Modernity, Mobility, and Materiality in E. M. Forster's Fiction

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abstract

Through attending to processual and performative human-world relations, this thesis reveals embodied activities as central to developing and showing people's identities and social relations in E. M. Forster's fiction. The materiality of the world is prevalent in his literary works where the textures of places, objects, and things are meticulously described. Places are depicted as dynamic and affective entities that are experienced physically and sensorially through movement. Their materiality is fundamental to the formation of human identity, habit, and nature. Acknowledging embodied interactions as essential to shaping human character unsettles common perceptions of Forster's evocation of rurality as a celebration of pre-modern Englishness against the inevitable advancement of modernity.

Forster's approach to modernity engages, this thesis argues, with changes wrought by the modern technologies of transport and communication that dominated human life in the early twentieth century. His fiction responds to the ways in which these technologies altered the material textures of the world and how people move across space. Privileging the sense of vision over the other human proximal senses, these technologies changed the quality of spatial and personal encounters, a chief focus for Forster's concerns about modernity. His fiction reveals that transforming the way humans interact with the nonhuman stimulates a change in aesthetic and moral values. Relocating Forster's humanism from the ideal to the embodied and the material makes his ideas and fiction pertinent to twenty-first century debates in material philosophy and thought.

Contents

Introduction

Modernity, Mobility, Materiality

> You know that we have lost the sense of space. We say "space is annihilated", but we have annihilated not space but the sense thereof. We have lost a part of ourselves. I determined to recover it, and I began by walking up and down the platform of the railway outside my room. Up and down, until I was tired, and so did recapture the meaning of "Near" and "Far". "Near" is a place to which I can get quickly *on my feet*, not a place to which the train or the air-ship will take me quickly. "Far" is a place to which I cannot get quickly on my feet; the vomitory is "far", though I could be there in thirty-eight seconds by summoning the train. Man is the measure. That was my first lesson. Man's feet are the measure for distance, his hands are the measure for ownership, his body is the measure for all that is lovable and desirable and strong.[1]

E. M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops' (1909) takes place in a dystopian future where people live in isolated cells in a machine that meets all their needs. The Machine denies people physical interaction with each other and with the surface of the earth, an environment that is not suitable for living anymore. In the Machine, people communicate via round blue plates that transmit sounds and images. When he escapes the pod, Kuno, who addresses his mother in the quoted extract, revolts against the Machine which 'has robbed [them] of the sense of space and of the sense of touch' (131). He walks and exercises to restore his bodily sensations that have been deadened during 'the centuries of wrong against the muscles and the nerves, and those five portals

[1] E. M. Forster, 'The Machine Stops', in *E. M. Forster: Collected Short Stories* (London: Penguin Group, 1947), p. 125. Further references to this story are given in the text.

by which we can alone apprehend' (145). 'The Machine Stops' is revealing of Forster's views regarding human perception and the role that bodily senses play in human progress and development. More evidently, it shows the deterministic quality of the environment and the extent to which its artificiality defines and shapes human experiences. From the outset, the 'The Machine Stops' is humanist in its emphasis on the significance of human experience, and because it depicts a character that celebrates human independence from the overly directive quality of the place. Still, the humanism the text promotes does not overlook the nonhuman element of the world that is exhibited in its various material textures which shape and develop the characters' experiences and identities. I argue that Forster's humanist views are themselves framed by the nonhuman. Despite Kuno's calls in 'The Machine Stops' that 'Man is the measure' (125), the text shows how the characters are fundamentally the product of nonhuman entities, whether they are material and felt, or ideologically present in their ideas and beliefs.

The different discussions in this thesis revolve around the correlation between the human and nonhuman elements of Forster's narratives. It is easy to assume that the portrayal of the nonhuman authoritative capacity contradicts Forster's liberal-humanist philosophy which may be suggestive of a natural separation between the human mind and the nonhuman materiality of the world.[2] However, I argue that Forster's texts not only reconcile the two forces, but also bring our attention to an interdependent

[2] Tony Davies writes in his definition of liberal humanism that 'every human being is an autonomous individual endowed with natural rights, talents and responsibilities, and the rational means to realise them to the fullest extent' in *Humanism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 151. Davies uses the same term to discuss Forster's humanism, and notes that Forster's work shows evidence of 'sceptical liberal-humanism', p. 41. Forster's sceptical liberal-humanism is also discussed by Golam Gaus Al- Qiiaderi and Sakiba Ferdousi in their article 'Liberal Humanism and the Concept of Race in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India'*, *Journal of Sociology*, 1.2 (2009), 15-28.

relationship between the human and the nonhuman.[3] In recent years, there has been a growing attention to the material and the nonhuman in different disciplines. The renewed awareness of the critical disregard of nonhuman agency have contributed to the emergence of theories which question and explore how the long-standing primacy of humans, especially in social sciences research, has shaped the politics of social and individual lives.[4] Before I unravel the current critical debates on the politics of the material in relation to Forster's works in the introduction and throughout the chapters, I want to argue that my research observes in Forster's attentiveness to the nonhuman an encompassing quality that not only makes his fiction still relevant nowadays, but also deems it an inventive work. Forster's novels and short stories anticipate and engage with current theories and practices that characterise the twenty-first century's vision of the relationship between humans and nonhumans. My approach shows that attending to the material elements of Forster's fiction develops a profound understanding of his complex humanist views and their implicated position with modernity.

One of the reasons why I begin the introduction with a quote from 'The Machine Stops' is because it offers an important vantage-point for exploring Forster's humanism, especially because the story depicts an extreme version of a modern world where people have lost their subjectivity and individuality – a quality that Forster deemed essential to humans. These two humanist traits that reclaim freedom and self-determination to the human race are the basis for the common idea in different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences that civilisation, modernity, and human progress should be understood and studied in man-made environments and in distance

[3] Forster styles himself as a humanist in his essay 'What I Believe' (1938), and critics traditionally consider his humanism related to that of human progress, development and empathy. See more about the different meanings of humanism and how it is implicated in Forster's work in Davies, pp. 39-49.
[4] I use the word 'renewed' to avoid claiming that 'new materialism' and the attention to the agency of objects/things is indeed new in critical debate.

from the deterministic qualities of nature.[5] Approaching culture and nature as two separate entities is problematised in this story and other writings by Forster that demonstrate how culture and human civilisation cannot achieve growth and progress in distance from nature.[6] Although modernity is conveyed as a condition that helps bring to human attention new and unconventional freeing ideas, identities and sensations, the texts imply that the constant process of homogenising human experiences under the name of culture and democracy equally creates an absence of freedom and individuality through the promotion of modern technology and modernised built environments.

Forster's work questions the distance between nature and culture by foregrounding the role of the human body in human perception, development and growth, and by extension, interpersonal relationships, society and human values. In 'The Machine Stops', Forster explicitly reveals his interest in embodied experiences and asserts the importance of the body thirty years later in his essay 'What I Believe' where he states that: 'I do not feel that my aristocrats [the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky] are a real aristocracy if they thwart their bodies, since bodies are the instruments through which we register and enjoy the world'.[7] The essay makes a clear and deliberate link between the human values Forster celebrates and bodily perception. My thesis argues that Forster's fiction, written many years before this renowned and revealing account, is observant not only of the prominence of the body in the process

[5] The relationship between nature and culture has always been of interest to researchers in different disciplines. See Stephen Horigan, *Nature and Culture in Western Discourses* (London: Routledge, 1988). See also the discussion on the relationship between nature and culture in the study of landscape in human geography and how it changed over the years in John Wylie, *Landscape* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 9-10.

[6] Kelly Elizabeth Sultzbach notes that Forster, like other modernist writers, 'often use the animate environment to critique cultural assumptions about scientific hierarchies, political power, and traditional forms of knowledge, associating formal innovation and natural imagery with an effort to express a larger consciousness of a diverse world' in her book *Ecocriticism in the Modernist Imagination: Forster, Woolf and Auden* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 8.

[7] E. M. Forster, 'What I Believe', in *Two Cheers for Democracy (Abinger Edition 11)*, ed. by E. M. Forster (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), pp. 65-73 (pp. 70-71).

of sensory perception and cognition, but also of the ways in which embodied interactions with the world contribute to the shape and development of people's habits, attitudes, and values.

It is in the light of human-world relations that Forster's humanist ideas are located in his fiction. What my reading offers is an examination of the values that determine interpersonal relationships in view of human encounters with the materiality of the world around them. Forster criticism often studies his liberal-humanism in relation to the socio-historical context of his writing. His humanist sentiments are also explored by taking into consideration his own biography and non-fiction, as well as the social relations created in his works between different classes, religions, nationalities and cultural backgrounds.[8] It is tempting to link Forster's fiction and non-fiction, especially when the latter can be used in interpreting the different themes and tropes that lack clarity in his works. However, although I do refer at times to Forster's non-fiction and criticism in my thesis, my main object of study in his novels and short stories.[9] One of the main reasons is that due to the nature of my research, my analysis is interested in the relational human-world experiences which are best shown through the careful depiction of embodied encounters in fiction. The non-representational and processual human activities that I attend to in my analysis, especially tracing how everyday encounters and experiences of the world contribute to people's identities, development, and their humanism, cannot be expressed in simple statements such as

[8] See Frederick Crews', *E.M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), Davies, *Humanism*, pp. 39-49, Michael Levenson, 'Liberalism and Symbolism in Howards End', in *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form from Conrad to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 78–93, Lionel Trilling, *E.M. Forster* (New York: New Directions, 1965), and A. Woodward, 'The Humanism of E. M. Forster', *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, 20 (1963), pp. 17-34.

[9] David Medalie proposes various reasons that problematise the ways Forster's critics mix his fiction and non-fiction, especially that Forster himself believed strongly that the process of writing in the two genres is disparate. See Medalie's article 'Bloomsbury and other Values', in *The Cambridge Companion to E. M. Forster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 32-46 (p. 34).

these found in his essays, diaries and letters. Another less important but appealing reason is that in an interview in the Paris Review in 1957, Forster explains: 'I am more interested in achievement than in advance on it and decline from it. And I am more interested in works than in authors'.[10] My thesis is similarly more interested in the creative works, than on the influence of Forster's life on his own writings and their development throughout the years. It became more apparent during the last stages of my research that using Forster's non-fiction and his criticism to interpret his literary texts can inhibit attending more carefully to the intricate and unstudied relations between his different literary works.

