he runs naked through fields and at one point

Wagnerian root and enhances discussions of the novel's extensive Wagnerian allusions.[37] Whilst the ways in which Wagner's Siegfried contributes to Stephen's characterization as the archetypal, though also problematic, hero have been analysed, critics have not yet established, let alone interpreted, the link between Forster's wordplay of 'cad' and Stephen's heroic quality.[38] This link, I will suggest, illustrates that Forster's writing of Stephen is a parodic divergence from his Wagnerian source. This is not to argue that the novel as a whole was conceived as a retelling or a subversion of Wagner's tetralogy; rather, my discussion proposes that the novel's delineation of the 'heroic' Stephen forms a commentary on Siegfried.

Stephen is, as the narrator announces in Chapter 12, 'not to be distinguished from a hero'; throughout *The Longest Journey*, he is bestowed, even though sometimes ironically, with the epithet 'heroic'.[39] Whether Stephen is a hero or not is also a topic diegetically engaged in by other characters. In Chapter 11, the main character Rickie and his fiancée, Agnes Pembroke, are on their visit to Rickie's aunt, Mrs Failing. At this point, Stephen's background as Rickie's half brother is not yet disclosed: Rickie thinks of Stephen as an anomalous farmhand who has been living in the house through some unknown connection of Rickie's late uncle while Agnes, though curious, does not act inquisitively. One day, after Rickie reluctantly goes for a ride with Stephen, Mrs Failing shows Agnes around, 'point[ing] out the various objects of interest' in the

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communicates with different animals. P. N. Furbank suggests that this particular episode recalls the forest scene in *Siegfried*, in which Siegfried understands the forest bird's song. See Furbank, i, 263.

[37] As several critics have noted, *The Longest Journey* is replete with Wagnerian allusions. Elizabeth Heine provides an introductory discussion of the novel's Wagnerian allusions and symbolism, *LJ*, pp. x-xv. As a result, several critics have attempted to read the Wagnerian 'model' behind the novel. See e.g. Tony Brown, 'E. M. Forster's *Parsifal*' and Judith Scherer Herz, '"This is the End of Parsival"'. Michelle Fillion traces Forster's attendance at Wagner's music dramas and provides a detailed reading of the gender, ideological, and structural connotations of the Wagnerian allusions in the novel. Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, p. 5, pp. 21-2, pp. 39-49, and pp. 51-5.

[38] See e.g. Heine, *LJ*, pp. xiii-xiv, and Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 49-51.

[39] *LJ*, p. 115. In Chapter 31, for example, Stephen 'stood, not consciously heroic, with arms that dangled from broad stooping shoulders, and feet that played with a hassock on the carpet'. *LJ*, p. 252.

surroundings (the River 'Cad', 'Cadbury Rings', 'Cadchurch', 'Cad Dauntsey', 'Cadford', and 'Cadover'), to which Agnes jokes, 'A terrible lot of Cads'.[40] The hostess then asks what her guest thinks about Stephen:

> "Very Nice," said Agnes, laughing.
> "Nice! He is a hero."
> There was a long interval of silence. Each lady looked, without much interest, at the view. […] "A hero?" [Agnes] questioned, when the interval had passed. Her voice was indifferent, as if she had been thinking of other things.
> "A hero? Yes. Didn't you notice how heroic he was?"
> "I don't think I did."
> "Not at dinner? Ah, Agnes, always look out for heroism at dinner. It is their great time. They live up to the stiffness of their shirt-fronts. Do you mean to say that you never noticed how he set down Rickie?"
> "Oh, that about poetry!" said Agnes, laughing. "Rickie would not mind it for a moment. But why do you single out that as heroic?"
> "To snub people! to set them down! to be rude to them! to make them feel small! Surely that's the life-work of a hero?"
> "I shouldn't have said that. And as a matter of fact Mr Wonham was wrong over the poetry. I made Rickie look it up afterwards."
> "But of course. A hero always is wrong."
> "To me," she persisted, rather gently, "a hero has always been a strong wonderful being, who champions—"
> "Ah, wait till you are the dragon! I have been a dragon most of my life, I think. A dragon that wants nothing but a peaceful cave. Then in comes the strong, wonderful, delightful being, and gains a princess by piercing my hide. No, seriously, my dear Agnes, the chief characteristics of a hero are infinite disregard for the feelings of others, plus general inability to understand them."
> "But surely Mr Wonham—"
> "Yes; aren't we being unkind to the poor boy. Ought we to go on talking?" [41]

A discreet conversation about 'the hero' on the verge of turning into a gossip about a particular 'hero', this passage sees Mrs Failing slyly luring Agnes into commenting on Stephen. It recalls Rickie's warning before he leaves for the ride about his aunt's

[40] *LJ*, p. 101.
[41] *LJ*, pp. 102-3.

tendency to instigate 'family breezes';[42] it also anticipates the narrator's announcement of Stephen's heroic status in the following chapter. If the conversation has such narrative significance, it is, too, an unusually explicit, seemingly out-of-context debate about definitions of heroism. Two delineations of the hero are juxtaposed here: for Mrs Failing, a hero is a maverick against and outside social norms; for Agnes, a hero stands for an ideal, and romanticized, form of masculine being. However, it is exactly the context in which the conversation takes place that gives this generic debate a specific Wagnerian focus: the textual proximity of 'cad' and 'hero', when read with the knowledge of Forster's private commentaries on Siegfried, becomes an indication of Forster's concern with Wagner's hero. Mrs Failing's exposure of the adversarial and confrontational elements within heroism, of the clichéd heterosexual pattern of the heroic quest, of the extreme individualism of the hero, is underpinned by Forster's scepticism about Siegfried. The analogue of Mrs Failing to a dragon thus not only questions the normative rite of passage of the hero and recounts it from the opposite perspective; it also offers a reflection on Siegfried's killing of the dragon, into which the giant Fafner has transformed, in Act II, scene ii, in *Siegfried*. This re-interpretation of a scene of heroic bravery as an insensitive intrusion emphasizes the unnecessary violence involved in Wagner's traditional narrative of hero-making, challenging the motivation of an act emblematic of Siegfried's heroism.

It is important, then, to a reading of the novel's Wagnerian elements that the wordplay of 'cad' is included and considered, not just as an ironic detail of Stephen's characterization, but also as an indicator of Forster's preoccupation with Siegfried's status as the hero. The rural English landscape of the 'Cad-' area, on the one hand,

[42] *LJ*, p. 100.

transforms symbolism into reality, importing the metaphysical subjects of the *Ring* cycle into an Edwardian environment.[43] On the other hand, it undercuts – and indeed parodies – the mythology of Siegfried, sustaining Forster's wariness of hero-worship and his denunciation of romanticization throughout the novel. Perhaps it was because of this fictional landscape that the name Siegfried was eventually dropped: an examination of the Siegfriedian caddishness did not need such an explicit allusion as to name the character after Wagner's hero. Another possibility behind the renaming is that the German name might not be appropriate to a character whose attachment to the English countryside is seminal to the plot.[44] Either way, Forster's inquiry into the 'heroic' stems from, and revolves around, his criticism of Siegfried: by situating Mrs Failing and Agnes's conversation in this 'Cad-' area, Forster reviews a truncated portion of Wagner's tetralogy, measuring Stephen's qualification as a hero through a reflection on Siegfried's characteristics and actions.

In the novel, this delineation of the 'heroic' Stephen is contrasted with that of the 'unheroic' Stewart Ansell:

> Ansell was in his favourite haunt—the reading-room of the British Museum. In that book-encircled space he always could find peace. […] There he knew that his life was not ignoble. It was worth while to grow old and dusty seeking for truth though truth is unattainable, restating questions that have been stated at the beginning of the world. Failure would await him, but not disillusionment. […] He was not a hero, and he knew it.[45]

[43] Elizabeth Heine's introduction, *LJ*, p. xiv.
[44] P. N. Furbank suggests that Stephen's 'heroic' vitality is indebted to his affinity with the English countryside. Furbank, i, 119.
[45] *LJ*, p. 177. There is also a notable contrast between their first names: 'Stephen' versus 'Stewart' – perhaps another reason for the name change?

A fervent philosopher, who tends to neglect people around him if he finds them unworthy of his attention, Ansell, Rickie's closest friend at Cambridge, has been read as the opposite of Stephen: Wilfred Stone, representatively, regards Ansell and Stephen as 'the intellectual and physical halves of Rickie's estranged soul'.[46] It is notable, then, that Ansell is, among other things, Jewish. Rarely discussed by critics, Ansell's Jewishness, I suggest, generates significant implications for his cultural ideal, career choice, artistic taste, and sexual identity. Yet, more importantly, it also participates in contemporary racial and evolutionary discourses, especially those related to Wagner. Forster made, to my knowledge, no direct observation on Wagner's anti-Semitic essays, but he was likely to have known the existence of these texts given that Wagner's anti-Semitism, especially in *Judaism in Music* (1850), influenced contemporary debates about and perceptions of Jewishness, and remained highly controversial in the subsequent decades.[47] Ansell's Jewish identity and his marked contrast with the Siegfried-like Stephen, then, make a suggestive critique of Wagner's ideology. And his actions after the self-acknowledged ineligibility to be made a 'hero', I will argue, become a counter-narrative of the hero-driven plot in Wagner's tetralogy.

The Ansells are the sole Jewish characters in Forster's work.[48] This representation of Jewishness reflects both parallels with and deviance from centuries-long stereotypes of Jews, prevalent in literary texts and multifarious accounts, as a

[46] Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain*, p. 209.
[47] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 20-1 and pp. 109-16. See also Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).
[48] Two of Forster's 1930s essays specifically addressed Jewishness in response to the Nazis' widely reported project of racial cleansing: 'Jew-Consciousness' (1939) and 'Racial Exercise' (1939), in *TCD*, pp. 12-4 and pp. 17-20. See Armstrong, 'Two Cheers for Tolerance', 286-7 and 289-92, for a discussion of Forster's emphasis on racial heterogeneity.

'race' distinct from Europeans.[49] The depiction of the Ansells in Chapter 3 delicately alludes to such a racial perception before the narrator spells out that Ansell has a 'lean Jewish face' in Chapter 7.[50] With Ansell's father being 'a provincial draper of moderate prosperity', the family is, as the narrator says, a 'plebeian household':

> To be born one thing and grow up another—Ansell had accomplished this without weakening one of the ties that bound him to his home. The room above the shop still seemed as comfortable, the garden behind it as gracious, as they had seemed fifteen years before, when he would sit behind Miss Applebloosom's central throne, and she, like some allegorical figure, would send the change and receipted bills spinning away from her in little boxwood balls. At first the young man had attributed these happy relations to his own tact. But in time he perceived that the tact was all on the side of his father. Mr Ansell was not merely a man of some education; he had what no education can bring—the power of detecting what is important. Like many fathers, he had spared no expense over his boy—he had borrowed money to start him at a rapacious and fashionable private school; he had sent him to tutors; he had sent him to Cambridge. But he knew that all this was not the important thing. The important thing was freedom.[51]

An example of social mobility, the nature and nurture of Ansell alludes to the perception of Jewish people as a group outside the 'normal' social, and implicitly racial, hierarchies. That such mobility is secured and enabled by the family business associates the Ansells with worldly commercialism; this association reiterates the stereotype about Jewish adeptness in mercenary activities, alluding to the cliché of the acquisitiveness – or, as is frequently caricatured, greed – of Jews. This is not to say,

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[49] For discussions of representations of Jewishness in British fiction in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of 'The Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *Modernity, Culture, and 'the Jew'*, ed. Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Jonathan Freedman, *The Temple of Culture: Assimilation and Anti-Semitism in Literary Anglo-America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Gary Martin Levine, *The Merchant of Modernism: The Economic Jew in Anglo-American Literature, 1864-1939* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Carol Margaret Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[50] *LJ*, p. 62.

[51] *LJ*, p. 30 and p. 29.

however, that Forster's representation of the Ansells is predetermined as anti-Semitic. The ambivalence lies in that both the narrator and Rickie celebrate the Ansells' family wealth: the narrator says, 'there was a curious charm in the hum of the shop, which swelled into a roar if one opened the partition door on a market-day', while Rickie exclaims, 'Listen to your money!', and describes the Ansells' income as 'alive'.[52] This portrayal of money as vital not only emblematizes the importance of commerce to modern capitalistic society but also conceptualizes wealth as the drive behind Ansell's social mobility.[53] The philistine background of Ansell, then, alludes to the association of Jews and material affluence, but such economic privilege also means the possibility of his cultural refinement.[54]

Ansell's alignment with culture is his primary characteristic in the novel. His interest in metaphysics (as shown in the Apostolic debate in Chapter 1), his ambition for a Cambridge fellowship, his worship of his *alma mater* throughout the novel – all of these details indicate that the 'not ignoble' life he envisions in the British Museum is a cultural life, and the 'freedom' his father emphasizes is intellectual and spiritual freedom. Yet this quest for culture is driven by certain social motivation; culture is the 'key' for Ansell to join the aforementioned hierarchies. Ansell's engagement with culture, then, encapsulates the sentiments of Jewish assimilation to Western society. His intellectual career, that is, reveals anxieties about the conception and exploitation of 'the Jew' as the Otherness in Western civilization, as well as aspirations for a

[52] *LJ*, p. 31.
[53] For discussions of Forster's attitude towards money, see e.g. Wilfred Stone, 'Forster on Love and Money', in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, pp. 107-21; and Paul Delany, '"Islands of Money": Rentier Culture in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 31.3 (1988), 285-96.
[54] This affinity between money and culture reminds us of Forster's portrayal of Leonard Bast in *Howards End*.

redefined cultural identity for assimilating Jews.[55] His research on German philosophy – a subject 'that lies behind everything' – also reinforces this reading: his focus on Schopenhauer and Hegel can be read as a gesture to trace his cultural genealogy back to the philosophical tradition of Western high culture, and as a strategy to study, and perhaps also to contest, monumental texts in which the alterity of 'the Jew' was established.[56] Whether this aspect of Ansell suggests Forster's empathy with Jewish assimilation is open to debate, but Ansell's study of German philosophy echoes discrete turn-of-the-century intellectual projects of numerous Jewish scholars who attempted to revise previous discourses on Jewishness. Given the notorious topicality of Wagner's anti-Semitism, it should come as no surprise that Wagner was frequently the subject of many of such attempts.

Among these responses to Wagner was Max Nordau's *Die Entartung* (1892).[57] Published in English as *Degeneration* in 1895, Nordau's book 'centralized Wagnerism, Wagner, and Wagner's work in debates about decadence and cultural degeneration for the remainder of the decade'.[58] By identifying the 'degeneracy' of Wagner and many other artists as the source of cultural 'degeneration', Nordau's pseudo-medical 'diagnosis' of the *fin de siècle* was, too, a redefinition of Jewishness: as Jonathan Freedman notes, using 'the avant-garde artist' 'to replace the Jew as arch-degenerate', Nordau's criticism of Wagner and degeneration was underpinned by his Zionist belief.[59] As a Zionist activist, Nordau argued against anti-Semitic stereotypes by

[55] Freedman, p. 54. Freedman provides an illuminating analysis of the constructions of, and the responses to, 'the Jew' in nineteenth-century Anglo-American conceptions of 'culture', pp. 37-54.
[56] *LJ*, p. 29. As Jonathan Freedman has observed, Hegel's construction of 'the Jew' in *The Spirit of Christianity* (1799) exercised a significant influence on later delineations of Jewishness. Freedman, pp. 37-43.
[57] Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans. anon. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
[58] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, p. 52.
[59] Freedman, p. 126.

proposing the concept of 'the muscle Jew': first mentioned in 1898 and repeatedly elaborated thenceforth, 'the muscle Jew' intersected with contemporary discourses on cultural decay, social reform, racial regeneration, and Jewish nationalism.[60] Forster's representation of Ansell, I argue, suggests his awareness of this intersection; more specifically, Ansell's engagement with music, especially his attitude towards Wagner, can be read as a reference to this complex web of associations between degeneration, Wagnerism, and Zionism. In biographical terms, we do not know whether Forster had read any of Nordau's writings, although Nordau's work was undoubtedly accessible to him and his friends. I thus do not wish to state emphatically that Forster, in any way, polemically echoed or refuted Nordau's ideas in his portrayal of Ansell. Nonetheless, it is certainly intriguing that the representations of music related to this 'unheroic', Jewish character are, as the following paragraphs will explore, resonant with Nordau's Zionist ideology.

At first glance, Ansell, though cultured, seems unmusical. Both Elizabeth Heine and Michelle Fillion suggest that Ansell lacks musical knowledge and has little Wagnerian sensibility; both scholars use the discussion between Rickie and Ansell in Chapter 1 about the tonality of the Rhinemaidens' glorious leitmotif in *Das Rheingold*, and the epistolary exchange in Chapter 9, during which Rickie and Ansell allude to Wagnerian female characters, as examples.[61] Under closer scrutiny, however, Ansell's

[60] Todd Samuel Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-4.

[61] For Heine's interpretation, *LJ*, p. 408 and pp. 416-7. Fillion, pp. 44-5 and pp. 48-9. To support these interpretations of Ansell's lack of musicality we could also recall a painting in the Ansells' home: 'a harp in luminous paint' with the inscription 'Watch and Pray' (*LJ*, p. 31). Whilst the painting can, of course, be simply read as indicative of the Ansells' practice of Judaism, the image of the sacred harp, as Jonathan Freedman notes, was a prominent symbol in nineteenth-century denigrations of Jewish musical accomplishment. Freedman, pp. 109-11. Rickie's visceral reactions to the painting have also been linked to the novel's homoerotic undercurrent. See Anke Johannmeyer, '"For Music Has Wings": E. M. Forster's "Orchestration" of a Homophile Space in *The Longest Journey*' (unpublished MA thesis, Uppsala University, 2009), pp. 11-2.

engagement with music, especially with Wagner's music, is more ambivalent than sheer lack of musicality. Heine and Fillion's readings, I would suggest, overlook Ansell's cynicism in their examples. What they regard as Ansell's lack of interest in music is, I believe, his knowing disinterestedness: given his wry interruption of Rickie's fantasizing and his ability to participate in the cultural game of Wagnerian allusions, Ansell is not unmusical, but knowledgeable about as well as critical of Wagner's music. In fact, Rickie, more than tellingly, exclaims in their discussion about *Das Rheingold*: 'oh, of course, you despise music' – surely, to 'despise' something is to have some knowledge (or preconception) of the thing one is against?[62]

Here, Ansell's attitude towards music produces a suggestive narrative: to be antagonistic to music, to undercut or refute Rickie's Wagnerian allusions, is to dissociate himself from the 'inflammability' of Wagner and Wagnerism, and thus from aesthetic and cultural 'degeneration'.[63] Such an attempt reflects his potential awareness of, and anxiety about, contemporary perceptions of intellectuals, homosexuals, and Jews as alienated, unfit, and exotic – that is, as 'cases' of Otherness in a diverse range of concurrent discourses on decadence, eugenics, and society. The fact that Ansell is a combination of these roles, and that the connotations and associations of each of these role are often interlinked, augments such awareness and anxiety, and endows his dissociation with added urgency.[64] His antagonism to music is, then, one of the strategies in a broader project of resistance to any association with 'degeneration'. In Chapter 9, for example, Ansell's physical domination over Rickie during their 'frolics'

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[62] *LJ*, p. 16.
[63] The term is from Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, p. 86.
[64] For the homoerotic undertone of the characterization of Ansell, see e.g. Joseph Bristow, '*Fratrum Societati*: Forster's Apostolic Dedications', in *Queer Forster*, ed. Robert K. Martin and George Piggford (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 113-36 (pp. 120-5). Bristow, elsewhere, discusses the intersection of homoeroticism, eugenics, and masculinity in the novel: *Effeminate England*, pp. 68-71.

is punctuated by his remark: 'I wish I wanted to bully you.'[65] An expression of tenderness, playfulness, and surreptitious homoerotic sadism, Ansell's remark also emphasizes his physical strength. Whilst this emphasis on his own able-bodiedness is, in part, an intended contrast with Rickie's disability, it can also be read as Ansell's physical demonstration of anti-degeneration. Just as his intellectual endeavour, as I have suggested, is related to his Jewish identity, so is his physical strength suggestive of his concern with contemporary perceptions of Jewishness. In Chapter 20, his response to Widdrington, a fellow Cambridge scholar, who laments 'the curse of being a little intellectual', suggests such concern:

> "But we are bloodless brutes. […] Two philosophic youths repining in the British Museum! What have we done? What shall we ever do? Just drift and criticize, while people who know what they want snatch it away from us and laugh."
>
> "Perhaps you are that sort. I'm not. When the moment comes I shall hit out like any ploughboy.["][66]

Whilst Widdrington's words reiterate the perceived degeneracy of intellectuals, Ansell's reply resists this perception. The comparison of himself to a ploughboy connects him with Stephen (Stephen is once described by Rickie as 'a kind of cynical ploughboy'), but it also resonates, resoundingly, with Nordau's ideal of 'the muscle Jew'.[67] In a 1905 pamphlet, Nordau argued that Zionism was 'to make' those who are 'all divorced from nature […] once more familiar with the plough and with nourishing Mother Earth'.[68] In Ansell's response, then, the invocation of a return to Nature is simultaneously a delineation of the 'healthy' Jew. The parallel between Ansell's

[65] *LJ*, p. 65.
[66] *LJ*, pp. 180-1.
[67] *LJ*, p. 192.
[68] Max Nordau, *Zionism: Its History and its Aims*, trans. Israel Cohen (London: English Zionist Federation, 1905), p. 19.

resistance to social perceptions of him and Nordau's Zionist revisions of Jewishness becomes striking.

The moment in which Ansell does 'hit out like a ploughboy' takes place in Chapter 27, when he discloses Stephen's parentage to Rickie in front of all the boarders at the Sawston School during a Sunday dinner: standing 'by the harmonium', Ansell 'put one foot on a chair and held his arms over the quivering room. He seemed transfigured into a Hebrew prophet passionate for satire and the truth.'[69] A shock to Rickie and a scandal from Agnes's perspective, Ansell's decisive act is significant in many ways. Here, his Jewish identity is combined with the reference to the school harmonium, which reminds us of his antagonism to music. In the novel, the school harmonium is explicitly associated with the imperial ideal of *esprit de corps*: 'over the harmonium to which [the school] sang the evening hymns was spread the Union Jack.'[70] Ansell's defiance, then, disrupts the unity of imperial patriotism and his Jewishness diffuses the Christian religiosity so frequently conjured up in proclamations of the Empire's overseas 'missions'. What lends added significance to Ansell's action is that the students' disharmonious singing of the school anthem, presumably also accompanied by the harmonium, is once described as 'the style of Richard Strauss'.[71] This jibe might indicate Forster's disparagement of late Romantic tonal discordance and excessive chromaticism, but the allusion to Strauss also brings our discussion back to Ansell's attitude towards Wagner. Given the widely noted influence of Wagner on Strauss, can Ansell's position next to the harmonium be read as a deliberate statement of his aversion, not just to music, but to a particular style of music? Can his upright

[69] *LJ*, pp. 224-5.
[70] *LJ*, p. 222.
[71] *LJ*, p. 158.

posture and passionate expression be associated with moralist critiques of Wagner's musical affectivity? In any case, what appears conspicuous in this multivalent moment is, as the narrator particularly highlights, Ansell's Jewishness.

It is possible, then, to identify a sustained negotiation of Jewishness in Ansell's engagement with music – and, indeed, in every aspect of Ansell. Whether we see this characterization of Ansell as philo- or anti-Semitic, Forster's strategy of juxtaposing the Siegfried-like Stephen with a distinctly Jewish character forms a subtle commentary on Wagner's anti-Semitism. At a deeper level, it is, too, a revision of the Siegfriedian version of heroism. Ansell's self-acknowledged status of not being a hero now seems ironic, since his disclosure of Stephen's parentage, as we have seen, is described as an emotionally heightened moment, and it is exactly his action that moves the plot forward and facilitates the reunion of the two brothers. In short, it seems a traditionally 'heroic' act, and, intriguingly, it is indeed described as an 'act'. In the chapter before his action, Ansell, alone in the garden where he had just encountered Stephen, is deep in his own thoughts, as described by the narrator: 'Ansell prepared himself to witness the second act of the drama; forgetting that all this world, and not part of it, is a stage.'[72] Given the novel's extensive Wagnerian allusions, this paraphrased Shakespearean line can be associated with the Wagnerian stage. Ansell's prominent role on this Wagnerian stage, then, demonstrates how Forster's narrative is driven by this 'unheroic' figure, and how it, consequently, differs from Wagner's heroes-packed tetralogy. Replacing conquest and violence with modesty and reserve, undercutting the triumphalism within heroism, and giving the 'hero' a mundane outlook, Forster's examination of heroism takes place in his characterization of Ansell

[72] *LJ*, p. 218.

in *The Longest Journey*. It is through the same strategy, and through alluding to Wagner, that Forster continued to challenge and revise the concept of heroism in the late 1930s.

In a letter to Cecil Day-Lewis on 30 October 1938, Forster envisaged the upcoming war:

> Either we yield to the Nazis and they subdue us. *Or* we stand up to them, come to resemble them in the process, and are subdued to them that way. Your poems, particularly the long one, offer the possibility of heroic action, and many will be satisfied by that; but not you nor I.[73]

Forster's statement is a firm refusal to adopt heroism, regardless of its broad topicality, as an option with which Britain could curb the aggression of Nazi Germany. It is, in part, a reiterated pacifist critique of the 'soldier hero': back in the First World War, Forster told his Cambridge friend Malcolm Darling not to 'indulge in Romance' because '[t]he newspapers still talk about glory but the average man, thank God, has got rid of that illusion'.[74] The statement is, too, a response to Nazism. Forster perceived the Nazis as a political oligarchy: the reference to Hermann Göring in *Nordic Twilight* is an example; also, in 'A View without a Room' (1958), the fictional postscript to *A Room with a View*, Forster directly identified Nazism as 'Hitlerism', which was 'an enemy of the heart as well as of the head and the arts'.[75] This identification of individual figures as the target of his criticism indicates Forster's opposition to 'Great

[73] *SL2*, pp. 161-2.
[74] Letter to Malcolm Darling (6 November 1914). *SL1*, p. 214. The phrase 'soldier hero' is from Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.
[75] 'A View without a Room' (1958), in *RV*, pp. 210-2 (p. 211).

Men', and to the totalitarian and authoritarian state under the Nazis' control. His dismissal of wartime heroism was, then, informed and augmented by such perceptions of Nazi Germany; for him, to refuse to adopt heroism was to prevent British democracy from turning into Nazi authoritarianism. This strategy of differentiation, however, put him in a paradoxical situation: ultimately, the Nazis had to be thwarted, but how? Forster's resistance to heroism – his pacifism as well as his anti-Nazism – made it difficult for him to envision Britain's role and course of action against this adversary. 'What I Believe' and 'Post-Munich', two of the essays Forster wrote in the months leading up to the war, addressed this difficulty. Though different in tone, both essays, I argue, dismissed heroism whilst searching for an alternative solution to the political crisis. More importantly, Wagner's *Ring* cycle provided the means through which both essays negotiated these issues.

'What I Believe' was, as it is widely agreed, a Forsterian manifesto against disparate concurrent political causes in the 1930s, in which Forster articulated the central tenets of his ideology, including humanism, liberty, democracy, sensitivity, and individualism.[76] Many parts of the essay have been scrutinized, but a half-paragraph-long allusion to the *Ring* cycle has received little attention within Forster studies. In his discussion of democracy, Forster acknowledged the necessary existence of state force, but argued that it is human beings' responsibility to keep it in check, as 'all the great creative actions, all the decent human relations, occur during the intervals when force has not managed to come to the front':

[76] Originally entitled as 'Two Cheers for Democracy', the essay was published on 16 July 1938 for the series 'Living Philosophy' in the New York political magazine *Nation*.

> Consider [the strong people's] conduct for a moment in *The Nibelung's Ring*. The giants there have the guns, or in other words the gold; but they do nothing with it, they do not realize that they are all-powerful, with the result that the catastrophe is delayed and the castle of Valhalla, insecure but glorious, fronts the storms. Fafnir, coiled round his hoard, grumbles and grunts; we can hear him under Europe today; the leaves of the wood already tremble, and the Bird calls its warnings uselessly. Fafnir will destroy us, but by a blessed dispensation he is stupid and slow, and creation goes on just outside the poisonous blast of his breath. The Nietzschean would hurry the monster up, the mystic would say he did not exist, but Wotan, wiser than either, hastens to create warriors before doom declares itself. The Valkyries are symbols not only of courage but of intelligence; they represent the human spirit snatching its opportunity while the going is good, and one of them even finds time to love. Brünnhilde's last song hymns the recurrence of love, and since it is the privilege of art to exaggerate she goes even further, and proclaims the love which is eternally triumphant, and feeds upon freedom and lives.[77]

The nuance lies in that, though a discussion of the confrontation between the giant and the gods, the passage subtly critiques Siegfried. Forster's disapproval of the 'Nietzschean' reiterates his doubt about Siegfried, criticizing Wagner's hero, as Mrs Failing's words on the intrusive dragon-slayer, for the hazardous action which instigates greater scale of violence and destruction. That Siegfried is the only character not explicitly named by Forster here displaces the narrative focus of the *Ring* cycle and divorces the tetralogy from an environment of Nazi worship. Given the widely reported close relationship between Bayreuth and the Nazis, such divergence from Wagner's hero-mythology becomes a declaration of anti-Nazism, in which Brünnhilde's redemptive role as the ultimate ideal of 'love' is celebrated. But such idealism is characterized by distinct consciousness of a world on the verge of war; the optimism underpinning his celebration is undercut by poignant fatalism, expressed by phrases such as 'catastrophe', 'will destroy us', and 'doom'. Forster's allusion to the tetralogy,

[77] *TCD*, p. 68.

then, combines his criticism of Siegfried with expressions of his mixed feelings towards the current international situation. Whether optimistic or pessimistic, idealistic or practical, his avoidance of Siegfried and emphasis on Brünnhilde dismiss counteractions and uphold a pacifist view. This view is self-consciously and purposefully idealistic, if not merely escapist: 'I look the other way until fate strikes me. Whether this is due to courage or to cowardice in my own case I cannot be sure.'[78]