It can be rather misleading to analyse Forster's understanding of humanism in his fiction separately or in sequence. My discussion in the various chapters shows how Forster's texts not only complement each other, but also appear sometimes as a jigsaw, where the meanings of one text cannot be found in that text alone, but through understanding the tropes and the meanings exhibits in earlier and later works.[11] Reading Forster's fictional works in relation to each other makes the famous epigraph of *Howards End* (1910), 'Only Connect', not just linked to the significance of interpersonal relationships, human connections with people and the world, and the values that are the foundation of human progress and development. Only connect, in this thesis, also means connecting Forster's works to each other, a rarity in published monographs on Forster which normally attend to novels separately or in pairs.

The chapters in this thesis address Forster's attitude to modernity in an attempt to explain his views rather than justify them. Modernity alters the relationship between

[10] F P. N. Furbank and F. J. H. Haskell, 'Interview with E. M. Forster, E. M. Forster: The Art of Fiction No. 1', *The Paris Review*, 1 (1956) <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5219/e-m-forster-the-art-of-fiction-no-1-e-m-forster> [accessed 2nd June 2018].

[11] Medalie observes that Forster shows 'a distrust of the extreme formalism of the Bloomsbury art theorists: unlike a painting or a sculpture, a novel or a piece of music cannot be considered as a contained entity' in 'Bloomsbury and other Values', p. 117.

humans and the world by changing the ways their bodies move in space. The alteration that is mostly conveyed in modern transport and communication technologies' effects on the qualities of human mobility that Forster deems essential to human identity and interpersonal relationships. Understanding human identity in movement rather than sedentarily unsettles the conventional reading of Forster's works which asserts that his ideas, sentiments and evocations of national identity are expressed in relation to stationary locales.[12]

The spatial dimension of Forster's novels and short stories has constantly received interest from researchers of his fiction and non-fiction. The rising interest in the geographical aspect of his works in the late twentieth century is signaled by Jeremy Tambling's *E. M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays* (1995), which explores the works of prominent scholars on various themes, including the relationship between space, language, gender and sexuality, which have not only shaped the research on Forster's fiction for the past twenty years, but also paid attention to less prominent novels at the time, such as *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907) and *A Room with a View* (1908). David Bradshaw's edited collection *The Cambridge Companion to E. M. Forster* (2007) presents essays which expand on similar themes but show more interest in *Maurice* (1971) and Forster's homosexuality. The volume also explores the recurring issues on spatial, social, and religious contrasts in the novels, and raises questions on Forster's ambivalent attitude towards modernism, liberalism and imperialism.[13] Over the years, Forster's novels have continuously

[12] This will be discussed more elaborately with examples in Chapter Two. Ruth Livesey's work on Victorian novels also problematises the traditional understanding of British national identity in relation to fixed landscapes. See Ruth Livesey, *Writing the Stage Nation: Locality on the Move in Nineteenth Century British Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1-26.

[13] See David Bradshaw, *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 4-5.

generated criticism on themes of Englishness,[14] liberalism,[15] humanism,[16] Hellenism,[17] colonialism and post-colonialism,[18] tourism and travel,[19] and gender and sexuality.[20] Recent years have also shown an increased academic interest in Forster's legacy that has taken shape in various film adaptations of his works, and in the works of various contemporary writers.[21] The different tropes and themes in Forster's works which have been of interest to contemporary scholars have influenced the ways in which the various geographical places in both his life and fiction are understood and analysed. Critics have to date approached places in Forster's works as static entities that exist in

[14] The theme of Englishness in Forster's writing recurs in different works, recent studies are seen in Jason Peter Finch, *E. M. Forster and English Place: A Literary Topography* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2011) and Paul Peppis, 'Forster and England' in *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 47-61.

[15] See Brian May, *The Modernist as Pragmatist: E. M. Forster and the Fate of Liberalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997)

[16] See Crews, *The Perils of Humanism*, Davies, *Humanism,* and Al- Qiiaderi and Ferdousi, 'Liberal Humanism and the Concept of Race'.

[17] See Peter Jeffreys, *Eastern Questions: Hellenism and Orientalism in the Writings of E. M. Forster and C. P. Cavafy* (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), and Ann Ardis, 'Hellenism and the Lure of Italy', in *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 62-76.

[18] See readings by prominent postcolonial critics such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and more elaborately in *Culture and Imperialism*, and Homi Bhabha's 'Articulating the Archaic', in *Literary Theory Today*, ed. by Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 203-218. See also Todd Kuchta, 'Suburbia, Ressentiment, and the End of Empire in *A Passage to India*', *Modernisms*, 36.3 (2003), 307-329, and Daniel R Shwarz, 'Forster's Passage to India: The Novel of Manners as Political Novel' in *Reading the Modern British and Irish Novel 1890-1930* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

[19] See Robert Burden, *Travel, Modernism and Modernity* (England: Ashgate, 2015), John Sayer Martin, *E. M. Forster*: *The Endless Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), S. P. Rosenbaum, 'Towards a Literary History of Monteriano', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 31.2/3 (1988), 180-198, Suzanne Roszak, 'Social Non-Conformists in Forster's Italy: Otherness and the Enlightened English Tourist', *A Review of International English Literature*, 45.1-2 (2014), 167-194, Sofia Sampaio, '"I wish something would happen to you, my friend!": Tourism and Liberalism in E.M. Forster's Italian novels', *Textual Practice*, 26.5 (2012), 895-920.

[20] See Christopher Lane, 'Forsterian Sexuality', in *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 104-119, Elizabeth Langland, 'Gesturing Towards an Open Space: Gender, Form and Language in *Howards End*', in *E. M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Jeremy Tambling (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), pp. 81-99, and Sara Suleri Goodyear, 'Forster's Imperial Erotic', in *Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 152-170.

[21] A recent study on Forster's literary legacy is Alberto Fernández Carbajal's, *Compromise and Resistance in Postcolonial Writing: E. M. Forster's Legacy* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Worldwide academic interest in Forster's work and his legacy has also resulted in two international conferences on Forster's Legacy in France (December 2015) and Poland (September 2016). See also the conference proceedings of Forster's Legacy by Elsa Cavalé and Laurent Mellet, *"Only Connect": E. M. Forster's Legacies in British Fiction* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2017).

separation from the human body.[22] They are either treated as backgrounds and symbols, or as biographical references, an approach that, despite widely informing Forster criticism, overlooks the dynamism of Forster's landscapes and their lively presence in people's everyday lives. The characters' identities in Forster's novels are developed and improved during bodily movement on different scales and my thesis dwells at length on these moments of human perception that are part of the mundane and everyday lives of his characters. I investigate these unmarked and unexceptional moments of their lives which not only contribute to their experiences but also have plenty to reveal about Foster's understanding of the relationship between humans and the material world. Suggesting that human identity lies in movement rather than in static places immediately locates Forster's works as one example of numerous literary texts that inform mobilities studies.

The new mobilities paradigm initiated by Mimi Sheller and John Urry challenges and problematises sedentary approaches to studying the world in different disciplines and shows how my thesis can be implicated with the approaches it presents. The dynamism of the different places in Forster's writings similarly undermines and challenges the ideas that the mobilities paradigm set itself against: mainly the meanings that are loosely derived from Martin Heidegger's idea of dwelling which the paradigm argues 'locates bounded and authentic places or regions or nations as the fundamental basis of human identity and experience and as the basic units of social research'.[23] The immobility that characterises the meaning of places in Forster criticism is challenged

[22] Some of which are by Glen Cavaliero, *A Reading of E. M. Forster* (London: Macmillan Press Hampshire and London, 1986), Finch, *E. M. Forster and English Place*, D. S. Savage, 'E. M. Forster' in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Malcolm Bradbury (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966), pp.56-70, and Wilfred Healey Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster* (California: Stanford University Press, 1966).
[23] Mimi Sheller, and John Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning*, 38.2 (2006), 207-226 (p. 208).

and redefined through the complex relational and performative practices between humans and places. The exclusivity of the new mobilities paradigm sparked a profound response from humanities researchers, especially literary studies. Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce in their editorial of the special issue on Mobility and Humanities disagree with the 'overly simplistic accounts which position mobilities research as a product of the social sciences'.[24] My thesis raises similar questions to those discussed in current theoretical debates and demonstrates the ways in which literary texts depict the complicated ways mobilities operate on various personal and cultural levels. Throughout this thesis, I show how Forster's writing is attentive to the ways in which embodied practices and the changes that occur in them reveal a change in human attitude and social relations. Characters' movements, perceptions, and sensations in Forster's fiction are indeed 'grounded in very different ontologies, embodied practices, and cultural and historical contexts' that form their values and are what makes them human.[25]

Mobilities research clarifies how the study of place must attend to the significance of its materiality on embodied movement, and thus on human and social practices, development and progress.[26] In the early twentieth century, the modernity that was accompanied by many changes in the conduct of everyday life altered the way humans interact with space and its different materialities. Yet, those who have briefly noted the significance of mobility in Forster's writing have primarily focused on the depiction of disembodied movement rather than its relation to the spatial materiality

[24] Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce, 'Mobility and the Humanities', *Mobilities*, 12.4 (2017), 493-508 (p. 494).
[25] Ibid, p. 497.
[26] See John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), Peter Merriman, *Mobility, Space, and Culture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman, *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013).

depicted in the texts. The awareness of mobility in relation to technology, mainly motoring, has been of interest almost exclusively to the study of *Howards End*. Frederic Jameson notes Forster's interest in mobilities through his representation of modern modes of transport as pleasurable experiences of the changed ways of encountering places and the world in the early twentieth century. Jameson observes that Forster's writing employs 'a new spatial language' to describe 'the unrepresentable totality' of the modern world.[27] He argues that Forster's use of words such as 'infinite' to describe the experience of being in motorcars or trains shows his excitement about 'positive achievement and enlargement of our sensorium'.[28] Jameson's view, albeit true in its accounting for the link between human sensory experiences and movement, is rather reductive because it ties Forster's interest in movement and perception merely to technology and thus overlooks the depiction of walking, another understated yet significant and highly embodied type of movement in Forster's writing.

Andrew Thacker also writes on the significance of motoring in the novel in a chapter in his book *Moving Through Modernity* (2009) where he, like Jameson, considers the depiction of motoring as a response to the new experiences of modernity in the early twentieth century. Thacker proposes that the motorcar is more than just a symbol, but rather has an overall effect on the form of the novel.[29] Motoring in *Howards End* recurs briefly in Lynne Pearce's study on the altered consciousness produced by early twentieth-century driving where she observes that, in *Howards Ends*, the characters' detestation of certain phenomenological experiences that motoring offers

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[27] Fredric Jameson, 'Modernism and Imperialism' in *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, ed. by Terry Eagleton, Fredrick Jameson and Edward Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 56.
[28] Ibid, p. 58.
[29] See Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 46-79, where Thacker responds in this quotation to John Lucas's treatment of the motorcar as a symbol. See John Lucas, 'Discovering England: The View from the Train', *Literature and History*, 6.2 (1997), 37-55 (p. 38).

'is an intrinsic part of the driving experience' that characterises early twentieth-century motoring activities.[30] The previous accounts reveal that Forster's attitude to motoring, and by proxy, modernity, is largely determined by the different motoring images in *Howards End*. I argue that in order to develop a better understanding of Forster's complex attitude to modernity, motoring should not only be approached in its structural or cultural significance in the novel but also through the way it provides drivers and passengers with new material sensations. Although a focus on movement has revealed a new side of Forster's fiction, this thesis argues that it is not just mobility itself but the materiality of the environment which plays a crucial role in shaping and defining the characters' experiences with place in their movement.

Jameson and Thacker detect a sense of thrill and positivity in Forster's writing which applauds the new changes and sensations that modernity brings. They also approach Forster's writing as modernist because of his interests in the modern ways humanity experiences place. Yet, I argue that if anything affirms Forster's position as a modernist writer in regard to his depiction of spatiality, it is not his excitement over the new embodied sensations of movement, but rather his persistent depiction of the necessity for physical touch in his fiction.[31] Forster's texts indeed encourage new experiences that develop human sensory repertoire, but not through technology. Despite the appeal that modernity creates through promoting autonomous and free rationally-

[30] Lynne Pearce, *Drivetime: Literary Excursions in Automotive Consciousness* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 24. Also see Lynne Pearce, 'A Motor-Flight Through Twentieth-Century Consciousness: Capturing the Driving Event' in *Researching and Representing Mobilities: Transdisciplinary Encounters*, ed. by Lesley Murray and Sara Upstone (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 78-98.

[31] Garrington's *Haptic Modernism: Touch and the Tactile in Modernist Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) argues that 'the adventures of the human hand and related sensations of touch and the tactile constitute a substantial tranche of the literature of the modernist period', p. 2. Research on modernist literature has also shown interest in movement in relation to modernity and technology. See David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus, and Rebecca Roach, *Moving Modernisms: Motion, Technology, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

thinking individuals, the texts demonstrate a scepticism of its limiting effects on human bodies. The texts elicit Forster's fears that modernity obscures the already complex relations between people and the world by dematerialising human relations with each other and the world.

Engaging with the materiality and agency of the nonhuman in Forster's fiction enriches my methodological perspective. Although the novels and short stories are the main source for my approach, I am also in debt to an array of theoretical resources from different disciplines. The chapters in this thesis draw upon various elements from human geography, phenomenology, sociology, and anthropology, which have enhanced my analysis and understanding of human-world relations. The rise of what is referred to as New Materialism aims to bring to attention the importance of recognising the active role of nonhuman forces in social, political, historical, economic, geographical and many other events that reveal the ways humans interact with the world around them. By taking into consideration the role of the nonhuman, New Materialism diminishes the many binaries that human-centered approaches create between subject and object, nature and culture, and mind and body.[32] Studying Forster's depiction of the nonhuman forces in his writing and how they influence human everyday life forms a new way through which we can understand his attitude to modernity, especially by raising questions about the effects it has on human embodied presence in a materially changing world.

Attending to embodied experiences also situates my research in phenomenology, especially the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, an anti-Cartesian philosophy that argues that the body is the basis of human knowledge. In

[32] See Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2010), and Terry Eagleton, *Materialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). Also see footnote 34.

Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty states that '[o]ur own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system'.[33] Merleau - Ponty's approach emphasises the role of the body in human perception and criticises the dependence on vision, but his view is problematic because it suggests that the outside world only becomes alive in human perception, an idea that is strongly opposed by different theorists whose approaches are linked to new material, anti-humanist, post-humanist and the many more schools of thought that decentre the human.[34] Phenomenology therefore appears to reject any power that nonhuman entities may hold in human life and experience, as well as the idea that the nonhuman is able to exist and act outside human knowledge and perception. Although phenomenology's privileging of human experience can be indeed problematic, this does not necessarily mean that human experience is unrelated to the significance of the nonhuman. My research trajectories, influenced by Forster's own writing, are equally attentive to the same ideas that set themselves against phenomenology by emphasising the active role of the nonhuman in human experience. Accordingly, by acknowledging the role of the nonhuman in everyday performative and processual activities, my approach becomes associated with what Nigel Thrift names 'non-representational theories' (NRT), an umbrella term that describes those theories which pay attention to human and nonhuman interactions and relationships. They also show an interest in the role of the body and materiality of the world in forming knowledge and experience. Thrift proposes that these links and networks that are created between humans and nonhumans

[33] Maurice Merealu-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 235.
[34] See Diana H. Coole, and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (New York: Duke University Press, 2010), and Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, Cambridge, 2013).

during quotidian embodied performances constitute the relational space which shapes our everyday experiences and in which we live.[35] Phenomenology, as John Wylie carefully explains in his book *Landscape*, has helped develop the work of NRT, yet a problem still arises: 'while non-representational theory recuperates and reinvigorates phenomenological accounts of embodiment, perception and human being-in-the-world, it is important to note that it is also pursuing intellectual trajectories that are in many ways quite opposed to phenomenological forms of understanding'.[36] This is because relational theories such as Actor-Network Theory, Thing Power, Object-Oriented Ontologies and Thing Theory are themselves influenced and developed from the concept of non-representational theories. Their opposition to humanist approaches such as phenomenology exists because they are primarily attentive to the ways in which human experience is strongly relational and determined by the materiality of our surroundings. Emphasising the material dimension suggests that human experience cannot be separated from the world of intertwined relations between subjects and objects.[37] This interest in materiality has created a space to study inanimate materials and generated a subsequent attention to questions of agency that affect the type of relations between the human and the nonhuman.

Questions about Forster's attitude to modernity are also broached in his depiction of human-world physical interactions and their influence on interpersonal relations. These encounters reevaluate the understanding of nostalgia in his work. Although my tone in the thesis may appear opposed to common nostalgic readings, I

[35] Nigel Thrift, *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), p. 8.
[36] Wylie, p. 165.
[37] See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Jane Bennett, 'The Force of Things: Steps Toward an Ecology of Matter', *Political Theory*, 32.3(2004), 347-372, Graham Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything* (London: Penguin Group, 2018), and Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 28.1 (2001), 1-22.

do not refute the presence of nostalgia completely. However, I prefer seeing Forster's attitude as a wariness towards modernity rather than nostalgia *per se*. The unwillingness to accept modernity whole-heartedly, as expressed in his texts, lies at the heart of human everyday material encounters. Forster's attitude towards modernity should not be linked to a feeling of nostalgia towards static objects, houses and locales, but his scepticism is situated in the core of everyday multi-sensory encounters that are altered in the early twentieth century. Thinking about Forster's attitude to modernity as suspicious encourages an understanding of why his texts celebrate certain interactions more than others.

In the middle of the twentieth century, several critics argued that Forster's fiction, especially his last two novels, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India* (1924), cannot be read as realist works for they avoid describing the external reality of the modern world. For instance, Frank Kermode and Peter Burra demanded that his work should be read symbolically because his writing moves towards the representation of the complex world through expressing internal ideas and states of mind, an approach that places him alongside other modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and T. S. Eliot.[38] However, considering Forster as a modernist writer is opposed in late twentieth-century criticism by critics such as Jeremy Tambling who argues that, although Forster's fiction is often discussed as modernist, his literary works are still essentially realist.[39] Tambling claims that Forster rejects the experimental techniques often employed by modernists, and argues that his works deny 'the experience of the

[38] See the claims of a symbolist reading of Forster's novels in Frank Kermode, 'Mr. E. M. Forster as a Symbolist', in *A Collection of Critical Essays*, pp. 90-95, and Peter Burra, 'The Novels of E. M. Forster', in *A Collection of Critical Essays*, pp. 21-33. Malcolm Bradbury himself, however, considers a symbolic reading limits reading Forster's work. See his introduction in *A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 6.

[39] Jeremy Tambling, 'Introduction', in *E. M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Jeremy Tambling (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), p. 3. See also Randal Stevenson's 'Forster and Modernism', in *The Cambridge Companion*, pp. 209-222.

street and the crowd' that defines modernity and marks the works of established modernist writers.[40] I believe that Forster conveys the modern urban experience, albeit in a different mode from other experimental writers, through his attention to the effect modern life has on people's bodies and their movement, and accordingly, on the way they perceive the world. My thesis is not interested in categorising his work, nor do I think that it is necessarily important to do so, but it is worth noting that some of the ideas he represents in his works can be placed in modernist trends such as those explored in Sara Danius's *The Senses of Modernism* (2002), Abbie Garrington's *Haptic Modernism* (2015), David Medalie, *E. M. Forster's Modernism* (2002) and Kelly Elizabeth Sultzbach's *Eco Criticism in the Modernist Imagination* (2016). I show that some of Forster's attitudes and sentiments, especially his views towards technology and his characters' constant striving for human touch, can mark him as a modernist writer.[41]

Yet, to read Forster as a modernist or symbolist writer may lead to the presumption that he sets the world at a distance, to be contemplated from afar through literary tropes. One reason why writers such as Graham Greene reacted against the modernist symbolist mode of writing is that 'it seemed to dissolve and deny the empirical reality of "the visible world"'.[42] Greene claims that experimental writings by authors such as Woolf and Forster are distant from the real world they lived in. My analysis challenges this prevailing view of Forster's treatment of places in his works by arguing two things: the first is that examining human-world relations only reveals how Forster's writing is strongly connected to the material reality of the world, but also how

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[40] Tambling, p. 3.
[41] In *Haptic Modernism*, Garrington argues that the haptic is at the heart of modernist writings. I explore this idea in depth in the final chapter of this thesis. Also, Danius argues that 'classical modernism represents a shift from idealist theories of aesthetic experience to materialist ones, or, which ultimately amounts to the same thing' in *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 2.
[42] David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), p. 50.