Forster could no longer be idealistic, however, after the Munich Agreement, which was signed on 30 September 1938. In 'Post-Munich', an essay exploring the prevalent uncertainty in Britain in the first half of 1939, Forster not only remarked on the futility of heroic action but also abandoned his faith in 'love':

> The decade being tragic, should not our way of living correspond? How can we justify trivialities and hesitations? Ought we not to rise to the great dramatic conception which we see developing around us? […] Ought we not, at such a moment, to act as Wagnerian heroes and heroines, who are raised above themselves by the conviction that all is lost or that all can be saved, and stride singing into the flames?
>
> To ask such a question is to answer it. No one who debates whether he shall behave tragically can possibly be a tragic character. He may have a just sense of the stage; he may discern the scene darkening and the powers of evil marching and the ravens gathering; he may feel the first breath of the tempest as it lifts him off his feet and whirls him backwards. But he is not properly cast as an actor; there will be something petty in him—perhaps something recalcitrant—which mars the aesthetic unity. He will not even pay the tribute of unalloyed terror. He will be half frightened and half thinking about something else on the very steps of the altar, and when the sacrificial knife falls he will perish an unworthy victim, a blemished and inferior lamb, of little esteem at the banquet of the gods.[79]

The *Zeitgeist* in 1939 was thus different from that in 1938. In 1938, people either supported pacifism or urged military action: continuing his Wagnerian allusion, Forster

[78] *TCD*, p. 68.
[79] 'Post-Munich' (1939), in *TCD*, pp. 21-4 (p. 21).

compared the pacifists to Brünnhilde and militarists – those who 'prepared to fight—with what weapons and against what they did not stay to consider' – to Siegmund.[80] But the year 1939, for Forster, was a moment when 'certainties and heroisms' no longer existed, and neither 'cowardice' nor 'bravery' could clarify the complexity people had to live in and confront.[81] Under these circumstances, Forster suggested extra sensitivity: only by being sensitive could 'we' sharpen our blunted emotions and attempt to survive this decade in which 'the Crisis […] has become a habit, indeed almost a joke'.[82]

Compared to 'What I Believe', 'Post-Munich' alludes to the *Ring* cycle in a less transcendent and less dramatic manner. The changed attitude towards Brünnhilde questions the relevance and applicability of her redemptive suicide to the present world, rehearsing Forster's criticism of the 'tragic' sense of Wagner and German national culture in *Nordic Twilight*. The differentiation of life from theatre and the biblical analogue of the lamb both remove the collective 'we' from Wagner's 'tragic' scenario of violence and death, love and sacrifice; instead, 'we' in this post-Munich era are characterized by 'trivialities and hesitations'. Such deflation of 'tragic' heroism, combined with the emphasis on the shared mundanity, not only underlines Forster's pacifism, but also suggests his resistance to simplification and sectarianism. His replacement of the heroic with the mundane, that is, simultaneously refrains from fuelling or accelerating the actual conflict with individual actions, and rejects the 'either-or' logic of contemporary political campaigns. It indicates a moderate approach to political contingencies; though caught between justification to fight and reticence

[80] *TCD*, p. 22.
[81] *TCD*, p. 22 and p. 23.
[82] *TCD*, p. 24.

from fighting, the indecisive, sensitive 'we' are allowed to have discerning musings about the complexity of 1939. That is why sensitivity is underscored and endowed with such significance at the end of 'Post-Munich'. Echoing his delineation of the 'aristocracy of the sensitive' in 'What I Believe', Forster's emphasis on sensitivity in 'Post-Munich' permits and encourages lingering thoughts on the complicated political dynamics between Nazism and anti-Nazism:

> Sensitive people are having a particularly humiliating time just now. Looking at the international scene, they see, with a clearness denied to politicians, that if Fascism wins we are done for, and that we must become Fascist to win.[83]

Demolishing the dichotomized perception of Germany and Britain, the last sentence is, I suggest, the main reason why Forster so much resisted heroism, and resisted joining or exploiting the topicality of heroism in the late 1930s. For Forster, to come to war with Germany, which would inevitably happen, was to thwart Nazism on the one hand, but to accept, aggravate, and aggrandize the 'Wagnerian' scenario of extremity, where glory and death are intertwined, on the other. His interpretation of Wagner's heroes as irrelevant in 'Post-Munich', then, reiterates his refusal to counterattack and anticipates his consequent silence on Wagner in the coming years.

During the war, Forster made numerous critiques of heroism in his private writings. In a diary entry made two months after the outbreak of the war, for example, Forster mentioned how his life remained in unexpected serenity: 'I have even found comforts and beauties and wish I had the force to write about them.' He did give a list of his observations on things around: 'the search lights from the roof of my flat', 'the

[83] *TCD*, p. 23.

finely contrived entrances to the public buildings', 'the freedom from aeroplanes', and many more. However, he realized that '[b]eneath this fantasy the usual meanness and bullying must be burgeoning, but don't yet show'. Another twist of mood followed, as he wrote, resolutely and emphatically that 'I would rather notice all this than contemplate Heroism[.] […] War is not best tackled by regarding it as the antithesis of peace.'[84] It is evident, then, that Forster, in his own way, upheld his resistance to heroism during the war. In some respect, it is also a resistance to propaganda. In another diary entry, Forster wrote what would have been controversial if he had stated in public:

> I want Germany to lose but not England to win, I take no interest in news except when the names of places are mentioned, listen to no speeches, and scarcely read newspapers. This is partly war-weariness and sadness, partly propaganda-reaction: I know that I am being got at: frankness is used to lull suspicion and make us uncritical of the next lie.[85]

Like this intentional avoidance of public discourses on the war, Forster's unfinished Beethoven Notebook and his silence on Wagner are similar strategies of restraint, a way of remaining critical of the politicalization of the work and status of the two composers.

In the midst of this negotiation of heroism, the recurrence of the term 'vulgarity' in Forster's wartime writings is too conspicuous to be ignored. By no means randomly applied, 'vulgarity' was used by Forster as a synonym of as well as a substitute for heroism. The emphasis on Britain's 'heroic' mission against Nazi Germany, on fighting this war for a righteous cause, prompted Forster to exclaim: 'And the vulgarity of it all.

[84] Diary entry (13 November 1939). *JD*, ii, 90.
[85] Diary entry (31 August 1941). *JD*, ii, 94.

Deeper than the cruelty and the deceit, the vulgarity.'[86] This alignment of heroism with vulgarity recalls Mrs Failing's assessment of the hero in *The Longest Journey*; it reminds us, too, of Forster's description of Siegfried as a 'cad'. In 1943, when Mussolini was overthrown and imprisoned by the Italian government, Forster wrote: 'If we were not a nation of cads, if all nations were not cads, we should see that the rescue of Mussolini [by Hitler's order] was the one heroic achievement of the war.'[87] Whether Forster was being controversial or satiric, the remark plays with the old pair of cad and hero, and destabilizes the notion of the heroic. When victory was foreseeable, Forster's alignment of vulgarity and heroism increased in volume:

> Italy gave in on the 6.0. news. No happiness or hope felt. This sort of good news cuts ice with me no longer. Pleased however when they put on the 5th Symphony, although they doubtless did so because V stands for vulgarity.[88]

The reference to Beethoven's Fifth (V) Symphony and the sarcasm about the capitalized 'V' reiterate his alertness to and anxieties about the conjunction of Beethoven and heroism.

Like the ironic characterization of Ansell's heroic quality in *The Longest Journey*, Forster's wartime writings challenge the concept of the mundane as the unheroic. This attempt to reconfigure mundanity is implicit at the end of 'Post-Munich': 'The world won't work out, and the person who can realize this, and not just say it and lament it, has done as well as can be expected of him in the present year.'[89] Common people, daily routines, private relationships, and trivial decisions were commended for

[86] Diary entry (23 May 1940). *JD*, ii, 92.
[87] Diary entry (15 September 1943). *JD*, ii, 98.
[88] Diary entry (8 September 1943). *JD*, ii, 98.
[89] *TCD*, p. 24.

their value in this time of crisis on their own terms. On 8 September 1940, Forster made a diary entry entitled 'London Burning':

> I watched this event from my Chiswick flat last night with disgust and indignation, but with no intensity though the spectacle was superb. […] This is all that a world catastrophe amounts to. Something which one is too sad and sullen to appreciate. Perhaps we are really behaving heroically[.][90]

Forster's description captures the destructive violence and the aesthetic excitement of the spectacle of a city ablaze.[91] The application of the adverb 'heroically' to the endurance of the collective 'we' uncouples the idea of heroism from individual decisive action and exceptional deeds. More importantly, the use of the term simultaneously diminishes wartime heroics, indicates Forster's admiration for the mundane, and centralizes the great public's experiences in perceptions of and accounts about the war. Like the descriptions of Ansell, this diary entry elevates the status of the common and the insignificant, and reappraises the conceptions of heroism.

Wagner remained a highly contentious – and indeed controversial – subject in the aftermath of the war. Forster would certainly have been aware that the nazified Wagner was a taboo in these years of denazification; he would have almost definitely heard Wagner criticized in lurid language in the Harvard symposium he attended in May 1947. The symposium was dominated by anti-Wagnerian scholars: one of them, the American composer and music critic Roger Sessions, unequivocally claimed in his

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[90] *JD*, ii, 94.

[91] For a perceptive reading of contemporary writers' descriptions of the flaming London in the Blitz, Leo Mellor, *Reading the Ruins: Modernism, Bombsites and British Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 62-84.

speech that he, and several others in attendance, found Wagner's music 'distasteful' and 'repulsive'.[92] Such prevalent anti-Wagnerism might have contributed, too, to the fact that, in Forster's lecture, 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism', he made only one passing reference to Wagner – not even in his words but simply a quotation from the English humorist Beachcomber.[93] Whether a coincidence or a calculated detail, whether a personal judgment of Wagner's irrelevance to his topic or a strategic evasion from controversy in the symposium, the lecture's lack of Wagnerian allusions continued Forster's silence on Wagner.

Not until 1954 did Forster reopen his discussion of Wagner: in that year, Forster attended the annual Bayreuth Festival and wrote 'Revolution at Bayreuth' for a broadcast talk.[94] The Bayreuth Forster visited was itself an explicitly politicalized site: the ongoing denazification of Wagner, which started in 1951 'with a cleansing performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony', was the primary concern of Wagner's grandsons, Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner.[95] Their attempt to dilute Wagner's distinct Teutonism whilst augmenting the composer's 'universal' appeal was linked to the widely noted abstraction of the New Bayreuth.[96] It is unsurprising, then, that Forster, who was much more familiar with the 'realist' Wagner of early twentieth-century

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[92] Roger Sessions, 'The Scope of Music Criticism', in *Music and Criticism: A Symposium*, ed. Richard F. French (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), pp. 35-51 (p. 48).
[93] *TCD*, p. 110.
[94] For details about the travel, Evert Barger, 'Memories of Morgan' (1970), in *E. M. Forster: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. J. H. Stape (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 209-17; Evelyne Hanquart, 'E. M. Forster's Travelogue from *The Hill of Devi* to the Bayreuth Festival', in *E. M. Forster: A Human Exploration*, ed. G. K. Das and John Beer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 167-82 (pp. 180-1).
[95] Edward W. Said, 'Pomp and Circumstances', in *Music at the Limits: Three Decades of Essays and Articles on Music* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), pp. 23-8 (p. 24).
[96] For Wieland Wagner's idea of New Bayreuth and contemporary responses to his productions, see Spotts, Chapter 7. For a perceptive discussion of the conjunction of Wagner, denazification, and Hellenism in post-war Bayreuth, see Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 125-50.

Covent Garden productions, described this post-war Bayreuth as 'odd'.[97] During his time in Bayreuth, Forster recorded on loose diary pages his thoughts on the performances he attended: *Parsifal* (5 August), *Das Rheingold* (10 August), *Die Walküre* (11 August), *Siegfried* (12 August), and *Lohengrin* (16 August). He did not make a diary entry on *Götterdämmerung*, although he was likely to have attended it on 13 August. He, for reasons that we do not know, skipped Wieland Wagner's new production of *Tannhäuser*, the highlight of the 1954 Festival. 'Revolution at Bayreuth' was based on these sketches of Forster's Festival experiences, first broadcasted on 29 October and then published as an article on 4 November. The article was Forster's most focused study of Wagner's music dramas; he demonstrated his broad knowledge of Wagner's work and acutely evaluated various aspects of the performances, including singing, acoustics, costume, stage design, lighting, and acting. He also commented on the *Festspielhaus*, the audience, and the general atmosphere. Overall, it was an ambiguous experience: on the one hand, there were elements with which Forster was strongly dissatisfied; on the other, there were exquisitely produced and executed scenes and music which Forster admired. Such ambiguity was also expressed in his diary entry on *Lohengrin*: 'My last Bayreuth evening. I never shall, do not even wish to come back, but a gap in my inexperience has been filled.'[98]

What concerns us here is Forster's preparation for his Bayreuth journey; in the month before his trip, Forster was reading *The Cult of the Superman* by the American critic and playwright Eric Bentley. He considered it a 'good book' as he recorded in his

[97] Letter to J. R. Ackerley (13 August 1954), cited in Hanquart, p. 181.
[98] Diary entry (16 August 1954). *JD*, iii, 125.

diary on 10 July 1954.[99] In his *Commonplace Book*, Forster gave a brief appraisal of the book's individual chapters:

> Many such readable remarks are in the book, which has the more solid merit of an intelligible account of Nietzsche. The section on Wagner also v. good Carlyle and Stefan George less so.[100]

It is worth speculating which parts of Bentley's interpretation of Wagner might have garnered Forster's praise. At a broader level, Forster might be approving of Bentley's approach to the controversial subject of Wagner and heroism in the aftermath of Nazism. As Bentley said in the foreword to the book, people in the 1940s 'are not in a frame of mind to listen to praise of Bismarck, Frederick the Great, and the Germans', but he found it necessary to tease out the nuances of previous ideas of heroism, not only because they could not be 'dismissed as Hitlerism' but also because we 'need [not] adopt a patronizing attitude to these critics of democracy'.[101] Forster might therefore have valued Bentley's study for its subject matter and its ideological aim. It is also possible that, on a specific note, Forster was in accord with Bentley's reading of Siegfried. Bentley regarded Siegfried as 'the iconoclast', but disparaged the character's action in the tetralogy as 'too loud, too violent, too arrogant: an unregenerate pagan devoid of compassion'.[102] The parallel between Bentley's and Forster's readings of Siegfried is striking, although whether or not these were the exact details Forster gleaned from Bentley's book is debatable. Nevertheless, it is certain that he went to Bayreuth with the knowledge of Bentley's study.

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[99] *JD*, iii, 118.
[100] *CB*, p. 194.
[101] Eric Bentley, *The Cult of the Superman: A Study of the Idea of Heroism in Carlyle and Nietzsche, with Notes on Other Hero-worshippers of Modern Times* (London: Hale, 1947), p. xii, p. vii, and p. xvi.
[102] Bentley, p. 153.