the characters' embeddedness or not in their respective environments exhibits the profound ways in which their bodies, and by extension their identities, are open for development and change. The second argument is that symbolic readings do not necessarily mean that the world is set at a distance. Although my approach and analysis does not consider symbols very much, some recent research, such as that by Kelly Sultzbach and Jeffery Mathes McCarthy's *Green Modernism*, shows how the use of symbolism in modernist literature cannot be separated from the nature and ecosystem of the world it represents and is itself embedded in the real world and attention to process.[43]

The images that Forster uses in his fiction do not indicate distance but rather proximity to the materiality of the world he writes about. Dust, the substance that I explore in depth in the first chapter, is an image that is repetitively used in many of Forster's writings as an indication of unfamiliar encounters. Dust can either signal an encounter with different geographical locations or, more significantly, a change in the way people interact with the material landscape, especially through motoring. This chapter argues that one of the ways Forster's texts implicate mobility with modernity and materiality is through their depiction of this complex substance that serves not only as evidence of his attentiveness to the nonhuman but also as a metaphor to describe a myriad of tropes that are constantly explored in his writings and that the chapters of this thesis will explore. The mobility and immobility of dust is telling of Forster's attitude to modernity and tradition, especially by linking his ideas to the subthemes of homosexuality, colonialism and the representation of the 'Other'. Such themes that are

[43] See Sultzbach, *Eco Criticism in the Modernist Imagination*, and Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy, *Green Modernism: Nature and the English Novel 1900-1930* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015). Also, George Bornstein's, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), argues against the common understanding of modernism which treat modernist texts as elitist creative objects that are composed in separation from sociohistorical contexts.

implicated directly and indirectly with his view of modernity are explored in more depth in Chapter Two which moves from exploring the micro-image of dust to the analysis of the dynamic portrayal of earthly surfaces in Forster's landscapes.

Alienation and belonging are ideas that are generally linked to nostalgia and rural Englishness.[44] Chapter Two suggests that attending to the characters' embodied relations with the places they inhabit, especially through the activity of walking in natural landscapes, reorients the common understanding of the idealised and romanticised images that arise in Forster's rural locales. Focusing on human experience in this chapter raises questions about the extent to which the characters' idealised concepts, values and identities are the production of external rather than internal factors that contribute to forming their habits. The discussion will explore the ways in which phenomenology and other theories that decentre human experience can be used to explain human-world relations, especially during the activity of walking, in both familiar and unfamiliar landscapes. I argue that habitual encounters with certain places in the novels influence the ways characters develop their interpersonal relationships. Raising questions about the role of habit in Forster's writings in this chapter is also the basis for my argument in Chapter Three, where I highlight the role of the human body as an essential mode of perception.

Personal relationships continue to be of importance to the themes discussed in the following chapter, especially the role of modernity in hindering or facilitating social connection. I move my discussion in Chapter Three from the rural landscapes to show how the different material textures of cities and suburbs are linked to people's characters and values. I argue that modernity informs people's everyday habits by

[44] See David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion, 1998).

imposing technologies that calculate and determine human performances and abilities. I show in this chapter how Forster's concerns principally lie in modernity's attempts to homogenise people's experiences by surfacing the world with hard materials that contribute to homogenising human experiences. The texts in this chapter show how objectifying human experiences encourages destination-oriented attitudes towards various everyday activities which, I argue, function as a limiting rather than a freeing side of modernity.

Forster's travel fiction similarly shows how the development of human character lies in subjective experiences and away from cultural mediators that tell people how to think about and appreciate certain practices. I demonstrate in this chapter how modernity's objectification of people's experiences can be seen as equivalent to cultural conventions and traditions that limit the role of travel in improving the travellers' knowledge and character. The arguments in this chapter engage with various accounts from the recent research on performative tourism, especially in its attentiveness to embodied and everyday touristic practices. I argue that the texts' depiction of the quotidian is revealing of how the themes of tolerance, sympathy and prejudice are not only found in the extraordinary events in the novels but lie in everyday embodied performances with unfamiliar environments. The anticipation that habits and modernity provide for characters' bodies is weakened during travel when Forster's English characters are forced to deal with people and landscapes that they have no prior knowledge of.

The final chapter elaborates on the discussions initiated in the introduction and throughout the thesis by attending more directly to Forster's attitude to modernity. This chapter considers examples from 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* which depict how people's experiences are mediated through transport and communication

technologies. I examine the texts' portrayal of the ways in which technology dematerialises human-world relations through its push toward an excessive reliance on the sense of vision. I argue that Forster's problematising of technology's effect on human perception is not just a reflection of his attitude towards the modern ways of life but largely due to its indirect impact on aesthetics, human relations and values.

The principal question I aim to answer throughout this thesis is how trivial everyday relationships between people and their surrounding environments can be revealing of their identities, interpersonal relationships and values. The various chapters that examine numerous examples from Forster's fictional writings demonstrate how his attentiveness to the material dimension of the different landscapes depicted in his works shows the ways in which human-world relations are determined by various internal and external factors. Everyday interactions between characters and non-human elements have plenty to reveal about Forster's attitude to modernity, an attitude that is fundamentally linked to his liberal-humanist values or otherwise.

Chapter One

Settled and Unsettled Dust: Hovering between Modernity and Tradition

Dust is a transformative substance in its ability to distribute and redistribute itself in different forms in our everyday life. It is an evasive matter that refuses to be determined. Its shiftiness and inconsistency allows it to be associated with different images and meanings. Dust appears in many of Forster's novels and short stories and is depicted in different settings in England, Italy and India. Dust is portrayed outside in the open air, wandering freely and forming clouds, or settled on human bodies, inanimate objects and the ground. Dust is also depicted indoors, intruding into households and waiting to be dusted, or undisturbed, resting at ease and accumulating on furniture and objects. Dust is a recurring image in Forster's texts and in each setting, Forster takes advantage of dust's unpredictable physical qualities and evasive cultural meanings in order to depict concepts that are difficult to pin down because, like the substance itself, they are in continuous change and alteration.

This chapter is interested in dust's mobility. Through its movement, dust defies straightforward representation. Forster's novels make use of dust's dynamism in the early twentieth century and introduce us to the changed ways this substance moves and associates itself with different meanings. I aim to show how Forster's attentiveness to dust reveals his interest in the material world and human relationship to it. More importantly, through closely observing dust's movement in his texts, I aim to tackle some issues concerning Forster's views on tradition and modernity.

The image of dust has a strong presence in English literary texts through its ability to epitomise life and death, animate and inanimate entities.[45] This ability that materialises in its physical qualities and metaphorical possibilities is explored in various recent studies.[46] Steven Connor observes how '[d]ust has become a source of great contemporary fascination for artists, critics and historians, a powerful quasi-object'.[47] The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed a notable interest in dust in the humanities. Carolyn Steedman's *Dust* explores modern historiography and the material world. She uses dust's fluctuating material qualities to explore the different ways the past shapes the modern world. Steedman observes that 'THERE ARE MANY DUSTS', enough in fact to create what she calls 'Dust Studies'.[48] However, her interest in dust is mainly associated with the idea that dust is differentiated from waste. Dust 'is about circularity […] Nothing *can be* destroyed'.[49] In the same year, Joseph Amato's *Dust: A History of the Small and Invisible* was published. His work traces the history

[45] Dust has often been used in biblical imagery and to signify death. Other examples of dust can also be seen in many works that are beyond of the scope of this chapter. For instance, Hamlet asks 'And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?' in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Hampshire: Macmillan Publishers, 2008), II. 2. 320-320 (p. 66). See also William Blake's 'Europe: A Prophecy' when the speaker describes the vitality of the material world 'when every particle of dust breathes forth its joy' in *The Poetical Works of William Blake V.1*, ed. by Edwin J. Ellis (London: Chatto and Windus, 1906), p. 366.

[46] See Joseph A. Amato, *Dust: A History of the Small and Invisible* (California: University of California Press, 2001), Leslie Simon, *'Bleak House*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and the Aesthetics of Dust', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 42 (2011), 217-236, and Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). Michael Marder's short book *Dust* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) shows an interest in this ordinary substance and provides an account through which dust is linked to different aspects of human life. Marder highlights the activity of 'dusting', and his book is primarily interested in the 'temporal nature' of dust. See Michael Marder, pp. 1-12.

[47] Steven Connor, 'Pulverulence', A talk given at An Evening of Dust, organised by Cabinet magazine for the Hayward Gallery, London, 17 October 2008. <http://www.stevenconnor.com/pulverulence/pulverulence.pdf> [accessed 26/09/2017]

[48] Steedman, *Dust*, p. 157. Steedman briefly discusses how dust is used by Karl Marx to point out to the damaging consequences of industrialization. Charles Dickens also lists many types of dusts in *Our Mutual Friend* (London: Penguin Group, 1971) when describing John Harmon, a man who made all his money by dust: 'he grew rich as a Dust Contractor, and lived in a hollow in a hilly country entirely composed of Dust. On his own small estate the growling old vagabond threw up his own mountain range, like an old volcano, and its geological formation was Dust. Coal-dust, vegetable-dust, bone-dust, crockery dust, rough dust and sifted dust, - all manner of Dust.', pp. 55-56

[49] Steedman, p. 164.

of dust and the miniature in the Western world and their changed cultural position and perception in the mentality of modern developed nations. Amato claims that because dust is 'unnoticed, trodden underfoot', it becomes 'associated with the lowest things, with what is broken, discarded and formless'.[50] Dust's smallness and insignificance, he suggests, is one of the reasons why it has never been a topic of research interest nor studied for its own sake.

In many literary texts, such as novels by Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, dust is mostly associated with the ground and dirt.[51] For example, in both *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855), Gaskell uses dust to express the controlling nature of the masters and the helplessness of the hands: '[w]orking folk won't be ground to the dust much longer' and 'their fathers ground our fathers to the very dust; ground us to powder!'.[52] Silas Wegg in Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) similarly complains: 'am I to grovel in the dust for him to walk over? No!'.[53] However, dust need not necessarily be associated with the earth, especially in other geographical settings where the earth is dry and dust storms occur.[54] While the previous examples from Victorian texts demonstrate dust's strong association with what is low and degraded, the same texts depict dust's dynamism, albeit sometimes in negative ways, where it is

[50] Amato, *Dust*, p. 4.
[51] In Sabine Schülting's *Dirt in Victorian Literature and Culture: Writing Materiality* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), she compares dirt and dust by suggesting that the latter 'lacks any negative association. Dust may be worthless and without any cohesion […] but it is hardly ever disgusting', p. 5. Yet, the negative associations of dust lie in its low status and its degraded relation with the ground.
[52] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), p. 76 and *North and South* (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 306-307.
[53] Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, p. 646.
[54] For example, George Eliot depicts dust in the air in Italy in her novel *Daniel Deronda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and declares that 'in Genoa, the noons were getting hotter, the converging outer roads getting deeper with white dust', p. 533. Also, D. H. Lawrence writes about 'the dust rising from the soft bricks', and how 'the air was full of red dust' in *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, ed. by Paul Eggert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 167, 169.

also found hovering in the wind and surrounding fast vehicles and carriages.[55] In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson's dictionary defines dust as '[e]arth or other matter reduced to small particles'.[56] Notwithstanding the dust's lightness that allows it to dwell temporarily in the air, Johnson's definition limits dust's quality to a matter that is only associated with the ground. A century later, the *Oxford English Dictionary* redefines dust more explicitly as '[e]arth or other solid matter in a minute and fine state of subdivision, so that the particles are small and light enough to be easily raised and carried in a cloud by the wind'.[57] The stress on dust's mobility in later definitions does not indicate that in a matter of hundred years dust has gained some magical ability to move in the air. The slight shift in emphasis and the attention to its movement demonstrates that the way dust is perceived has changed over the years. This transformation did not track a change in the components or value of dust, but in the way certain qualities enhanced its mobility and allowed its dynamism to be noticed.

It is worth noting that my analysis of dust in the different sections of this chapter is not interested in its association with dirt or uncleanliness. Instead, I am more interested in demonstrating how the depiction of dust in Forster's fiction shows his interest in the relationship between humans and the material textures of the environment, a discussion that will continue through the following chapters of this thesis. More importantly, I will show how through his close portrayal of the disparate

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[55] For instance, the narrator in Dickens's *David Copperfield* observes that: '[t]here was dust, I believe. There was a good deal of dust, I believe. I have a faint impression that Mr. Spenlow remonstrated with me for riding in it', *David Copperfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 470. Also in Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, '[t]he keen east wind had long since swept the streets clean, though on a gusty day the dust would rise like pounded ice, and make people's faces quite smart with the cold force with which it blew against them', p. 42.

[56] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* 6th edn. V. 1, (London: J. F. and C. Rivington, 1885), p. 663.

[57] James Murray, et al., *Oxford English Dictionary* (1888), V.3 <https://archive.org/details/oed03arch> [Accessed 06/08/2015].

ways this substance moves and settles, Forster demonstrates the ways in which dust performs and creates new meanings.

It is during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially with the growth of motorcar ownership, that the portrayal of dust emphasises its strong vitality and restlessness. Dust has become evident in people's everyday lives, hovering over the roads, forming clouds behind cars, and coloring the horizons.[58] The visibility of dust's mobility not only made it an interesting topic for motorists and the manufacturers of motorcars and its accessories, but also a powerful metaphor in literary texts.[59] Amato claims that '[d]ust is everywhere because it is the source of everything'.[60] It is true that dust takes part in composing different entities, but its ability to be everywhere is also dependent on its ability to move and settle. It is in its mobility that dust momentarily dwells on the ground's surface or, due to its lightness, wanders freely in the air.

Dust either represents life and the matter of living bodies, or what is dead because, as Steedman asserts, '[d]ust, you see, will always do this: be there and not there; what is left and what is gone'.[61] Dust is paradoxical. It could be anything and can represent nothing. However, what is significant in Forster's depiction of dust in his works is his emphasis on its mobility. It is not just the dust itself but the positive and

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[58] There are various accounts in literary texts that associate dust with motoring. For instance, in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, the 'blue sky was suffused with dust colour on the horizon', *Jacob's Room* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 30-31. Similarly, in D. H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock*, the narrator explains: 'I could feel the swinging drop of the car as it came down the leaps of the hill. We could see the dust trail up among the trees' and 'clouds of dust rose around [Leslie]', in *The White Peacock* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982), pp. 236, 237. Likewise, Kenneth Grahame relates dust to motoring and portrays the many dusty roads and 'an enveloping cloud of dust that blinded and enwrapped them [Rat, Mole, Badger] utterly', in *The Wind in the Willows* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 31. There are also various critical and historical accounts that have closely addressed the issue of rising dust in the early twentieth century, some of which are: R. M. C. Anderson, *The Roads of England: Being a Review of the Roads of Travellers, and of Traffic in England, from the Days of Ancient Trackways to the Modern Motoring Era* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1932), Merriman, *Mobility, Space, and Culture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), and William Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics 1896-1970* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971).

[59] See Merriman's observations on the history of motoring accessories and their development due to dust, pp. 72-97.

[60] Amato, *Dust*, p. 4.

[61] Steedman, p. 65.

negative connotations of its mobility and immobility that Forster uses as a metaphor for the different themes he explores in his works. Forster's writings highlight dust's dynamic character and pertinence to early twentieth century modernity beyond its association with motoring. His texts explore the paradoxical meanings it could hold for England and Englishness, modernity and tradition. Dust is used to describe changing places, textures of the environment, times, and people, and to interpret situations, states of being, and belonging.

My aim in this chapter is to analyse images of dust in the three different geographical contexts in which Forster depicts his narratives, attending to both its settled and unsettled conditions. First, I will explore the different meanings of dust in the English environment, and examine the ways in which dust's mobility is used by Forster to tackle the theme of breaking away from tradition in early twentieth-century England. Second, this chapter will cover a wider national context in Forster's India, where the image of mobile dust draws attention to controversial issues that question the role of the British Empire in India. Finally, I will observe how suburban English tourists interact with a dust that is marked as a foreign substance in Italy, and accordingly examine the power relations between dust's mobility and tourists' expectations of what the environment (or dust) ought to be.

Dust Moving Wildly

The introduction of new technologies of transport in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a central role in reconfiguring people's perceptions of their bodies and their surroundings. In the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in the way people have historically encountered their environment through modern

technologies, especially through motorcars.[62] Reading Forster's work as a witness to the changes taking place in early twentieth-century England is significant because it depicts the transformed relationship between humans and the environment. Studies of mobilities offer the chance to examine the new and different ontologies of mobility which are not restricted to the current experience of movement in the world but cover the transformed experiences which accompanied the new dependence on technologies of transport in the last two centuries.[63] However, the increasing interest in mobilities studies comes hand in hand with the emergence of the 'thingly turn'[64] or 'material turn'[65] which asserts the role of material things in human perception. As such, materialities have started gaining significance in the study of mobilities.[66] *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* by Peter Adey et al. dedicates a whole chapter on the unfamiliar materialities which have emerged due to the changes in the way we encounter the environment. These changes are responsible for the appearance of some mobile materialities, such as dust, which act as disruptive entities that need to be controlled. Their disruptiveness is not associated with their material characteristics as much as with their ability to move freely with no restriction.

The prevalence of dust in Forster's fiction has only been noticed by a few critics and most notably in *Howards End*. Malcolm Page considers dust as one of other several images in the novel which provide a kind of 'rhythm' and are all 'a pattern of true symbolism, of deliberate imprecision'.[67] Page suggests that these images create a certain pattern in the novel. Yet, he does not specifically demonstrate the meanings

[62] There are numerous studies from different disciplines on human perception through movement in motorcars and trains. They will be explored elaborately in Chapter Five.
[63] See Peter Adey et al., *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014).
[64] Connor, 'Thinking Things', *Textual Practice*, 24.1 (2010), p. 1.
[65] Adey et al., p. 12.
[66] See Merriman and Pearce, 'Mobility and the Humanities', pp. 493-508.
[67] Malcolm Page, *An Introduction to the Variety of Criticism: Howards End* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 63.

such images signify. He indicates that Forster portrays motoring negatively as he sees that cars become the symbol of 'mobility and rootlessness' and the reason for the stink and raised dust.[68] A similar negative view of Forster's depiction of motoring is shared by Glen Cavaliero who deems the motorcar as a 'symbol of mobility and uprootedness'.[69] Page and Cavaliero view motoring as a negative and pessimistic image of a modern and mobile world, and associate the resulting feelings of disconnection to the modern experience of the city. Thacker's article on motoring in *Howards End* also suggests that the depiction of dust in the novel is both an emphasis on the negative health effects of motoring and on 'an ongoing spatial conflict between the car as an emblem of the city, and the rural countryside that is being "spoiled" by the malignity of modern machinery'.[70] Thacker supports his argument with historical accounts on the effects that dust, as a direct consequence of motoring, has on people and the rural environment. Yet, the complexity of the meanings that dust holds in *Howards End* and other works by Forster remain unnoticed. While the image of dust and motoring is a ubiquitous theme in other novels by early twentieth-century writers, such as Virginia Woolf, John Galsworthy, D. H. Lawrence, Kenneth Grahame and many more, Forster's interest does not merely lie in the association of dust with motoring and its effects on the daily life of people, but also dwells on the image of dust and its settled and unsettled conditions in times of great uncertainty.[71]

Through the several motoring activities portrayed in his works, Forster depicts dust's mobility as unfamiliar and disruptive. Instead of being merely disturbed by the

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[68] Ibid, p. 96.
[69] Cavaliero, p. 122.
[70] Thacker, 'E. M. Forster and the Motor Car', *Literature and History*, 9.2 (2003), 37-52 (pp. 43-44).
[71] See Lawrence, *The White Peacock*, Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day* (London: Hogarth, 1990), John Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga* (London: Heinemann, 1922), and Grahame's, *The Wind in the Willows*. Also See Mica Nava and Alan O'Shea, *Modern Times: Reflections on a century of English Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1996) where they describe the early twentieth century as a 'period of new or accelerated process of modernisation-massive transformations' in many fields, p. 13.

modernisation of England as a potential threat to the English countryside, as some critics suggest, Forster's interest lies in the question of what these changes could mean to people's everyday lives and their relationship with the material world surrounding them. The new ways of encountering the world through motorcars in texts such as *The Longest Journey*, *Howards End*, and *Maurice* are associated with the increasing mobility of dust, the visibility and significance of which become more evident once motorcars are set in motion on the country roads.[72] In short, motoring aggravates dust. I will show that it is through this unsettled image of dust that Forster identifies the modern and unconventional nature of those characters who challenge established traditions.