Forster's reading of *The Cult of the Superman* provides a suggestive context for his comment on Siegfried in 'Revolution at Bayreuth'; he was, as he had been throughout the first half of the century, alert to the topicality of Wagner and heroism. Focusing on the forging of the sword *Nothung* in Act I, scene i, in *Siegfried*, Forster describes the scene as 'a heroic romp':

> Siegfried in a patch of ruddy light, Mime in a greenish patch, did their bests, hiss went the blade, crash the anvil, topple the pot, and there stood the dubious hero armed. It does not do to think earnestly about Siegfried. Bayreuth started him off with a rush and a crash and stopped one thinking. I have never objected to him less. It is essential to one's enjoyment of 'The Ring' that Siegfried should be bearable, that his caddishness should be accepted as boyishness and his infidelity as hallucination. He is an awkward customer, but he got pulled through.[103]

The passage demonstrates, once again, that Forster centralized heroism in his evaluation of Siegfried. Siegfried's status as the hero is accepted here thanks to the live performance; he may be perceived as 'dubious', but the energetic, fast-paced action (a 'romp') on stage livens – if not completely romanticizes – the scene and the characteristics of Wagner's hero. Forster's diary entry on *Siegfried* makes similar comment: 'Act I was splendid – only physical action but they did act and the making of a hero is always heroic.'[104] Perhaps there is surreptitious homoeroticism in Forster's focus on the 'physical' part of the performance. In biographical terms, we can only speculate in what way the acting of the renowned tenor Wolfgang Windgassen as Siegfried inspired Forster to compromise his distrust of the character. Yet, like his previous commentaries on Siegfried, this passage considers Siegfried's heroism and

[103] 'Revolution at Bayreuth' (1954), in *PT*, pp. 171-8 (p.174).
[104] Diary entry (12 August 1954). *JD*, iii, 123.

shows how Forster's perception of the tetralogy depended significantly on such a consideration.

If 'Revolution at Bayreuth' rounds off, metaphorically, Forster's Wagnerian experiences, it is too, I would suggest, the symbolic end of his negotiation of Wagner and heroism. His private responses to Siegfried's caddishness, his characterization of Stephen and Ansell, his wartime Wagnerian allusions, and his Bayreuth experiences present a critical process through which Forster reflected on Siegfried's heroic quality. Such a reflection considers not only Wagner's hero, but also, as I have suggested, the political repercussions Wagner, Wagnerism, and Wagner's work generated. Yet whatever contingent discourses intersected his reflection, Forster's personal, sometimes idiosyncratic, commentaries on Siegfried suggest the centrality of subjectivity to his engagement with Wagner. For Forster, Wagner's work was always art. His silence on Wagner during and after the Second World War exemplifies this belief in Wagner's aesthetic significance; 'I listen to Wagner to-day with unchanged admiration and increasing anxiety', he declared in *Nordic Twilight*. Forster's lifelong engagement with Wagner, then, consistently prioritizes the value of individualistic opinions, the freedom of being a musical 'outsider', and the importance of personal, direct aesthetic experiences.[105] And just as he favoured the mundane in response to the topicality of wartime heroism, so Forster endowed musical amateurism with added significance in the wake of professionalization in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is to Forster's role as a musical amateur that the next chapter will turn.

[105] The term 'outsider' is from 'Revolution at Bayreuth'. *PT*, p. 176.

IV

Amateurism: Gender and Class

> But I recall he told me that only in a true democracy could friendship between men flourish in freedom.
>
> James Kirkup, *I, of All People: An Autography of Youth*.[1]

Forster's short story, 'The Celestial Omnibus' (1908), is about a boy's aesthetic and cultural enlightenment. It is a curiously fanciful story in Forster's oeuvre, with its fairy-tale conventions of children's adventure, its humanistic re-imagining of the Dantean *Paradiso*, and its supernatural, dark, slightly moralistic ending. Its fantastical elements are also contributed by Wagnerian mythology: like *The Longest Journey*, which Forster completed just a few months earlier in 1907, the story contains extensive Wagnerian allusions to the *Ring* cycle, most explicit in the description of the boy's first omnibus ride. Conducted by Sir Thomas Browne, the journey is almost identical to the gods' entrance to Valhalla in the final scene of *Das Rheingold*. The thick fog that the omnibus goes through, the peal of thunder that sounds like 'the noise of a blacksmith's forge', the rainbow bridge unveiled from the 'shattered' cloud amidst growing murmurs, the glorious precipice in the morning sunshine, the 'three maidens' down in 'an everlasting river', playing with 'something that glistened like a ring' and singing to those on the bridge – all of these details bear striking resemblance to their Wagnerian

[1] James Kirkup, *I, of All People: An Autography of Youth* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), p. 199.

sources.[2] The effects of these spectacles and sounds are also those of Wagner's music dramas, as the excited – if not debilitated – boy cannot decide whether he should watch, listen, or sing along. Such experiences are combined with the boy's instantaneous familiarity with Wagner's music: on his second ride on the omnibus, he sings the Prelude to *Das Rheingold* without knowing anything about the tune.[3] Compared to the death of his awe-struck travel companion, Mr Bons, who is too 'knowledgeable' to appreciate the adventure, the boy's unconscious enjoyment, his unassuming character, and his non-discriminatory attitude towards the people he meets, are rewarded with aesthetic refinement. Forster's delineations of the boy's acquisition of a Wagnerian sensibility thus privilege direct stimulation and close observation over extensive training and detailed knowledge. That such a dawning moment takes place during a personal experience through the most direct contact with the artwork, suggests the centrality of the individual in Forster's musical vision. Forster's story prioritizes, that is, all forms of individualistic, sometimes even idiosyncratic, engagement with music.

This figure of the individual is, among other things, an amateur. Throughout his life, Forster repeatedly emphasized his role as a musical amateur, with the following words from 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism' as the representative example: 'I have no authority here. I am an amateur whose inadequacy will become all too obvious as he proceeds.'[4] Such self-abasement also appears in the essay, 'The C Minor of that Life':

> I have battered my head against [whether tonalities have special qualities] for years—a head untrained musically, and unacquainted with any instrument beyond the piano. Perhaps, like many amateur's problems, it is no problem, but one of those solemn mystifications which are erected by ignorance, and

[2] 'The Celestial Omnibus', in *MS*, pp. 29-44 (p. 36).
[3] *MS*, p. 42.
[4] *TCD*, p. 105.

which would disappear under proper instruction.[5]

Forster's usual apologetic tone is evident, but another dimension of his musical amateurism is also clear here: underlying his self-acknowledged inadequacy is a wariness of instruction, or educational prescription, from outside. The adjective 'proper' reveals Forster's reservation about training and scholarship, about a standardized and systemized approach to music, about excessive emphasis on knowing, rather than feeling, in a musical activity. Such reservation is explicitly expressed in 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism': 'training may sterilize the sensitiveness that is being trained; that education may lead to knowledge instead of wisdom, and […] that spontaneous enjoyment […] may be checked because too much care has been taken to direct it into the right channel.'[6] This wariness of instruction, at times, amounted to defiance. For example, writing to the writer H. W. Meyerstein in 1944, Forster declared that, in terms of the first movement of the 'Appassionata' Sonata, 'I'm disposed to think everyone is wrong except myself'.[7] His 'subjective reactions' to Beethoven, Forster said to Meyerstein, 'were well worth recording' because they were, as he said elsewhere, the result of his 'physical approach to Beethoven which cannot be gained through the slough of "appreciation"'.[8] This odd, slightly unexpected twist of the Bunyanesque collocation suggests that Forster perceived 'appreciation' as a lack of discernment and an aesthetic degradation of passivity.[9] His 'physical' approach to music, in contrast, was considered active, his subjectivity endowed with a certain freshness and dissociated from amateurish reverence to music. His physical, sometimes visceral,

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[5] 'The C Minor of that Life' (1941), in *TCD*, pp. 119-21 (p. 119).
[6] *TCD*, p 106.
[7] Letter to H. W. Meyerstein (24 November 1944). King's College Archive Centre, Cambridge: The Papers of E. M. Forster, 18/378/18/Meyerstein.
[8] *TCD*, p. 125.
[9] From Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: 'the Slough of Dispond'. *OED*.

musical experiences were thus regarded as existential evidence; to uphold these experiences against circulated interpretations became a way of asserting his individuality and of remaining independent from external influences. In insisting on such direct engagement with music, Forster looked forward to 'infection', to a 'sense of cooperation with a creator', to a transformative experience through which one is 'rapt into a region near to that where the artist worked'.[10]

It becomes evident, then, that musical amateurism brings together several themes that have been discussed so far in the thesis. Forster's insistence on individual interpretations can be exemplified by, as delineated in the previous chapter, his idiosyncratic retreat from the topicality of Wagnerian heroism in the 1940s. His search for 'spiritual parity' with the artist, for the opportunity when he, as an amateur, experiences the 'excitement' in which the composer conceived a work, embodies, once again, his belief in personal relationships.[11] Such a vision of private connection recalls his focus on individual exhibits, rather than on the official narrative, in the British Empire Exhibition. His perception of music as a 'physical' art also reminds us of those different forms of 'touch' between his characters – those different encounters when sentiments from one individual to another are felt when bodies are brought together through the medium of music. These encounters, as we have seen, are frequently charged with homoeroticism: the body of Forster's fictional musical amateurs, whether it is Aziz and Ralph, Philip and Gino, or Clive and Maurice, is cast under the effect of music and becomes a site of homoerotic bonding. It is no coincidence, then, that when spelling out his amateur status in 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism', Forster also decidedly talked about 'Love': 'However cautiously, or whatever reservations, after

[10] *TCD*, pp. 113-4.
[11] *TCD*, p. 118 and p. 113.

whatsoever purifications, we must come back to love.'[12] William Roerick, with whom Forster revised the lecture the day before the event, reminisced that Forster gave him the liberty to re-structure the lecture but demanded 'Love' be mentioned 'at the beginning, in the middle and at the end'.[13] This emphasis on the etymology of 'amateurism' – an amateur is a 'lover' of something – not only signifies Forster's advocacy of musical amateurism; also, by giving 'Love', which connects the central tenets of Forster's ideas, such as those of individualism, personal relationships, and homoeroticism, a prominent place in the lecture, Forster defined his personal ideology. In other words, Forster used his musical amateurism to deliver an ideological, if not explicitly political, statement.

It is the occasion when this statement was made that invites more discussion. Given that 'The *Raison d'Être* of Criticism' was a plenary addresses at the 'Music and Criticism' symposium at Harvard, Forster's declaration of his amateurism foregrounds an identity distinct from that of the majority of the event's attendees. Like other social strata, music, in the early twentieth century, witnessed an emergent class of professionals.[14] The rapid professionalization of society not only brought forth an increasing emphasis on expertise and credentials in performance and teaching; also, musicology gradually transformed from an amateur pursuit to a serious academic discipline in universities.[15] The establishment of music professorships, the reforms of

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[12] *TCD*, p. 118.

[13] William Roerick, 'Forster and America', in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass, pp. 61-72 (p. 65).

[14] Following the publication of Harold Perkin's *The Rise of Professional Society* (1989), numerous critics have examined the increasing stratification of society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Literary scholars, for example, have analysed the impact of expert culture and intellectual disciplinarity on modernist texts. See e.g. Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Lois Cucullu, *Expert Modernists, Matricide, and Modern Culture: Woolf, Forster, Joyce* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[15] This theme runs through Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling's groundbreaking book, *The English Musical Renaissance 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). For the establishment of musicology in America, see Joseph Kerman,

curricula and examinations, the development of theories and analytical tools – all of these contributed to cementing and shaping the scholarship of musicology.[16] Forster's amateur status was thus formed, and became more and more distinct, within this historical context; his anxieties about his 'amateur' thoughts on music were informed and augmented by the growing population of music scholars.[17] In this respect, his acknowledgement of being an amateur in the Harvard lecture was prompted by, as well as responsive to, the presence of musicologists, academics, and professional musicians in the symposium. There is certainly a degree of self-awareness of inadequacy, of his inability to use 'the proper language of the professional', in his acknowledgement.[18] However, there is also an intention to gesture deliberately towards themes he deemed beyond critical dissection and to differentiate his lecture from musicological – and thus, for him, more technical – studies. And if amateurism, as aforementioned, encapsulates certain Forsterian ideology, such a validation, or recuperation, of musical amateurism against professional culture, I argue, is particularly related to his ideas of gender and class.

In a recent collection of essays on the relationship between music and institution in nineteenth-century Britain, Paul Rodmell notes in the introduction that, whilst 'the means of institutionalisation became increasingly diverse and complex', 'music(ians) benefited from being organised'. '[T]he tendency […] to professionalise and move

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Musicology (London: Fontana Press, 1985).

[16] See e.g. Lisa Parker, 'The Expansion and Development of the Music Degree Syllabus at Trinity College Dublin during the Nineteenth Century', *Music and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Paul Rodmell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 143-60.

[17] Paula Gillett has looked into the frictions between and anxieties shared by amateurs and professionals in late nineteenth-century England. Paula Gillett, 'Ambivalent Friendships: Music-lovers, Amateurs, and Professional Musicians in the Late Nineteenth Century', in *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, ed. Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 321-40.

[18] Stephen Benson, *Literary Music: Writing Music in Contemporary Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 3.

away from some of the patriarchal structures of previous periods', he observes, helped 'music and musicians escap[e] the patronage system which had previously sustained them'.[19] Rodmell correctly unpacks the implications of music's liberation from exclusive hands, but overlooks, I would suggest, that professionalism has its gender and class politics. This is not to denounce what he regards as music's improved social status, but to challenging his reading by suggesting that, for music – as a knowledge system – to shape itself into a professionalized expertise within a contentious intellectual arena, it frequently involved a self-characterization in gendered and class terms. To become professional, that is, was often to characterize its uniqueness as 'masculine', and to lay claim to virtues such as idealism and abstraction, through which the expert dissociates the discipline from 'mass' experience. This is the narrative running through David Trotter's compelling study of the relationship between professionalization and paranoia within literary modernism.[20] In music, feminist musicologists have identified music as a gendered discourse.[21] Additionally, numerous critical musicologists, music historians, and ethnomusicologists have paid attention to genres beyond the traditional repertoire of Western 'canons' in the academy and re-evaluated the boundary between art and popular. What I wish to highlight here is, then, that the entry of gender and class issues into musicology allows us to think reflexively about the formation of the discipline.[22] Rather than a sudden, neutral emergence, the establishment of musicology was a

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[19] Paul Rodmell, 'Introduction', in *Music and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Paul Rodmell, pp. 1-9 (p. 9).

[20] David Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism: Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially pp. 7-11.

[21] McClary, p. 17.

[22] Queer musicology is particularly interested in such an examination of the discipline itself. Philip Brett, for example, has noted that the tendency of musicology to engage in formal analysis and factual compilation is a way of '[s]elf-policing against the always present but never fully articulated threat of homosexuality'. Philip Brett, 'Musicology and Sexuality: The Example of Edward J. Dent', in *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity*, ed. Sophie Fuller and Lloyd Whitesell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 177-88 (p. 180).

process through which gender indicators and class hierarchies were used as a means of producing the symbolic capital of its expertise – and thus a means of ensuring its professionalism.