Dust, as a mobile and dislocated substance in the English landscape, first appears in Forster's second published novel, *The Longest Journey*. Forster does not depict motoring directly in the novel but rather its effects on the natural scene as reflected through the faded colors of grass and trees which Rickie Elliot notices in his walk in Wiltshire:

> [Rickie] saw the great wood beginning unobstrusively, as if the down too needed shaving; and into it the road to London slipped, covering the bushes with white dust. Chalk made the dust white, chalk made the water clear, chalk made the clean rolling outlines of the land, and favoured the grass and the distant coronals of trees.[73]

Forster depicts here a paradoxical image of nature and modernity. The tranquil image of the landscape is disrupted by the road to London that cuts its way through the great wood. It is because of the road and the movement which takes place on its surface that

[72] Although *Maurice* was published posthumously in 1971, it was written in 1913-1914.
[73] Forster, *The Longest Journey* (London: Penguin Group, 2006), p. 126. Further references to this story are given in the text.

dust is agitated and relocated. This dust is organic. It is white and comes from chalk which purifies water and determines the neat systematic shape of the land. However, dust is dissociated from its original place in the chalk and rests, instead, on grass, bushes, and the tips of trees. Forster personifies white dust and gives it agency. It can favour places and is able to move from where it is originally located. This sense of agency that Forster suggests is best understood in terms of what Tim Ingold outlines in his study of surfaces. Ingold argues that despite their agency, materials do not contain sentient power. He suggests that '[t]hings are alive and active not because they are possessed of spirit – whether *in* or *of* matter – but because the substances of which they are comprised continue to be swept up in circulations of the surrounding media'.[74] Therefore, in order for dust to acquire agency and be moved from the road, certain interaction with the road's surface must take place. There are no images of motorcars on the road, but the image of dust covering the bushes is an indication of a certain type of action that has previously taken place on the road's surface.

The image of dusty roads reappears in Forster's short story 'The Other Side of the Hedge' (1911), where dust's presence is also associated with motoring. As the narrator walks on the monotonous road, he is oppressed by the place's inanimateness which is emphasised by the brown hedges and dust which covers the road's surface. Moreover, 'white dust was settling down' on things he and others have dropped on the road, making these things appear 'no better than stones'.[75] The image of dust settling down, similar to dust in *The Longest Journey,* indicates a previous action. The dust is also white. It petrifies objects and makes the things it covers appear lifeless, inert and insignificant. We are left with the consequences of the movement of motorcars on the

[74] Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), p. 29.
[75] Forster, 'The Other Side of the Hedge', in *The New Collected Short Stories* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1989), pp. 34-40 (p. 40). Further references to this story are given in the text.

earth which makes rocks and big clods of earth and chalk crumble and disintegrate into smaller pieces of white dust. Dust is simply 'the road, broken down by heavy vehicles and flung into the air by the faster light ones'.[76] It is originally part of larger objects such as rocks, chalk walls or the road itself. However, due to this new type of movement taking place on the road's surface, dust is detached from the solid objects it participates in composing. Accordingly, dust gains agency and the ability to move because of this modern type of interaction which allows it to enjoy a particularity of its own. Due to its movement and separation, dust is stripped of its identity as a particular object. It directly loses the meaning it holds in this world and becomes merely the dust of an unidentified object. It does not matter whether it once was a rock, a road or some invaluable ancient statue. Once it is detached it becomes an unfamiliar substance, an intruder.

The disturbing quality of dust and its foreign dynamism appears more evidently in *Howards End* where Forster depicts the emergence of this element closely and traces its movement. Dust here is inseparable from the frequent images of motorcars in motion. It signals their movements and complements their vigorous swerves on the roads' un-tarmaced surfaces. The upper middle-class Wilcoxes are fond of motoring and often go on motoring trips in Yorkshire. The first car journey we read about in the novel takes place when Mrs Munt, the Schlegels' aunt, visits the Wilcoxes in Hilton. Charles Wilcox, the eldest son, gives her a ride to his house. As he listens to her

> he turned round in his seat, and contemplated the cloud of dust that they had raised in their passage through the village. It was settling again, but not all into the road from which it had taken it. Some of it had percolated through the open

[76] William Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics 1896-1970* (London: Bodley Head, 1971), p. 64.

> windows, some had whitened the roses and gooseberries of the wayside gardens, while a certain proportion had entered the lungs of the villagers.[77]

Motoring's influence on dust's mobility is obvious in this example. The constant action caused by the motorcar's wheels on the un-tarred surface of the road forces dust to move from its place and form a cloud behind the car. First, dust is lifted from the ground. It then assembles a cloud in the air and eventually settles, but not on the road from which it came from. It rather sneaks into people's properties and bodies. Dust also covers the plants and flowers on the side of the road whose colours are now hidden by its whiteness. It forces the flowers to lose their lively quality, and makes them transform into something more solid and less alive, resembling statues. Despite losing its meaning as an identified object, dust still holds the material qualities of a specific object. For example, the dust Forster uses in the previous example is 'white dust', emphasising its organic origin from chalk walls, whereas the 'coal-dust' used by D. H. Lawrence in *Women in Love* originates from the coal-mine, and 'iron-dust' in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* comes from steel and iron.[78] Therefore, although dust loses the cultural meaning which defines its status and position in this world, the material quality it holds still allows it to be identifiable with a specific type of object. In its disconnection and dislocation from its place of origin, dust develops, according to Connor, 'the quality of qualitylessness, the virtual virtue of transmitting the virtues of other substances'.[79] Dust moves from its solid and identifiable state as a part of the road to cover living objects such as flowers. It leaves its white sprinkles on them, and its temporary strength forces the colours which identify roses and gooseberries as living plants to disappear under its

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[77] *Howards End* (England: Penguin Group, 2012), p. 17. Further references to this story are given in the text.
[78] See Lawrence, *Women in Love* (England: Penguin, 2007), pp. 113-114, Dicken's, *Bleak House* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 878-884.
[79] Connor, 'Pulverulence', p. 3.

whitening influence. Dust appears to have a temporary force, but without having any certain cultural quality or identity. Dust is simply a thing.

A thing, according to Bill Brown's 'Thing Theory', is an object which stops functioning the way humans expect it to. Brown argues that

> [w]e begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily. [80]

When objects lose their significance to the human mind, they become a thing – marginalized, overlooked and unidentified. However, they still have effect on people, living entities and other objects. Building on Brown's understanding of objects and things, W. J. T. Mitchell also reasserts that on the one hand: 'objects are the way things appear to a subject – that is, with a name, an identity, a gestalt or stereotypical template'. On the other hand, 'the thing appears as the nameless figure of the Real that cannot be perceived or represented […] it signals the moment when the object becomes the Other'.[81] Things do not conform to human expectations of them. Things are entities that challenge cultural constructions of what is supposed to be normal or 'natural'. Dust becomes a thing when it separates from the object it used to constitute and loses identification with it. However, the thingness of dust is mostly evident and effective during its mobility. Dust is powerful not when it is confined to the ground, but rather when it forms into clouds and envelops motorcars and people on the road. Forster highlights the role dust plays in changing places' appearances and people's perceptions in his texts. The emphasis on its motion makes it clear that dust's mobility not only

[80] Brown, p. 4.
[81] J. W. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 156.

allows it to assert itself as a thing, but presents it as an emerging unfamiliar phenomenon whose questionable presence is the result of the changed ways humans move in space. Objects only start asserting themselves as things when the relationship between humans and the nonhuman changes.[82] Therefore, the emergence of dust results because of the modern modes of transportation that change the ways people encounter the material environment. Although objects lose their meanings when they stop functioning in ways humans expect them to, they still exist and can create relationships with people in alternative ways. In its mobility, dust, as a thing, becomes more visible and vigorous once a strong interaction takes place on the un-tarred earth's surface in the country roads. Its power is a consequence of the action which occurs on the ground and the altered ways of encountering the environment.

Dust's mobility is also determined by spatial and temporal factors. For example, in *A Room with a View* (1908), 'after abundant rains' the motorcars which passed through Summer Street 'raised only a little dust'.[83] The type of interaction which takes place between the motorcar and the earth's surface is determined by the weather that in this example detains dust from swift movement. The cars' vast speed can also change the type of communication between bodies or human-automated objects with the ground. This changed relationship forces the earth to break into smaller pieces and particles such as dust, and allows the existing dust to gain a certain type of mobility which has direct and indirect effects on the characters' perceptions of places. When Charles contemplates the cloud of dust his car generates he says: 'I wonder when they'll learn wisdom and tar the roads' (17). Charles blames the un-tarred road for creating dust that is already part of the road, rather than the impact his motorcar has on the road's

[82] Brown, p. 4.
[83] Forster, *A Room with a View* (England: Penguin Group, 2012), p. 129. Further references to this story are given in the text.

surface. It is the presence of the motorcar that is a key factor in breaking the road into smaller pieces and dust. Motoring is the main reason for triggering dust's particles into a state of restlessness that increases its movement. The unsettled dust is thus conceived as a direct result of modernity which, despite showing Forster's uneasiness towards its disruptive effects, allows this substance to have more visibility and freedom.