In light of this conception of professionalization as a politically contested process, this chapter explores the gender and class politics of Forster's representations of musical amateurism and professionalism. It focuses on Vashti in 'The Machine Stops' and Dorothea in *Arctic Summer* – the former a music lecturer in a future world and the latter a folksong collector in the early 1910s – and rounds out the discussion by looking at Risley, a particularly outspoken musical amateur, in *Maurice*. Informed by Forster's own advocacy of amateur engagement with music, my discussion explores the ways in which these texts represent and criticize professional musical scholarship. It takes its cue from Forster's original plan for *Arctic Summer* – 'My motive should be democratic affection' – and considers Forster's criticism of masculinity and elitism in professional culture in relation to his fictional representations of a 'democratic' vision.[23] Such a Forsterian 'democracy', I will suggest, is underpinned by his preference for the amateur over the professional. Surprisingly, the three texts that the following pages examine, though chronologically close to each other, have not been studied together. They are gathered here, not only because of the shared theme of the amateur-professional relation, but also because, in terms of genre and form, they are unique in their own ways in Forster's oeuvre. A science fiction, an unfinished fragment, an unpublishable novel – it becomes clear, then, that Forster's 'democratic' vision contains something that cannot be said explicitly in public in contemporary society, something that he either had to create an alternative world to accommodate, or found it difficult to represent or elaborate, or spelt out in a way that the manuscripts could only be

[23] Diary entry (19 December 1910). *JD*, ii, 19.

circulated among friends. The two earlier texts – 'The Machine Stops' and *Arctic Summer* – are therefore understandably ambivalent; both of them can be read as Forster's irresolute formulations – or 'drafts' – of this 'democratic' vision. Yet, as the discussion of *Maurice* in the final part of the chapter will demonstrate, the realization of such a 'democracy' produces problematic implications for Forster's ideas of gender and class, especially for his conceptions of women.

Forster's portrayal of women is one of the main concerns in the chapter. Since the posthumous publication of Forster's homosexual writings, critics have been divided about Forster's women characters: his emphatic women protagonists, mysteriously powerful mother figures, 'goddesses' or 'sirens' in homosocial relationships have been read as types or as signs, as gay men in travesty or as queer women, or simply as evidence of Forster's understanding of 'the other sex'.[24] The chapter participates in this critical network by focusing on Vashti and Dorothea, both strongly drawn in the descriptions of their engagement with music but under-discussed by critics. Unlike the rest of Forster's women characters, both Vashti and Dorothea have their public role as musical professionals. Compared to the prominence of Myra Hess we saw in *A Diary for Timothy*, with which the thesis opens, Vashti and Dorothea secure their public platform not through musical virtuosity but through their knowledge of music. Forster's association of women and professional musical scholarship, then, allows us to have a glimpse into his attitude towards women in public on the one hand, and to analyse the gender politics of his responses to musical professionalism on the other. In so doing, the chapter considers where and how Forster places these women characters in his fictional representations of a 'democratic' vision.

[24] An insightful review of the literature on the subject of Forster and women is given by Jane Goldman in 'Forster and Women', in *The Cambridge Companion to E. M. Forster*, ed. David Bradshaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 120-37.

'The Machine Stops' was Forster's sole attempt at science fiction. Written in 1908, the story was first published in *The Oxford and Cambridge Review* in 1909 and subsequently included in Forster's second collection of short stories, *The Eternal Moment and Other Stories*, in 1928. Intended as a response to Wellsian optimism about progress and technology, the story is set in a future world where every human being is designated into a subterranean cell and every aspect of human life is sustained and controlled by the intelligent and omnipotent 'Machine'. As many critics have noted, the text provides an extraordinarily prophetic exploration of the crisis of humanity under the influence of machinery. It has been read in relation to Forster's belief in personal relationships and tied in with discussions about Forster's notion of intimacy and homosexual desire.[25] It has also been contextualized within the genre of science fiction: acknowledged as a precursor of later dystopian fictions, it has been regarded as a prescient portrayal of late twentieth-century cyber networks.[26]

However, the prominence of music in the story has never been discussed. Music plays an extremely multifaceted role in Forster's future world. First and foremost is its ambivalent part in the Machine regime's programme of mass control. At the opening of the story when the narration begins by delineating the main character's cell, music can be heard: 'There are no musical instruments, and yet […] this room is throbbing with

[25] See e.g. Ralph Pordzik, 'Closet Fantasies and the Future of Desire in E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops"', *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, 53.1 (2010), 54-74.

[26] See e.g. Douglas Mao, 'The Point of It', in *Utopianism, Modernism, and Literature in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Alice Reeve-Tucker and Nathan Waddell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 19-38; Tom Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 111-21 and p. 159; Brooks Landon, *Science Fiction after 1900: From the Steam Man to the Stars* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 11-21; and Silvana Caporaletti, 'Science as Nightmare: "The Machine Stops" by E. M. Forster', *Utopian Studies*, 8.2 (1997), 32-47.

melodious sounds.'[27] This description of disembodied music conjures up an evidently 'modern' soundscape. It echoes the effect of Wagner's hidden orchestra at the Bayreuth *Festspielhaus*. It also recalls the development of sound recording at the turn of the century, which overturned the centuries-long concept of music's irrevocability. Most importantly, the modernity of the music is also manifested in its transmission through a worldwide broadcast system, which anticipates, uncannily, the operation of the BBC more than a decade later. The reliance on such a far-reaching communication network, however, gives music's presence a sinister undertone. This future broadcast system is characterized as thought-controlling and linked specifically to state surveillance: 'Under the seas, beneath the roots of the mountains, ran the wires through which [human beings] saw and heard, […] and the hum of many workings clothed their thoughts in one garment of subserviency.'[28] What underlies this advanced civilization of technophilia is, then, the menacing authoritarianism of the Machine. Writing in the late Edwardian years, Forster might not have foreseen that this critique of the association between media and state control would work reflexively as an ironic footnote to his own engagement with the BBC after the 1920s. (Or perhaps his entire career as an active broadcaster – and as an important national voice after the Second World War – was prompted exactly by this alertness to the power of media and an intention to take good advantage of it?) In this respect, music, transmitted through such a broadcast system, seems to be one of the tools of mass control used by the Machine. And since subsequent depictions of music in the story show that the same tracks are played repeatedly ('the symphonies of the Brisbane school', which will be discussed later), the music's melodiousness seems to produce a hypnotic effect on its listeners.

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[27] *MS*, p. 87.
[28] *MS*, pp. 114-5.

This portrayal of music as a potentially hypnotizing, sedative device in the Machine world echoes the topicality of musical affectivity within contemporary formulations of crowd theory. To many commentators, music had a manipulative power that was capable of manoeuvring large crowds, which were themselves perceived as feminine and particularly susceptible to such a musical effect.[29] In Forster' story, the characteristics of the 'audience' at the receiving end of the broadcast system are associated with those of crowds: they are anonymous, featureless ('People were almost exactly alike all over the world'), and impressionable ('No one could mistake the reverent tone in which [a lecture on religion] had concluded, and it awakened a responsive echo in the heart of each').[30] The narrator attributes such characteristics of the future human beings to the progress of the Machine: 'Humanity, in its desire for comfort, had overreached itself. It had exploited the riches of nature too far. Quietly and complacently, it was sinking into decadence and progress had come to mean the progress of the Machine.'[31] Succumbing to the omnipresent intermediation of science, the indiscriminate conglomeration of senseless and muscleless cell citizens is thus a product of the Machine civilization. Yet we cannot help but wonder whether music, too, contributes to this transformation of humanity, and whether the very melodiousness of the music plays a part in taming its listeners into sedate creature. Whilst the story's depictions of the music's pervasiveness, recurrence, and melodiousness indeed encourage us to make such an assumption, the ambivalence is that Forster never specifically describes whether music does lend its power to the Machine's dominance over human beings. The association between music and mass control, then, is

[29] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 104-6.
[30] *MS*, p. 96 and p. 110. As Emma Sutton observes, 'audience' and 'crowd' were two of the terms that were developed by various texts of crowd theory and were 'identified as distinct entities laden with ideological meaning'. Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, p. 105.
[31] *MS*, p. 111.

simultaneously suggested and annulled by the text.

More ambiguity can be discerned in Forster's use of the word 'throbbing'; it endows the hypnotic melodiousness with a heartbeat-like energy. This bodily pulse of the music contradicts the assumption that music is used as mass sedation, as it embodies a certain corporeality which the Machine cannot diminish. Such a conceptualization of music as an organic entity recurs in Part III of the story when signs of the Machine's failure appear. Vashti, the main character, complains to her friend about the 'trouble' lately with the music broadcast: there have been 'those curious gasping sighs that disfigure the symphonies of the Brisbane school. They sound like someone in pain'.[32] Her personification of these auditory 'defects' sends out multiple implications for the role music plays in the story.[33] On a thematic level, music here is endowed with senses, feelings, and emotions, and thus once again placed in opposition to the Machine, which lacks, and attempts to subdue, those qualities. Metaphorically, the 'sighs' can be read as an expression of agony about the condition of human beings under the surface of comfort and convenience. The 'sighs' also mark a symbolic moment when human beings start to break free from the control of the Machine; they announce the imminent collapse of the system and seem to anticipate the liberation as well as the survival of humanity after the Machine stops. Differing from the previously discussed perception of music as potentially used by the Machine, all of these interpretations suggest music's subversive power in the technophile world. Intriguingly, in the story, the way in which music undercuts or destabilizes the system is always conveyed through its physical quality. The text's persistent representation of music's physical existence adds another layer to our earlier discussion of Forster's perception of

[32] *MS*, p. 112.
[33] *MS*, p. 113.

music as a 'physical' art: the physicality of his individualistic engagement with music seems to originate from his perception of music itself as a physical entity. All these physiological elements, then, suggest that Forster perceives musical experience as an example of corporeal encounter. Forster's emphasis on music's corporeality is one to bear in mind as we turn to focus on Vashti and her musical profession.

Vashti is a 'lecturer' on music. In Forster's future world, lecturing – or more precisely, broadcasting – is the occupation for intellectuals. They lecture on a wide range of subjects; Vashti's 'expertise' lies in 'Music during the Australian Period':

> She opened with a humorous account of music in the pre-Mongolian epoch, and went on to describe the great outburst of song that followed the Chinese conquest. Remote and primaeval as were the methods of I-San-So and the Brisbane school, she yet felt (she said) that study of them might repay the musician of to-day: they had freshness; they had, above all, ideas.[34]

This mention of 'Australia' is intriguing. In biographical terms, we know little of Forster's attitude towards Australia; he made, to my knowledge, no explicit remarks on Australia in his published and private writings. At the turn of the century, social and political changes in Australia started to obtain wider publicity in Britain and such a myth of Australia as 'the lost Arcady' no longer existed. Nevertheless, the wild landscape, the unique fauna and flora, the transportation of convicts, the gold rushes – all of these factors contributed to shaping the British cliché of Australia as an exotic 'down under'.[35] It seems possible, then, that Forster, who had never been to Australia, might simply be using 'Australia' for its exoticism in order to defamiliarize his Edwardian readers from their usual musical experiences.

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[34] *MS*, p. 91.
[35] Coral Lansbury, *Arcady in Australia: The Evocation of Australia in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1970), pp. 154-8 and p. 167.

The very oddity (and absurdity) of these references to Australia, then, reveals Forster's problematic national logic at work. It is unclear whether Forster had in mind any specific works composed in Australia or by Australians; in fact, we do not know whether Forster was familiar with or knowledgeable about Australian musical culture. It is also unclear whether the text is referring to aboriginal music or Western art music. It is likely, then, that 'the symphonies of the Brisbane school' from the 'Australian' period are Forster's invention. The musical historiography delineated by Vashti (pre-Mongolian epoch – the Chinese conquest – I-San-So – Brisbane school, Australian period – Today) is invented, too. Among all the non-European countries, Forster might have chosen Australia because 'Australian' is phonetically similar to 'Austrian'; in so doing, he parodies as well as displaces the Austro-German musical traditions. It is thus less an issue of reducing an exotic culture to stereotypes than of appropriating something un-European to produce differences and enhance strangeness. His perception and use of Australia – and China – as a country in stark contrast to European nations, as a culture outside Western civilization, as the Other, is therefore implicitly Eurocentric.

It would be wrong, though, to dismiss Forster's representations of 'Australian' music simply because of his problematic national imagining; details in Vashti's lecture, I believe, deserve more discussion as they are suggestive of Forster's criticism of musical professionalism. The Brisbane school, according to Vashti, was concomitant to a musical trend during which 'the methods of I-San-So' were popular. Whilst 'I-San-So' seems Forster's coinage of a three-character East Asian name, it can also be 'I sang so' and thus implies a singing practice that constitutes a formulaic refrain. Read alongside the detail that the Brisbane school took place after 'the great outburst of song', music from the Australian period seems to have a distinct vocal legacy and is embedded in a culture marked by its oral tradition. Vashti's backward, antiquarian exploration of these

musical cultures thus echoes contemporary interest in musical revivalism, especially in English folksong collection, in Edwardian society. By 1910, English folksong had been a subject of extensive attention from musicians, composers, and academics among others, whose observations were often underpinned by anxieties about the future of English music and intertwined with their delineations of nationhood. For example, Charles Villiers Stanford, in 1889, identified folk music as the key to the establishment of a national school of music in England.[36] In 1905, Edward Elgar similarly underlined the importance of folk music, encouraging young musicians to 'draw their inspiration more from their own country' in order to 'arrive at having an English *art*'.[37] While more will be discussed regarding the concept of 'folk' in English folk revival when we turn to *Arctic Summer*, what I wish to emphasize here is the similarity of tone and rhetoric between Vashti's lecture and these proposals made by folk enthusiasts. Like the latter, Vashti's words attempt to glorify the past by raising antiquarianism to a conceptual level. Whilst Stanford, Elgar, and others looked for 'inspiration' from English folksong, Vashti stresses that those early musical works have 'ideas'.

The worship of 'ideas' in the story is a satiric exaggeration of excess (and false) intellectualism. Whatever the subject matter is, a lecture in the Machine world always concludes on a note about obtaining 'ideas'. This is, however, more a blank catchphrase than a meaningful anticipation: 'ideas' are only invoked in the lectures but never discovered or reified. This intoxication with 'ideas' is a product of technophilia: the genesis of the Machine civilization is a simple wish to free human beings from manual work. However, while the 'soul' does receive more attention after 'bodies' have been

[36] Hughes and Stradling, pp. 32-3.
[37] Edward Elgar, *A Future for English Music and Other Lectures*, ed. Percy M. Young (London: Dobson, 1968), p. 51.

released from labour, it is an undue attention.[38] 'Ideas' are thus allowed to form, but they form without originality or individuality, since acquired information is privileged over first-hand experiences in the Machine civilization: 'First-hand ideas […] are but the physical impressions produced by love and fear'.[39] Forster's future intellects, then, gather and reiterate information that no longer has any bearing on their epistemology of the world. Their lectures, instead of being instructive, endorse the Machine's intermediation in everyday life. They are successors of 'master brains', but they have surrendered to science and become 'a generation absolutely colourless'.[40] Hence the featureless crowds we have seen.