Becoming Dust

In the early twentieth century, dust's continuous movement and unsettlement due to widespread motoring activities had many effects not only on people's everyday lives, but also on the built environment. Merriman demonstrates how, with the growth of motorcar ownership, 'many tracks, streets, and roads were re-engineered to cater for motor vehicles. New roads and motorways were built to serve motor traffic, while many existing roads were paved, fenced-in, painted with road markings and furnished with signs'.[84] Modernising the roads was considered an essential move to serve motorcar owners and protect others from the disturbing effects of dust. It was assumed that the mobility of this substance needed controlling. Tarring the roads and covering them with asphalt and other hard substances means limiting the power that dust as a thing seems to acquire when strong action takes place on the earth's surface. Ingold uses the term 'surfacing' to describe the process of coating the ground with resistant materials.[85] He claims that covering the earth's surface shows an attempt to 'bring closure to life' by separating the substances on the earth from the air and weather, or what he calls, drawing on James Gibson's work, the medium. Separating the surface from the living

[84] Merriman, pp. 66-67.
[85] Ingold, 'Footprints through the Weather-World: Walking, Breathing, Knowing', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16.1 (2010), 121-139 (p. 126).

world, Ingold claims, is a way of making the world conform to our expectations of it.[86] In that world, dust's intermingling with the air is not desired. In the human mind, dust is expected to conform to its state as a motionless entity and a residue, and what Connor calls 'the unmistakable emblem of death, decay and dissolution'.[87] Dust in its settled condition is confined to earth. However, in its mobility, dust becomes 'powerfully generative'.[88] It gains agency and power, defying traditional Western norms. In its movement, dust resembles life and power through its separation and freedom, and through the material quality it still holds and is able to transmit to other objects and humans.[89]

Although the mobility of dust caused by motoring activities in the early twentieth century is an issue that has been addressed in different accounts from that period, Merriman's interest rather lies in the health issues produced by dust.[90] William Plowden writes about the disagreeable effects of dust as a consequence of motoring on un-tarred roads.[91] The significant health and medical risks of dust that are emphasised by Plowden and Merriman in their writings are not overlooked by Forster, as he depicts the way dust imposes itself on people's properties and bodies. The dust which is raised by Charles's car, for instance, 'entered the lungs of the villagers' (17). However, instead of depicting people coughing and suffocating from dust, the novel tracks the dust's power and movement. The growth of motorcars as an emblem of modernity that causes the constant raising of dust in the English environment, and dust's ability to dislocate

[86] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 123.
[87] Connor, 'Pulverulence', p. 1.
[88] Ibid, p. 1.
[89] Rupert Brooke's poem 'Dust' (1908-1911) also associates dust's movement with life and freedom: 'Not dead, not undesirous yet,/ Still sentient, still unsatisfied,/We'll ride the air, and shine, and flit, […] And dance as dust before the sun,/ And light of foot, and unconfined,/ Hurry from road to road, and run/ About the errands of the wind', in *Modern British Poetry*, ed. by Louis Untermeyer (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), p. 198.
[90] Merriman, p. 83-86.
[91] Plowden, p. 64.

itself from its original state and location, appear as more substantial topics in Forster's writings. Dust may be a result of modernity but it is also a new image of displacement and rootlessness, and most importantly, a powerful image of change.

In *Howards End*, motoring allows people to encounter the world in an alternative way which not only disconnects them physically from the ground but also from other characters whose preference for walking makes them perceive the world in different and traditional ways. In his study of environment perception, Ingold emphasises that it is 'through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually "in touch" with our surroundings'.[92] It is only through being in direct contact with the ground that people can perceive places attentively. Surfaces, he explains, 'are where radiant energy is reflected or absorbed, where vibrations are passed to the medium'.[93] Surfaces are where action takes place. Having a strong perception of their existence, according to Ingold, is dependent on people's grounded contact with place, and thus their attentiveness. In *Howards End*, Ruth Wilcox is contrasted with her motor-loving family because she creates in her continuous walks in her garden and the meadows a special kind of connection with the ground.[94] In the beginning of the novel, Ruth is depicted walking slowly in the garden and Forster focuses on the relationship between her and the nature of the place in which she walks. His emphasis on the multi-sensory interaction between her body and the earth, and the physical contact between her dress and the grass, tells us about the type of connection Ruth has with the place. She is the one who, as Page explains, 'moves quietly in a world of telegrams and anger, of newspapers and motor-

[92] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 45.
[93] Ibid, p. 22.
[94] The relationship between Ruth Wilcox and the texture of the earth in her garden is discussed more elaborately in Chapter Two in this thesis.

cars and golf-clubs, and is unaffected by them'.[95] For Lionel Trilling, Ruth represents the traditional image of stability and attachment to place for she is 'England's Past'.[96] On the one hand, she is described in the novel as 'a wisp of hay, a flower' in the middle of conversations that were 'the social counterpart of a motor-car' (76). She is rooted in her place, her traditions and the ground, but her bond with the ground is contrasted to the modern mobile world. On the other hand, the young people sitting around Margaret's lunch table are modern, fast and disconnected like their motorcars (78-79). Yet, the motorcar is not the only image which expresses disconnectedness and rootlessness. In its movement, dust carries in its transformative composition the quality of anti-dwelling. Although dust settles after its restlessness, Connor notes that 'it seems to do so tardily and reluctantly'.[97] By doing so, the dust's presence draws attention. It is agitated quickly, yet its movement is long visible to the eye. The time dust takes to settle gives it prominence by allowing it to be noticed.

When Bruno Latour writes about the importance of objects in Actor-Network Theory, he does not give a specific definition for things. For him, humans and nonhumans are actants in different situations. They both have agency and the ability to be effective through the relationships they constitute in networks. Dust then, according to Latour, is an actant. However, Latour differentiates between human and nonhuman actants in their mediation. He observes that objects, unlike humans, shift very fast between being mediators to intermediaries and vice versa, which makes their effects and actions invisible. However, dust defies Latour's categorisations. Although dust settles eventually, the dust behind Charles' car, for instance, settles slowly, and allows him to contemplate the cloud it assembles. Latour explains that

[95] Page, p. 67.
[96] Trilling, *E. M. Forster* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 121.
[97] Connor, p. 9.

> objects, no matter how important, efficient, central, or necessary they may be, tend to recede into the background very fast, interrupting the stream of data – and the greater their importance, the faster they disappear. It does not mean that they stop acting, but that their mode of action is no longer *visibly connected* to the usual ties since they rely on types of forces chosen precisely for their differences with the normal social ones.[98]

Latour observes that if objects have less importance, then they take less time to disappear into the background. If we accept his judgement, dust should take a long time to recede. However, this does not mean that it recedes into the background as Latour suggests. Dust in Forster's works is always visible in unusual places, covering grass and trees and entering people's properties. It is true that dust loses its link with the other bigger objects it used to compose. However, it can leave its mark on other humans and objects. Dust is highlighted through its ongoing presence and its movement. Dust, in its last-longing effects, even comes to identify the presence of people in motorcars.

Not only are the Wilcoxes separated from the ground and the environment through their motorcars and the accessories they wear, but Margaret identifies them as dust because of their displacement and movement. In a motoring excursion with the Wilcoxes, a motorcar runs over a cat. Margaret claims that they [the Wilcoxes] 'had no part with the earth and its emotions. They were dust, and a stink, and cosmopolitan chatter' (223). It is worth noting that dust here is not a metonym that reduces the Wilcoxes to the matter they are likened to. Forster's metaphor uses dust beyond its innate qualities by emphasising its mobility and continuous ability to move and settle. The Wilcoxes' dissociation from the land and the places they encounter contrasts with the image of the flower which Forster associates with Ruth. Like the rising dust in

[98] Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 79.

previous images, they become detached from the earth and its solidity, representing modern England in their movement through motorcars. The values that the Wilcoxes hold are also the result of the different transformations affecting the social landscape of England, and their modern ideas represent a breaking away from the past and tradition.[99]

Paul Readman writes on the relationship between the land and national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He sees that 'in the English context there is a strong a *priori* case for regarding ideas about patriotism and national identity as bound up with land, landscape and the rural'.[100] The countryside, he suggests, could be seen as important in the construction of English national identity because 'much of the rural past was inescapably rural in character'.[101] Therefore, in that time of change, creating a link with the country and its earth may be seen a way of preserving the old traditions. Ruth creates a bond through her walks in the rural landscape and, by doing so, she maintains the stability of that convention and asserts a traditional relationship with place.[102] However, the other Wilcoxes' movements break that stability. They become like dust, 'the beginning and the end of things', representing the end of that old tradition, but also the beginning of a new one.[103] The portrayal of dust's mobility in the novels, I want to propose, is not one that is always negative. The strong and persistent movement of this substance is merely unfamiliar, and thus defies the accustomed expectations that it will be inert.

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[99] I will discuss these modern values more elaborately in Chapter Two and Five.
[100] Paul Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of Land 1880-1914* (UK: Boydell Press, 2008), p. 2.
[101] Ibid, p. 214.
[102] I am not trying to suggest here a binary between modernity and movement and stability and rurality. This idea is further elaborated and problematised in Chapter Two.
[103] Connor, p. 7.

When Ruth dies, Forster depicts in her funeral a different type of dust: '[s]he had gone out of life vividly, her own way, and no dust was so truly dust as the contents of that heavy coffin, lowered with ceremonial until it rested on the dust of the earth' (107). The tranquility and rootedness of Ruth's life reappears in this example through the portrayal of her death. The representation of Ruth's dust as 'truly' problematises Forster's view of modernity and tradition. Authenticity or the 'real' is associated here with the traditional meaning of dust as an entity that is confined to the ground. This scene celebrates immobile dust because it falls within the normalised western expectations of its behaviour. The true dust is not the unidentifiable 'Other' thing which forms clouds in the air, but it is rather the substance that has determined meanings that fit the 'stereotypical template' the human subject has of dust.[104]

The same adherence to tradition is also visible in *The Longest Journey*. Here, when Rickie visits his aunt in the Wiltshire countryside, he goes for a ride in the country with Stephen, his step-brother. The narrator explains Rickie's thoughts on the rural people who worked and died in that place: '[b]etter men, women as noble – they had died up here and their dust had been mingled, but only their dust. These are morbid thoughts, but who dare contradict them?' (110) Forster here explains Rickie's thoughts that reduce humans' connection with the place to the bodily and the material, rather than recognising this connection in a cultural and immaterial sense. Their dust is conventional because it is settled and only makes meaning in this specific place where people live and work, and then returns to the same place when they die. This conventional image of dust, similar to Ruth's, is not mobile nor dislocated. Dust is traditional in its heaviness, settlement, and resistance to dislocation. However, the image of dust Margaret uses to describe the Wilcoxes is the image of light and mobile

[104] Mitchell, 156.

dust which is able to break free from the ground. The dust they represent is not confined by its old cultural meaning of being tied to the ground, but is rather unrestrained. It stands for separation and groundlessness, even immorality.[105] Yet, it still represents a certain kind of freedom.

Forster's attitude towards technology and modern modes of transport has often been interpreted as expressive of a generally negative view of modernity.[106] Modernity's threat to tradition is often addressed in *Howards End* where both motoring and dust's mobility are most prominent. Forster's reserved remarks on dust's excessive force and movement are strongly tied to motorcars which he holds, not wholly unfavourably, responsible for agitating this disruptive matter. I argue that Forster's uncomfortable attitude towards modernity, materialised by the activity of motoring and the dust's mobility, softens in *Maurice.* It is in this novel that Forster both finds the reasons to reconcile himself to technology, and shows awareness of how modernity and breaking away from tradition allows the emergence of marginalised identities. In *Maurice*, dust's visibility and emerging mobile qualities are strongly associated with the representation of homosexual identity.