If Vashti's emphasis on 'ideas', like other lecturers', is a symptom of the overreliance on science, it also generates more repercussions given that music is her subject. Her declaration that music has 'ideas' – and, at the same time, her complete negligence of the physicality of musical engagement – allude to the observations and debates of contemporary science on the perceived dualism of mind and body through analyses of musical affectivity. Many critics have documented and commented on the interdependence of music and science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They have noted music's influential role in the development of various sub-disciplines in sciences and have also explored the ways in which newly formulated scientific hypotheses and theories fed into perceptions of music.[41] One area that attracted particular attention was the relationship between musical effect, intellectual

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[38] *MS*, p. 94.
[39] *MS*, p. 109.
[40] *MS*, p. 110.
[41] Phyllis Weliver, for example, has emphasized the influence of music on studies of mental sciences. Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), especially the chapter 'Harmony and Discord in the Self: Music, Mesmerism and Mental Science', pp. 59-97. Emma Sutton links the interdependence of music and science to the pathologizing of decadence, exploring the ways in which scientific and medical discourses participated in and augmented the topicality of Wagnerian affectivity. Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 72-87.

reflection, and the human body; physiologists and psychologists frequently drew on musical experiences to elucidate the relations between the mental and the physical.[42] These extensive interdisciplinary discussions, I suggest, informed Forster's juxtaposition of two perceptions of music – music which has 'ideas' and music which is 'throbbing' – in 'The Machine Stops'. Vashti's emphasis on 'ideas', then, echoes those scientific proposals in favour of the intellectual and conceptual properties of music. In contrast, the text's repeated references to the physical aspect of music suggest a perception akin to that of studies emphasizing the physiological elements of musical experience. It is not hard to tell which side Forster is on: his ironic delineation of Vashti's 'expertise', of her attention to 'ideas' rather than to the bodily elements of the musical effect, reflects his own emphasis on music's corporeality. That Vashti *knows*, but never *feels*, the music on which she lectures commits exactly the mistake we have seen Forster caution against earlier in the chapter: excess focus on knowledge and instruction results in blunted sensitivity and lost intuition.

This ironic portrayal of Vashti's approach to music is thus an amateur's critique of musical professionalism. The irony of Vashti's lecture is a way of discrediting the authorial figure, of parodying as well as deflating the grandiosity of public dissemination of 'knowledge'. It is also a quiet endorsement of amateurism, a strategy of recuperating subjectivity and individualism through highlighting the pre-eminence of the body in all forms of engagement with music. What underpins such a critique is, I suggest, Forster's opposition to the preoccupation with masculinity and the implication of elitism in professional culture. Vashti's predilection for the intellectual significance of music, for the rational and cerebral aspects of musical consumption, can be read as her 'will to abstraction'. This tendency to engage in conceptual discussion – and, at the

[42] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, pp. 74-5.

same time, to bypass the always-present physicality of musical effect – helps to align her professional expertise with 'masculine' values whilst implicitly characterizing amateur experiences of physiological excitability as 'feminine'. What is also pertinent here is the subject of her study: as previously discussed, Vashti's antiquarianism echoes contemporary interest in English folksong. The interest is a gendered one, as the concept of a revival, or a 'Renaissance', is itself a triumphalist assessment of 'the distant past' and a consecration of 'its aristocratic and male values'.[43] Drawing on abstraction and idealism to study the past, then, such an investment in masculinity erects Vashti as a figure of the professional against, as we have seen, the featureless crowds of Forster's future human beings. Forster, by providing an ironic portrayal of musical intellectualism and undercutting the professional respectability of Vashti and her expertise, thus jibes at the overarching masculine ideal of professional culture and subverts the social status of the expert. It is tempting to elaborate on the parallel between Vashti's lecture and the advocacy of English folksong collection and propose that Forster's text is a parody of the enthusiasm and idealism of folk revivalists. However, given that the text presents an alternative world set in an unspecified future, I suggest that the story forms a less specific, and thus much more general, commentary on the gender and class politics of professionalism.

It is intriguing, then, that the professional in 'The Machine Stops' is a woman. By the first decade of the twentieth century, although women had garnered increasing visibility in musical performance and entered several other different areas in English musical culture, women music scholars were still rare.[44] How are we to interpret Forster's intention to put Vashti in a professional role? One possibility is that Forster is

[43] Brett, 'Musicology and Sexuality', p. 180.
[44] Paula Gillett, *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914: "Encroaching on All Man's Privileges"* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000).

a women's writer, granting this character such public prominence and authoritative status rarely seen in reality. Yet the irony in his characterization immediately undermines this celebratory reading, and opens up another possibility that Forster is simply misogynistic in his negative portrayal of Vashti's discredited professionalism. Meanwhile, it is possible that Vashti combines two roles necessary to the main event of the story: the adventure of Kuno, Vashti's son, to the surface of the earth in Part II. The mother figure is central to the plot: the narration needs someone to stay simultaneously close to and at some distance from Kuno, which is fulfilled by Forster's reconfiguration of the maternal instinct for the Machine world. At the same time, Kuno's rebellion against the Machine, which is not only delineated through his adventure but also suggested by an unobtrusive detail that 'he detested music', requires a character who worships and serves the Machine regime through the means of music.[45] Vashti's combination of the mother and the musical professional, then, provides the necessary platform for the unfolding of Kuno's adventure and for the distinction of Kuno's attitude towards music.[46] Whether or not any of these speculations above is true, perhaps Vashti, like all the other women characters written by Forster, is too 'sophisticated', or 'slippery', to be pinned down to a single reading.[47] Nevertheless, the portrayal of Vashti can be read as Forster's reflection of, and on, the competitiveness of professional culture: women, in order to define their social standing in this highly professionalized society, are required to adopt a 'masculine' rhetoric to produce the symbolic capital for their intellectual expertise. The short story is thus an amateur's

[45] *MS*, p. 113.
[46] Like Ansell's view on music in *The Longest Journey*, Kuno's attitude towards music is itself a subject worth some discussion. Several possibilities suggest themselves. It can be read as a resistance to the Machine's mass control. It can also be read as his contempt for intellectualism and his faith in the human body.
[47] Goldman, p. 135.

examination, and exposure, of the complicity of musical professionalism with dominant social values.[48]

Forster's examination of music as a professionalized discipline appears vividly in his unfinished novel, *Arctic Summer*. Like 'The Machine Stops', *Arctic Summer* is an exploration of the politics of professionalized musical scholarship. Yet because of its realist setting in contemporary England, *Arctic Summer* provides a more specific delineation of a particular trend in English musical culture, and thus a more focused scrutiny of late Edwardian and early Georgian social contingencies, than the short story. Despite the fact that it is unfinished, the text captures in detail the professionalization of musical scholarship through describing Dorothea Borlase, a folksong collector, and her engagement with music. And just because it is still a work in progress, we are allowed to witness in the manuscripts Forster's attempt to use these descriptions to bring together a variety of ideas in contemporary social and political movements, such as reforms of children's education, women's suffrage, and British Fabianism.

Begun in 1911, *Arctic Summer* was drafted, laid aside, continued, abandoned, significantly revised, and again abandoned before Forster's first trip to India in September 1912. He revisited the fragments in 1951, revised and read the first five chapters at the Aldeburgh Festival. After that, *Arctic Summer* was put aside and left

[48] Perhaps it is worth bringing a text from another context into our discussion. In *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf writes: 'we, daughters of educated men, are between the devil and the deep sea. Behind us lies the patriarchal system; the private house, with its nullity, its immorality, its hypocrisy, its servility. Before us lies the public world, *the professional system*, with its possessiveness, its jealousy, its pugnacity, its greed. The one shuts us up like slaves in a harem; the other forces us to circle, like caterpillars head to tail, round and round the mulberry tree, the sacred tree, of property. It is a choice of evils. Each is bad. Had we not better plunge off the bridge into the river; give up the game; declare that the whole of human life is a mistake and so end it?'. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 86. My emphasis.

unfinished.[49] As noted earlier in the chapter, Forster wanted to delineate 'democratic affection' in the novel. The diary entry (19 December 1910) where he made such a plan gives more information about the novel he had in mind:

> Plenty of young men & children in it, & adventure. If possible pity & thought. But not love making – at least of the orthodox kind, & perhaps not even of the unorthodox. It would be tempting to make an intelligent man feel towards an intelligent man of lower class what I feel, but I see the situation too clearly to use it as in Mon Frère Yves, where the author is either deceiving the public or himself. My motive should be democratic affection, and I am not sure whether that has any strength.[50]

This passage indicates that, when planning *Arctic Summer,* Forster was some distance from his explicit representation of homosexuality in *Maurice*, although it is evident that, after the writer's block caused by the success of *Howards End* earlier that year, he was envisioning a homosocial framework (and perhaps self-policing against any association with homoeroticism?) for his new novel. In 1911, the novel evolved into 'a book on chivalry' and subsequently obtained its title, which suggests that Forster had constructed the central contrast between his two male characters, Martin Whitby and Clesant March.[51] Arctic summer is Martin's ideal society, where there is 'to have no dawn' and 'will be time to get something really <great> \important/ done. […] Dawn implies twilight, and we have decided to abolish them both'.[52] Opposite Martin stands

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[49] Thanks to Elizabeth Heine's editorial work, the novel's manuscripts are presented as three texts: the main version, with its first five chapters revised in 1951 and about four remaining chapters unrevised, plus a note for the Aldeburgh reading in which Forster explained why he could not finish the novel; the 'Tripoli Fragment', presumably an inceptive draft written in 1911; and the 'Radipole version', a whole-scale revision of the novel in summer 1912. I have been much indebted to Heine's deft and insightful discussion of Forster's writing of the novel. *AS*, pp. xi-xxv.

[50] Diary entry (19 December 1910). *JD*, ii, 18-9.

[51] Diary entry (27 September 1911). *JD*, ii, 31. Diary entry (1 November 1911). *JD*, ii, 32.

[52] *AS*, p. 125. For quotations from *Arctic Summer*, I retain Heine's editorial marks throughout my chapter.

Clesant, 'a Knight errant born too late in time who finds no clear issue to which to devote himself'.[53] Martin dedicates himself to work, looking forward to a modernized and ameliorated society, whereas Clesant abides by traditions, emphasizing honour, family, and established social order. Elizabeth Heine's observation on Forster's intention with the contrast between the two characters is insightful: the novel is 'to join the physical courage of the thoughtlessly chivalric hero with the moral tolerance of the civilized man, to re-educate the one and revitalize the other'.[54] The 'democratic' relationship Forster had in mind is, then, a male friendship in some kind of cross-class bonding.

Around Martin and Clesant are a number of minor (and, perhaps not coincidentally, women) characters, and Dorothea is one of them. Martin's sister-in-law, Dorothea is an educationalist, an active campaigner for women's suffrage, a socialist like her sister Venetia (Martin's wife), and an English folksong collector. Dorothea does not appear in the first five chapters; she is only briefly mentioned, in Martin's thoughts, as the sister who has 'the finer mind'.[55] For the audience at Aldeburgh in 1951, then, Dorothea would only have a faint presence compared to Venetia, whose character is more extensively shown and delineated in the pages Forster read. Moreover, they would not know of Dorothea's involvement in folksong collection because the only reference to it was deleted in Forster's revision. Whether this deletion was to give a more focused presentation of Martin's character in the Aldeburgh reading, or it suggests that Forster in 1951 thought of the English folk revival as a dated movement, this originally designated but later hidden aspect of Dorothea registers Forster's awareness of the popularity of folksong collection when he was drafting the novel in the early 1910s. In

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[53] Letter to Forrest Reid (2 February 1913). *SL1*, p. 187.
[54] *AS*, p. xii.
[55] *AS*, p. 132.

1908, Forster attended one of Cecil Sharp's folksong lectures, after which he wrote appreciatively about the way Sharp lectured on the subject.[56] Sharp might have contributed to Forster's characterization of Dorothea, although it is also possible that Forster modelled Dorothea on contemporary female folksong collectors, such as Lucy Broadwood and Maud Karpeles. Whoever provided the model for Dorothea's musical interest, her role as a folksong collector, I suggest, intersects with other dimensions of her character. It is not just a mimetic detail of a popular musical activity, but a part tailored to and emblematic of her ideas of society. Forster's portrayal of Dorothea, then, examines the traits and politics of folksong collection by representing it as a cultural movement embedded in a wider social and political context. As the following paragraphs will explore, the insight of modern criticism that English folksong collection was methodologically flawed and politically conservative was anticipated in Forster's text.

The antiquarian intellectualism we have seen in Vashti's backward glance at previous musical cultures recurs in Dorothea's interest in the English folksong, yet it is given a more specific form of institutionalized scholarly pursuit. Dorothea's antiquarianism is set in a scholarly environment where there is an established collective effort to work on English folksongs in an active and systematic way. She works 'at the Conservatoire', as well as travels, like her 'colleagues', to different parts of England to collect songs.[57] She notates the singing, identifies the tonality, and compares and contrasts different variants of songs:

> [Dorothea] began singing a folksong in scholarly fashion; she had collected half a dozen variants of it already:

[56] Diary entry (26 March 1908). *JD*, i, 162.
[57] *AS*, p. 182 and p. 183.

> "'Oh he did whistle and she did sing—'"
>
> "Who are he and she?" asked Venetia, looking over her shoulder.
> "Joseph and Mary. That's from Hereford. Now listen to this. Kent.
>
> 'Oh he did whistle and she did sing
> And all the bells of earth did ring
> For joy that Jesus Christ was born
> On Christmas day in the morning.'
>
> Now for Wiltshire. The mode's Doric. 'Oh he did—'"
> "They sound to me very much alike," said her sister, passing out with the breakfast things.[58]

Venetia's response to her sister's brief performance mocks the excessive scrupulousness of such a scholarly approach to English folk music. The nuances Dorothea maps out between different variants of a song become unnecessarily complicated for non-professionals. Venetia's wry remark, then, presents an amateur's response to the overly and overtly analytical scholarship of musical antiquarianism.

What underlies Dorothea's tendency to analyse (or over-analyse) English folksongs is an assumption – or, for the collectors themselves, a belief – that English folksong deserves such rigorous scrutiny. Dorothea collects folksongs because 'they are beautiful'.[59] Compared to Vashti's wish to obtain 'ideas', Dorothea's expectation to find something no less intangible echoes contemporary enthusiasm for English folk music. Ralph Vaughan Williams, for example, elaborated on the 'beauty' of English folk music:

> this music is not mere clownish nonsense, but has in it the germ of all those principles of beauty, of expression, of form, climax and proportion which we

[58] *AS*, p. 183.
[59] *AS*, p. 185.

> are accustomed to look for in the highly developed compositions of great masters.[60]

Here, the folksong's intangible 'beauty' is perceived as seminal to stylistic complexity and aesthetic maturity. Vaughan Williams's words thus endorse the potential and value of English folk music, and feed folk revivalists on an imagination of a musically endowed 'Merrie England', long lost and in need of being revived. Expressed in a tone not so different from Vashti's, though in a much more detailed, if not pedantic, manner, such scholarly justification reveals not only enthusiasm but also anxiety. As discussed earlier in the chapter, English folk enthusiasts frequently associated the folk revival with the future of the nation. It is unsurprising, then, that Vaughan Williams, whilst validating folksong collection, cautioned that '[w]e have been rather late in the day in England in doing what other nations have long considered their duty'.[61] In this respect, if Dorothea's admiration for the aesthetic quality of English folksong expresses a national ambition to emulate other European musical cultures, her over-analytical approach also betrays the shared national anxiety about the quality of England's 'folk' output.

Such a preoccupation with the quality of the songs determines the way Dorothea works:

> Dorothea opened her notebook, the companion of many a country tramp. In it were here gleanings of English song. Her enthusiasm, cold and steady, had led her among queer places and rough men. There were entries in it such as "Mr Lodge, Imber in the Down. Only when drunk." "Mrs Tarr, Blandford Workhouse." Some of the verses were unprintable. All that was beautiful and pure—and there was much—would be sifted out of the chaff, and resown.[62]

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[60] Ralph Vaughan Williams, *English Folk-Songs* (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1966), p. 8.
[61] Vaughan Williams, p. 4.
[62] *AS*, p. 183.

Dorothea's scholarly approach is reflected in her 'cold and steady' 'enthusiasm'; the two adjectives also suggest a lack of sympathy for her often 'drunk' or 'rough' interviewees, and reveal a class attitude which will be discussed later in the chapter. What has to be emphasized here is that Forster portrays Dorothea not only as a collector, but also as an editor. Forster's alertness to such a role played by contemporary folksong promulgators anticipates more recent critical views on the English folk revival. Spearheaded by Dave Harker's study, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'Folksong',* modern criticism disputes the notion that English folksong was the 'pure' creation of 'the people'.[63] It criticizes early twentieth-century folksong collectors for their regular omission and modification of the song lyrics, and for the way they manipulated and bowdlerized the material they had gathered to serve their bourgeois and intellectual ends. Also, it investigates that fictional entity 'the folk', showing how the construction of an endangered 'folk' provided the rationale for a 'revival'.[64]

Forster's portrayal of Dorothea, then, attends to the inventive nature of folksong collection and to the uncritical triumphalism of the movement 'rescuing' a waning culture ('the old people were dying out', as Dorothea believes).[65] What motivates her to devote her time to this 'work', as Dorothea's telling use of the word 'resown' indicates, is her educational ideal.[66] Dorothea edits the songs because she will later have what is 'beautiful and pure' 'taught back in schools to the grandchildren of those

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[63] Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'Folksong', 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985). For a brief discussion of the bowdlerization of folksong, see e.g. Hughes and Stradling, pp. 210-1.
[64] Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 18.
[65] *AS*, p. 183.
[66] *AS*, p. 183.

who had known them instinctively'.[67] Here, the conceptualized 'folk' is invoked once again in order to sustain the imagined 'Merrie England' until its timely revival. It is evident, too, that the education Dorothea is envisioning is a whole-scale dissemination of folksongs beyond the Conservatoire, a re-creation – or, more accurately, an invention – of *the* 'folk' culture. Forster's portrayal reflects, then, that the English folksong collection movement was characterized by its strong 'interventionist intent'.[68]

This educational ideal of the folksong movement reminds us of Dorothea's work as an educationalist. This aspect of Dorothea, I suggest, is contributed by Christabel Meredith, the wife of Hugh O. Meredith, Forster's once best friend during and after his Cambridge years.[69] Forster was biased against Christabel, condemning frequently and stridently her lack of sympathy, her insistence on working after marriage, and her ideas of education.[70] Whilst P. N. Furbank is correct in suggesting that Forster used Christabel Meredith as a model for his characterization of Venetia as 'a simple-minded Newnham Fabian', it is Dorothea, I would suggest, who embodies Meredith's expertise in modern – or, for Forster, 'pernicious' – methods of child-rearing.[71] Although criticized by Forster, Meredith's ideas of children's education were in line with some of the advanced pedagogical theories widely circulated in contemporary Continental

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[67] *AS*, p. 183.
[68] Boyes, p. 4.
[69] Hugh Meredith has been regarded as the model of Clive Durham in *Maurice*. See e.g. Philip Gardner's Introduction to the Abinger edition of the novel, *M*, pp. xv-xvi.
[70] Both P. N. Furbank and Wendy Moffat record Forster's depression after learning the engagement of Hugh and Christabel in 1906, Furbank, i, 141; and Wendy Moffat, *E. M. Forster: A New Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 87. After that, Forster wrote frequently in his diaries and letters about the Merediths, recording every single row between the couple whilst censuring Christabel most of the time. The way Christabel educated her children was particularly criticized by Forster and his confidante, Florence Barger, who used to be Christabel's fellow educationalist, but who had a different (much more traditional) view on family and child-rearing. See *SL1*, p. 146, pp. 229-30, and p. 243; *SL2*, p. 6; Furbank, i, 186; *JD*, ii, 12-3, 19, 26, and 58.
[71] Furbank, i, 208. Letter to Florence Barger (10 November 1920). *SL1*, p. 319. Perhaps because of his preconception that Meredith's theories would never succeed when it comes to her own children, Forster opposed Meredith's ideas of education vehemently, as he once wrote in his diary: 'Don't think I could see my eldest son's character and health spoilt by a dotty dirty sexless bluestocking'. Diary entry (30 September 1923). *JD*, ii, 70.

Europe. In *The Educational Bearings of Modern Psychology* (1916), Meredith opposed lecturing, punishment, and formalized syllabi and curricula, contending that schooling should be a process of socialization through which a child can discover and develop his or her inner kindness and sensitivity. She proposed an educational scheme in which the teacher, instead of attempting to quench children's impulses, works knowingly with their instincts.[72] Dorothea's educational method in *Arctic Summer* is similar to Meredith's in the way that it envisions a knowing teacher: 'Most work is done indirectly. Educationalists like Dorothy admit as much. They try to drop knowledge into the subconscious stratum of the child's mind'.[73] It places the teacher high on a vantage point, where certain omniscience implies that children can always be knowingly taught and guided. Martin objects to this view, suggesting that 'A child […] is a sharper subject than you school ma'ams suppose'; to pass on knowledge, 'One subconsciousness must call to another. Which is a clumsy way of saying that there must be affection.'[74] Martin's delineation of a more equal relationship between the teacher and the student values personal understanding. His emphasis on 'affection' not only responds to Dorothea's educational method but also exposes her lack of sympathy.

Dorothea's lack of sympathy, I suggest, is also associated with her Fabian leanings. Even though there is no explicit reference to the Fabian society, Dorothea's political outlook is obvious in the following description of the Borlase sisters:

> Venetia was at Newnham, Dorothea lived at home, and was destined by her parents for a more domestic career. Both were in full revolt against their lot. Their war cry <amazed Martin at first. It> was 'Be tidy'. They wanted to help

[72] Christabel M. Meredith, *The Educational Bearings of Modern Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916). For a discussion regarding women's contribution to children's education and educational policies in the Edwardian years, see e.g. Jane Martin, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999).
[73] *AS*, p. 152.
[74] *AS*, p. 152.

> in tidying up the world. It is time. The age of discovery is over—there will be no new countries. It is time to arrange the old, and all men and women must turn to. Romance, whether in action or in thought, is a relic of the age of untidiness; it assumes the unknown, whereas we know, or at all events we know enough. Untidiness. The word caught. It ran like wildfire through Newnham[.][75]

The mention of Venetia's education at Newnham links the 'war cry' to what contemporary male students at Cambridge described as the 'agitation' caused by campaigns for degrees for Girton and Newnham students.[76] The phrase, put in a broader context, also alludes to women's suffrage, especially the suffragettes' protests in contemporary London. More pertinent to our discussion is the phrase 'Be tidy'. Not only reflecting the characters' social ideal, this slogan is also relevant to Rupert Brooke – whose paper, *Democracy and the Arts*, was one of Forster's sources for *Arctic Summer* – and to the Fabian society, to which Brooke was closely affiliated around 1910.[77] Brooke's idiosyncratic obsession with cleanliness has been well documented.[78] Such an idiosyncrasy is suggestive of a social attitude not rare within the Fabian society, which advocated an impersonal approach to social improvement and upheld the ideal of a scientifically planned, institutionally organized, and professionally operated society. Forster's tribute to Beatrice Webb in 1943 suggests that he was aware of this Fabian way of tackling social issues through institutional overhaul: Webb, he wrote, 'did not

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[75] *AS*, pp.131-2.

[76] Rita McWilliams-Tullberg, *Women at Cambridge: A Men's University—Though of a Mixed Type* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975), p. 133. Just before Forster entered King's in 1897, there was the famous campaign for degrees for Girton and Newnham students, which started promisingly but failed in the end. Under the fear that women not only wanted to be awarded degrees but also 'attempt[ed] to meddle in men's education', the misogyny of male undergraduates rose to such an extent that they made public protests against the campaign. McWilliams-Tullberg, p. 90.

[77] Brooke read the paper at the Cambridge University Fabien Society in early 1910. Writing to Brooke on 24 November 1911, Forster said: 'I have this moment decided to put all I can remember of your paper on art into a novel—and as I remember it'. *SL1*, p. 126.

[78] For example, John Lehmann describes that Brooke was attracted to the actress Cathleen Nesbitt in 1912 because she seemed 'unspotted by the "uncleanness" which obsessed his mind in connection with his earlier friendships and emotional involvements'. John Lehmann, *Rupert Brooke: His Life and His Legend* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980), p. 77.

believe in a local and sentimental pity', but in 'Commissions of Enquiry and note-taking', as they could truly have poverty and social injustice 'cured'.[79] Although frequently criticized by contemporaries for its focus on bureaucracy, the Fabian society attracted many young intellectuals – Brooke included – who believed in science, efficiency, and professional culture. It becomes evident, then, that Dorothea's dedication to 'tidying up the world' encapsulates that very belief.

For Forster, the Fabians' predilection for tidiness reflected an inner hardness from which he decidedly differentiated himself, as we can see in his sketch of Brooke immediately after Brooke's death:

> He was serene humourous intelligent and beautiful—as charming an acquaintance as one could desire—and latterly most friendly. But he was essentially hard; *his hatred of slosh* went rather too deep and affected the eternal water-springs, and I don't envy anyone who applied to him for sympathy.[80]

The identification of Brooke's obsession with cleanliness as one of his defining characteristics, the association of this obsession with Brooke's tendency to be unsympathetic, and Forster's steadfast aversion to such lack of sympathy not only unveil Brooke's elitism, but also suggest Forster's rejection of the Fabian social outlook. For Forster, the Fabian mindset is essentially unsympathetic to the individual. The attention of the Fabian society is always to the public rather than to the individual, to institutional reform rather than to personal welfare. What he firmly differentiates himself from is therefore the class politics inherent in this Fabian vision of a tidied-up world.[81] This differentiation suggests Forster's wariness of the Fabians' professed

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[79] 'Webb and Webb' (1943), in *TCD*, pp. 208-11 (p. 209).
[80] Letter to Malcolm Darling (2 August 1915). *SL1*, p. 227. My emphasis.
[81] Perhaps it is worth noting that, although it does not appear in the texts we have discussed in this

socialism, of the class implications of their intention 'to extend to the population at large their own values, tastes and privileges'.[82] Fabian socialism is conservative, and such conservatism neglects the individual in its pursuit of a middle-class social unity.[83] This ideological difference separates Forster from the Fabian society, as he said in his tribute to Beatrice Webb that 'I could never have been intimate with them: only those who worked with them could be that, and my own schemes for improving society run upon different lines'.[84] It is telling that Forster uses the word 'intimate': intimacy, plus 'affection' and 'sympathy', the two words we have seen, reveals Forster's enduring advocacy of personal relationships.

I have considered Dorothea's educational ideal and Fabian connection in some detail because, for all their discrete ideological associations, they are woven into, and mutually explanatory and significant to, her engagement with folksong collection. Dorothea's role as a folksong collector is educational in intent and socialist in practice, but conservative in outlook. By inculcating upon 'the people' the songs she has collected and edited, a folksong collector like Dorothea becomes not so much a musical revivalist as a middle-class expropriator and exploiter, not so much a social reformer as a Foucauldian figure of state control. The more she emphasizes the strangeness of the places she has to venture to collect the songs or the people she has to meet, the more explicit her class bias becomes. Dorothea does not value the individual, and Forster's

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chapter, 'muddle' is one of the words recurrent in Forster's work.

[82] Ian Britain, *Fabianism and Culture: A Study in British Socialism and the Arts, c. 1884-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 6-7.

[83] Ian Britain argues that we have to distinguish Fabian socialism from sheer elitism that has 'no egalitarian ramifications' because Fabians' motivation 'was nothing if not benevolent'. Britain, p. 230. Nevertheless, I maintain that the social outlook projected by British Fabianism is conservative, for it still aimed to achieve an ideal society based on middle-class value judgment.

[84] *TCD*, p. 210. It is also intriguing to see how the Webbs differentiated themselves from the groups to which Forster belonged. The best example is Beatrice's letter to Forster on Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (24 April 1933), in which she said: 'What puzzles me is the cause of this fundamental difference of judgement between us and Lowes Dickinson'. *GLD*, p. 224.

opposition to her lack of sympathy is suggested through his description of a brief encounter between Dorothea and a window-cleaner who comes to sing her a song he knows. 'Pray that he's not full of fleas', Dorothea jokes before her visitor arrives.[85] After the window-cleaner turns out to be 'a disappointment' – he knows no folksong and is 'difficult to get rid of' – Dorothea plays 'Pergolesi, to drive all interruption from her ears'.[86] In the early twentieth century, Pergolesi was one of the composers who received extensive attention from musical antiquarians: for example, Stravinsky's ballet *Pulcinella* (1920) used pieces that, at that time, were thought to be Pergolesi's composition.[87] Dorothea's choice of Pergolesi, then, suggests her interest in 'early music', in studying and performing archaic works that later scholars often find wrongly attributed. Like her enthusiasm for English folksong, this interest reveals a scholarly scrupulousness in its intention to 'revive' past musical cultures. Forster's satiric depiction of her encounter with the window-cleaner therefore mocks such pretentious antiquarianism. Also, it can be read as his mischievous prediction of the folksong movement's fruitless future prospect. Most importantly, Dorothea is exposed as a folksong collector unsympathetic to those who provide her with songs.

It becomes evident, then, that Forster is delineating his personal belief and social ideal by writing against what Dorothea represents, against the institutions to which she belongs, and against the ideologies upheld by those institutions. Dorothea's interest in 'folk' culture, social improvement, and mass education reveals an enchantment with the collective, but also suggests a disregard for the individual. Intriguingly, in the same chapter where she dismisses the window-cleaner, her cordial interaction with Clesant

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[85] *AS*, p. 184.
[86] *AS*, p. 187.
[87] Stephen Walsh, 'Stravinsky, Igor', in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> [accessed 28 August 2013]

prompts the man to exclaim that he 'had never met with such sympathy from a woman'.[88] At one point, Dorothea is also described as 'risqué', and we cannot help but wonder whether Forster might be portraying her as another Helen Schlegel whose sympathy remains reserved for those whom she intuitively connects with. More importantly, although the unfinished status of *Arctic Summer* leaves everything uncertain, Dorothea, sympathetic or not, seems to take on the role of mediator, gradually bringing the two male characters together to fulfil Forster's 'democratic' vision. If such was the plan Forster had in mind, that Dorothea would be 'sacrificed' for the sake of the exclusively male bonding between Martin and Clesant, what we have to investigate, then, is the misogynistic undercurrent of Forster's social envisioning. As in our earlier discussion regarding Vashti, Forster's criticism of musical professionalism produces uneasy implications for his ideas of gender.

As we have seen, the authority of a professional musical scholar is manifested in 'her' ability to determine what can, and cannot, be said in public about music: Vashti prescribes to her audience the intellectual way of listening to music whilst neglecting the subversive physicality of musical effect; Dorothea edits the texts of her songs before disseminating them among 'the people'. Both of Forster's texts represent musical professionalism as controlling of, and complicit with, social norms. In contrast, musical amateurism is always that something lying behind, which Forster insinuates by undercutting and questioning professional culture – that something elusive and ambivalent. None of Forster's fictional music amateurs have shared with the public their interpretations of music: Philip's enjoyment at the Italian theatre, Rickie and

[88] *AS*, p. 186.

Ansell's discussion about Wagner, Helen's introspective listening to Beethoven, Lucy's playing of Beethoven, Ronny's unmentionable viola-playing – all of these characters' responses to music either stay in their mind or are communicated within their personal circles. It is here that Risley, the initiator of Maurice's homosexual awareness, blurs the boundary between professional and amateur: his communication with Maurice after the concert of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, though not publicized, assumes the right to interpretation from the professional and, as an amateur, gives a definitive reading of the symphony's incestuous desire whilst sneering at the ignorance of the public. It is no coincidence, then, that the novel was not published during Forster's lifetime because of its openly portrayal of homosexual relationships. It is also sufficiently clear that Risley touches on taboo issues when he talks about Tchaikovsky's closeted homosexuality. What I wish to look into here is the ways in which the very forwardness of Risley's amateurism delineates Forster's 'democratic' vision.

When studying *Maurice*, critics tend to bypass Risley: Alan Sinfield briefly observes how Risley 'does know how to be queer' whilst Sarah Cole directly labels him as 'the Wildean homosexual' in the novel.[89] Although Risley's characterization undoubtedly alludes to Wildean mannerism, Risley's appearances in the novel – which often take place when Maurice is in an epistemological crisis – do invite more discussion.[90] One of the scenes is his defiant interpretation of Tchaikovsky in the post-concert talk with Maurice. Critics have analysed Risley's introduction of Tchaikovsky's biography to Maurice and his wordplay of 'Pathique' and 'Pathetic'.[91]

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[89] Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde, and the Queer Moment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 140. Cole, p. 65.

[90] Risley, according to Forster, was based on Lytton Strachey. *M*, p. 218.

[91] Bret L. Keeling highlights Risley's reference to Tchaikovsky's biography to Maurice as a more effective disclosure of sexual identity than Clive's use of the music. Keeling, pp. 95-8. Michelle Fillion reads Risley's wordplay of the symphony's programme as Risley's insinuation of pederasty as a possible solution to Maurice's sexual crisis. Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm*, pp. 103-4.

Informed by these analyses, I pay particular attention to Risley's exclamation: 'I come to see all respectable London flock. Isn't it *supreme*!'.[92] Whilst Risley's satiric, mock-god tone is clear, his social vision is reflected by the words he uses here. The term 'flock' depicts the whole 'London' as a herd, as an indiscriminate crowd, ignorant of the incestuous emotions in the biography of Tchaikovsky's composition of the symphony. The verb also reflects how Tchaikovsky's foreignness translates into public appeal and exposes the consumption of Tchaikovsky's exoticism in this British environment. The curiously multi-referential adjective 'respectable' mocks the perception of concert-going as a socially sanctioned activity conducive to one's social mobility. It also jibes at the audience's decently covered guilty pleasure in the sensationality of Tchaikovsky's dubious sexuality and suspicious death.[93] For Risley, the concert is not about Tchaikovsky's music but about the spectacle ('I come to see') of the unknowing audience. His knowledge of the symphony, then, places him in a domain where only those who understand the encoded narrative of the symphony can enter; it is a domain outside, and high above, the spectacle of the audience. Risley's exclamation therefore takes the form of class snobbery, only in this circumstance it is not the professional but the amateur who professes to be superior to the rest of society.

Risley's words thus mock contemporary English professionals' masculinist condemnation of Tchaikovsky's 'musical invasion'.[94] Influenced by rumours and innuendos about Tchaikovsky's life, Anglo-American criticism of Tchaikovsky in the

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[92] *M*, p. 137.

[93] As Judith A. Peraino suggests, 'the contradiction at the heart of much of Tchaikovsky's posthumous reception, fed by the epistemology of the closet, is that Tchaikovsky as homosexual necessarily deceives, yet as composer he obviously confesses'. Tchaikovsky's homosexuality as an 'open secret' thus augments the appeal of his music to the audience. Judith A. Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens: Musical Technologies of Queer Identity from Homer to Hedwig* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 82.

[94] C. Hubert Parry, *Summary of the History and Development of Medieval and Modern European Music* (London: Novello, 1905), p. 119.

first half of the twentieth century tended to adopt highly gendered and eroticized vocabulary to comment on Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* and its effect on the audience.[95] It is not surprising that the most vehement attack on Tchaikovsky came from academics associated with the English Musical Renaissance.[96] That 'Renaissance', as previously discussed, is a gendered concept is exemplified by their proposal that folk and Tudor music would secure the national solidarity necessary for a resistance to highly affective music like Tchaikovsky's.[97] Risley's interpretation, then, forms a commentary on this professional appraisal of Tchaikovsky. Yet such a commentary is made with an air of ostentatious condescension. Those who share knowledge of the symphony form a social minority, opposed to a general public perceived, and condemned, by Risley as an uninformed crowd. The equality Martin envisions in his response to Dorothea's educational ideal does not exist in Risley's exclamation. Nor does Risley's outlook differ so much from Dorothea's Fabian leanings in terms of the way they look at other social classes. If this social minority delineates Forster's 'democratic' vision, such a democracy is marked by its very exclusivity. And here, Leonard Bast's failed attempt to acquire 'culture' through concert-going in *Howards End* further highlights this problem of Forster's celebration of amateurism: Bast's recognition that 'the real thing's money and all the rest is a dream' may underline an individual's material needs and dissolve the Victorian myth of self-education, but it also exposes a blind spot in Forster's notion of 'democracy'.[98] The rationale behind Forster's portrayal of Bast's struggle with foreign names in music is spelled out in 'The Beauty of Life' (1911): 'The average man', Forster suggests, 'needs to be just a little braver. […] Why are we so afraid of

[95] Malcolm Hamrick Brown, 'Tchaikovsky and His Music in Anglo-American Criticism, 1890s-1950s', in *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity*, ed. Sophie Fuller and Lloyd Whitesell, pp. 134-49.
[96] Hughes and Stradling, p. 59.
[97] Hughes and Stradling, p. 190.
[98] *HE*, p. 235.

doing the "wrong thing," […] of pronouncing the names of artists or musicians wrongly?'.[99] Forster is thus criticizing Bast's timid approach to music as a route to culture rather than for its own sake, yet the phrase, 'The average man', generalizes the lower-middle classes and reveals Forster's own privileged social background. Whilst one can argue that *Howards End* indeed presents a consciously problematic view of and reflection on class discrepancy and social improvement, reading Leonard Bast alongside the conversation between Maurice and Risley augments the ambiguity of Forster's championing of amateur engagement with music.

What further complicates the scene is an unobtrusive female character placed extremely ambiguously against this male exclusivity. At first glance, it seems that in *Maurice*, where female characters are less prominent, Forster is thus able to delineate a more direct critique of musical professionalism. Under closer scrutiny, however, a female character plays an important role in facilitating the meeting between Risley and Maurice. Risley's interpretation would not have been heard – that is, the encounter between Maurice and Risley could not have happened – without the concert ticket given to Maurice by a Miss Tonks. Friend with Maurice's sister Kitty, Violet Tonks meets Kitty at the Domestic Institute and is considered a 'socialist'.[100] Whilst Forster's depiction of the friendship between Miss Tonks and Kitty invites more discussion within lesbian studies than it is possible to provide here, I will conclude by reflecting on the place of women in Forster's 'democratic' vision. When given the ticket, Maurice is thinking about the possibility of marriage and thus takes the ticket as a promising sign for a potentially 'normal' relationship: he 'has a warm feeling of gratitude towards

[99] 'The Beauty of Life' (1911), in *AEOW*, pp. 169-75 (p. 173).
[100] *M*, p. 123.

Miss Tonks. Unfortunately, after the concert he met Risley'.[101] The conspicuous 'Unfortunately' may have revealed an expectation for Maurice's return to social convention, but its sharp irony topples such an expectation and foreshadows Maurice's gradual reconciliation with his homosexuality. Here, by using Miss Tonks's ticket as a means of arranging the meeting between Maurice and Risley, Forster is parodying his previous portrayals of women as mediator between two men and transforming homophile friendliness into homosexual recognition. The small, 'democratic' community of male musical amateurs is thus facilitated by, but also made possible at the expense of, women. Whilst one could highlight the exclusion of Miss Tonks from this 'democracy' as an example of Forster's misogyny, one could also stress the importance of her ticket to the encounter and suggest Forster's irresolution as to where to place women in his social ideal.

These contradictory readings emphasize the ambivalence of Forster's text. Without muting such ambivalence, it is notable that the three texts discussed in the chapter present, once again, the continuing relevance, and importance, of music to Forster's conceptualization of his personal ideology. For Forster, his preoccupation with alternative social structures to that of the public and the dominant during the period before the First World War was formulated through his representations of the increasingly professional culture in the discipline of music. Such formulations mark an ongoing process over those years, representing a long negotiation of gender and class issues in the hope of delineating his ideal 'democracy', publishable or not.

[101] *M*, p. 137.

Epilogue

'Life in Music'

One of Forster's earliest fictions, 'The Story of a Panic' has been called many things: 'a remarkable story, [I] wondered how the Independent Review dare publish it' (by Charles Sayles, Assistant Librarian at Cambridge); 'a fanciful tale, full of charm and power' (by a *Daily Telegraph* reviewer); and, more recently, 'a redrawing of the traditional "make-up" of masculinity' (by William Greenslade).[1] To this list we might also add: an experiment of the political suggestiveness of literary representations of music. The story describes the transformation of Eustace from a lethargic boy to an 'uproarious' creature after a mythical visit from Pan.[2] If we read the moment when Eustace blows his whistle and makes an 'excruciating noise' – perhaps to summon Pan? – as the start of his transformation, the whole process reaches its climax when Eustace sings:

> He had stopped his running, and was singing, first low, then loud – singing five-finger exercises, scales, hymn tunes, scraps of Wagner – anything that came into his head. His voice – a very untuneful voice – grew stronger and stronger, and he ended with a tremendous shout which boomed like a gun among the mountains, and awoke everyone who was still sleeping in the hotel.[3]

The conspicuous military metaphor for vocal spontaneity, the juxtaposition of Wagner's

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[1] Forster, 'My Books and I', in *LJ*, pp. 300-6 (p. 303); Anon., 'Unsigned notice', *Daily Telegraph*, 17 May 1911, p. 4, cited in *E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Philip Gardner, pp. 169-70 (p. 169); and William Greenslade, '"Pan" and the Open Road: Critical Paganism in R.L. Stevenson, L. Grahame, E. Thomas and E. M. Forster', in *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30*, ed. Lynne Hapgood and Nancy L. Paxton (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 145-61 (p. 150).

[2] 'The Story of a Panic', in *MS*, pp. 1-22 (p. 11).

[3] *MS*, p. 15.

music and rudimentary singing exercises, the association of Eustace's dithyrambic singing with Pan's excess physical, emotional, and sexual energy, the implications of the singing as a wake-up call to Eustace's middle-class compatriots – this passage suggests Forster's interest in representing music at the very beginning of his literary career. More importantly, it reflects his attention to the participation of music in a contentious cultural milieu, and to the ways in which music intersects with a variety of political discourses.

As we have seen in the previous four chapters, such an exploration of the relations between music and politics continued throughout Forster's life. In both creative works and critical writings, in published books and private accounts, Forster's representations of music reflect and comment on political contingencies. The very significance of music to Forster's formulations of ideas of friendship, nationality, heroism, and democracy suggests that, in many ways, music generated his decades of writing. Critics, then and now, often do not think of Forster as a prolific writer – even he himself did not think so until B. J. Kirkpatrick had compiled a bibliography of his work, as he wrote in 1964:

> Critics have sometimes said—and have sometimes intended it as a compliment—that I have written very little. They must change their tune now. I shall certainly change mine. The longer one lives the less one feels to have done, and I am both surprised and glad to discover from this bibliography that I have written so much.[4]

First, Forster's awareness of critical evaluations of him as a writer suggests a degree of concern with his 'afterlife'. In his later years, Forster did think about his posthumous

[4] E. M. Forster, 'Foreword', in *A Bibliography of E. M. Forster,* ed. B. J. Kirkpatrick, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. vii.

'fame', most explicitly shown by his almost scrupulous preparation of the typescript of *Maurice* for posthumous publication.[5] Second, using a musical analogy to describe critical opinions, the passage demonstrates, once again, how frequently Forster invokes a sense of music in his writing. What is equally intriguing – if not more so – is that he compares his view on his life's work, too, as a 'tune'.

Forster's 'tune', which he admitted he also had to change, makes an oblique allusion to his own verdict on his literary output the previous year. On 5 November 1963, he wrote in his diary:

> How I miss my Life in Music, which ceased when Aldeburgh did. It had a warmth and vitality which Life in Literature has lacked. For any one who survives from it my heart beats: e.g. for the Croziers three days ago.[6]

The references to Aldeburgh and to the Croziers suggest that Forster's 'Life in Music' is referring to his collaboration with Britten and Eric Crozier on *Billy Budd* around 1950. He made a similar comment in his letter to Britten after the premiere in 1951: 'this opera is my Nunc Dimittis, in that it dismisses me peacefully, and convinces me I have achieved.'[7] The above diary entry thus reflects Forster's enduring pride in his participation in the opera and suggests that Forster, at that particular point, valued this one achievement in music more than his decades of work as a writer. Perhaps Forster's pensive attitude towards his 'Life in Literature' is simply contributed by the fact that, compared to the artistic collaboration on *Billy Budd*, his writing career had been, if not a long travail, at least a lone journey. It is also possible that he was thinking about his writing career as a novelist and thus excluded all his non-fiction work when he made

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[5] See Philip Gardner's introduction, *M*, p. xliv. Wendy Moffat's also provides a useful account of Forster and Isherwood's arrangement of the American publication of *Maurice*: Moffat, pp. 3-21.
[6] Diary entry (5 November 1963). *JD*, ii, 152.
[7] Letter to Benjamin Britten (9 December 1951). *SL2*, p. 246.

such a comparison. Most significantly, as the end of the diary entry reaches the end of a page, Forster, as if an after-thought had suddenly occurred, writes as a detached commentator, up from the bottom at the right margin of the completed page, 'A proof that music's my deepest?'.[8]

His 'deepest' what? The incompleteness of the sentence and the question mark endow this marginalium with elliptical suggestiveness. It produces an effect similar to the end of the 'Appassionata' passage in *A Diary for Timothy*, when the mining noise cuts short the music and leaves it unresolved. The irresolution leaves us to want to hear more about Forster's life in music. For in acknowledging how music was crucial to his personal ideology, by interpreting musical allusions intertwined with his negotiations of a diverse range of subjects, through exploring his enduring, protean interest in music, we can recover a sense of the political reference of Forster's engagement with music.

[8] *JD*, ii, 152.

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