Like *Howards End*, *Maurice* depicts the association between mobile dust and mobile people. The novel traces the sexual development of Maurice after the realisation of his homosexuality. When they confess their love for each other, the two young Cambridge students – Maurice and Clive – jump into Maurice's side-car and swerve and swirl in the powerful machine until

[105] The Wilcoxes are described as 'dust, and a stink', p. 223.
[106] The different accounts that link Forster's hostility to modernity with motoring and technology will be explored in depth in Chapter Five.

> [t]hey became a cloud of dust, a stench, and a roar to the world, but the air they breathed was pure, and all the noise they heard was the long drawn cheer of the wind. They cared for no one, they were outside humanity, and death, had it come, would only have continued their pursuit of retreating horizon.[107]

Maurice and Clive are not just dust like the Wilcoxes, but *became* a cloud of dust. By announcing their feelings and leaving Cambridge, they separate from the community they belong to and from their past lives, and they form a new mobile, isolated and complex relationship. When Clive tells Maurice he loved him, Maurice's first reaction is: 'Oh rot!' […] 'Durham, you're an Englishman. I am another. Don't talk nonsense' (48). Maurice identifies himself with a traditional English identity, and when he succumbs to Clive's desire, he becomes alienated from it. Both Maurice and Clive become outsiders. They are not only dust, but a cloud. The dust cloud is separated from the ground, but is constituted by particles that embrace each other. Through their new relationship, Maurice and Clive are separated from others but share a certain connection. However, since dust clouds only form temporarily and dust is destined to settle in different places, their relationship does not represent stability. Like a cloud, it is something ambiguous and in flux.

Identifying Maurice and Clive with dust suggests that personal and national identities are not fixed terms and can be constantly challenged. The mobile dust they are associated with is different from the heavy and settled dust of Ruth and defies it. Maurice and Clive do not smell the stink produced by the side-car, and are not affected by its noise. They are not disturbed by the new images of mobility and modernity, and are still connected with nature through the clean air and the wind. Their difference is

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[107] Forster, *Maurice* (England: Penguin Group, 2005), pp. 64-65. Further references to this story are given in the text.

seen as ordinary, yet unfamiliar and outrageous. Maurice and Clive continue their trip until the side-car breaks down, and 'the trail of dust began to settle behind them' (65). After that climatic moment, the characters settle and are destined to try and fit again in a society to which they no longer belong.

At this point, it is useful to remember Brown's definition of things as objects which have lost their value to the human mind. Things can have identifiable meanings when they are associated with bigger objects, but once they are separated, they become unidentified. When Forster defines some of his characters such as the Wilcoxes and Maurice and Clive as dust, he asserts their separation from the wider circle, community and nation they belong to. The Wilcoxes are dust through their separation from the 'traditional' and 'natural' definition of Englishness and their continuous mobility through motorcars, whereas Maurice and Clive are dust in their changing nature, instability and emerging identity. In his depiction of such characters in his novels, Forster criticises the cultural association of national identity with a specific kind of sexual and social identity, because such characters still hold the same fundamental associations with their country and its people, the way dust still has the same material value of the object it emerged from. Mobile dust becomes the image of both the end and death of certain conceptions and values, and of birth to new generative changes across the English social and national landscape.

The 'Other' Dust

The mobility of dust in the English environment is associated with modernity, but the constant movement and hovering of dust in Italy and India have other meanings. In

Where Angels Fear to Tread, *A Room with a View*, and *A Passage to India*, dust takes on many of the qualities often ascribed to dirt. Sabine Schülting explains how the references to dirt in Victorian Literature 'are generally informed by bourgeoise ideas of order, respectability, and propriety'.[108] In her discussion, she suggests that dust, unlike dirt, 'lacks all negative association' despite its occasional depiction as a 'worthless' substance 'without any cohesion'.[109] However, because of its mobile and unsettled condition, dust is negative in its threat to order and civilisation. The new form and mobile quality that dust acquires once it is separated from bigger identifiable objects defy the cultural meanings that its substance used to represent.

Attention to dust as an essentially mobile material invites us to think of the attempts that are made to control it. Dan Swanton observes the problem in the 'excessive mobilities of these particles [which] fail to respect boundaries'.[110] Dust's unrestrained movement is seen as a troubling phenomenon which needs to be regulated. As already noted, Ingold writes about the attempts in the modern world to regulate life on the ground through what he calls 'surfacing', the covering of ground with hard materials. He sees hard surfacing as a 'definitive characteristic of the built environment'.[111] The modernisation of England came hand in hand with the process of surfacing un-tarmaced roads, as has been suggested in both Charles's conversation with Mrs Munt in *Howards End* and the different studies by Merriman, Plowden and Ingold discussed earlier in the chapter. However, modernity's association with the order and control of the landscape is not just the case in England, but also in British India where

[108] Schülting, p. 6.
[109] Schülting, p. 5.
[110] Dan Swanton, 'Waste', in *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*, ed. by Peter Adey et al. (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 288-297 (p. 290).
[111] Ingold, 'Footprints through the Weather-World', p. 126.

the British population considered that boundaries had to be set on the land as much as on the people.

In Forster's *A Passage to India*, the Civil Station, like its name, 'is sensibly planned' and the 'roads intersect at the right angles'.[112] This architectural planning of the land, according to Ian Baucom, is what was expected in the colonies. English architecture was exported to the colonies in order to 'continue maintaining the Englishness of the English and to realize the extra benefit of Anglicizing the empire's sometimes unruly subjects'.[113] What Baucom suggests is that asserting the English way of understanding and controlling places is emphasised in the Empire's efforts to rule its subjects by controlling the environment. In *A Passage to India*, the plans to govern the Indian population correspond with the attempts to control the foreign or 'Other' materiality of the Indian environment.

Dust in *A Passage to India* is a substance that is incorporated in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of British-India, and is different to how it figures in the English setting in Forster's other novels. Dust in India is noticeable primarily to Anglo Indians and new arrivals such as Mrs Moore and Adela. To the regular inhabitant, dust is not striking and even overlooked because of its ongoing presence and its relentless clinging to people's clothes and bodies. In its continuous visibility, it becomes invisible and overlooked, for people continuously 'sat in the dust' and 'disappear[ed] into dust' (34, 164). When Kate Flint writes about dust in colonial literature, she suggests that dust, 'as in much writing of the Empire, is the marker of colonized lands; the substance which had to be washed off at the end of the day, or which causes confusion […] it disrupts

[112] Forster, *A Passage to India* (England: Penguin Group, 2005), p. 6. Further references to this story are given in the text.
[113] Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 20.

identities and obscures vision'.[114] Flint, unlike Schülting, does not differentiate between dirt and dust and similarly highlights the unsettling associations of dust for the English inhabitants of India. Consequently, the disruption of dust in India is considered an issue that distorts proper conceptions of place and identity and thus needs regulation. *A Passage to India* shows how when the locals encounter a different type of dust which they are not familiar with, dust comes to be present and noticeable.

Aziz is forced to make a visit to Major Callendar's bungalow after he is called by a messenger. However, once Aziz arrives, he is 'ignored' and his carriage is taken by two English ladies. Aziz is then forced to walk on the systematised Anglo-Indian ground 'to shake the dust of Anglo India off his feet! To escape from the net and be back among manners and gestures that he knew!' (15). Aziz longs to get away from being controlled by the place as his feet become covered with specifically Anglo-Indian dust. Although, according to the *OED* and drawing on the Bible, to shake dust off of someone's foot means to 'leave indignantly or disdainfully'.[115] This dust which settles on Aziz's foot is different from the type of matter Flint comments on.[116] The dust she explores is mobile, active and unsettled and has to be governed and constrained. Yet, this substance resembles the dust of Anglo-India that is settled on the ground, a matter that is repressive, governed and not free like the Indian dust he is accustomed to. Therefore, this dust traps Aziz to the ground as it asserts itself as a thing which he is not familiar with. Despite its immobility and steadiness, this dust gains significance in Aziz's eyes and it acquires the quality of the colonial power whose goal is to control

[114] Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 41.
[115] See 'Shake the dust off someone's feet' in <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/shake-the-dust-off-one%27s-feet?q=shake+dust+off> [Accessed: 06/08/2015].
[116] See "dust, n.1." *OED*, and Mathew 10:14.

and regulate. Through walking, Aziz hopes to shake the dust off to free both the dust, and his body.

While Aziz is disturbed by the dust's repression, Adela and Mrs Moore are puzzled by its movement. On their way to the caves, Adela points out the false dawn to Mrs Moore which she thinks is 'caused by dust in the upper layers of the atmosphere that couldn't fall down during the night' (128). Then, Mrs Moore remembers the lakes and mountains in Grasmere which 'were beloved by them all. Romantic yet manageable' (129). Although the dust that hangs freely in the night sky is what causes the view Adela admires, its unmanageable condition seems to disturb this English spectator who is accustomed to a different type of environment whose nature she considers more predictable and governed.[117] The mobility of dust is therefore something that is unfamiliar, different, and threatening. Dust's inferiority is reasserted during Aziz's trial where he was accused of sexually assaulting Adela. Mrs Turton, an Anglo-Indian who is disagreeable to both the English and Indian characters, says that the Indians 'shouldn't be spoken to, they ought to be spat at, they ought to be ground into the dust' (204). This image of being grounded into dust is similar to those I explored earlier in the chapter in Gaskell's *North and South* and *Mary Barton*. However, I argue that this association of Indians with the ground is not just degrading, but also confining. Tying dust to the ground means confining its movement and freedom, and forcing it to be marginalised and unnoticed. Forster brings to our attention the conventional Anglo-Indians' view of both India and its people through Mrs Turton who wants the Empire to control the people the way it attempts to control the environment by trapping it in the ground. According to Mrs Turton's biased-judgement,

[117] Oliver Stallybrass notes that the view that Adela refers to in the novel is the false dawn. See footnote number seven in Forster, *A Passage to India*, p. 358.

Indians, like the mobile dust, are incomprehensible and unmanageable and should be reduced to something that is more sensible to the colonisers. Aziz's comparatively unregulated movement allows him to accompany Mrs Moore and Adela in different places in India, including the caves. Aziz's mobility is perceived as troublesome, a freedom that may cause threat and danger to the English colonisers, some of whom get 'the creeps' if the natives are too near (24). Although it could be suggested that dust, like dirt, is a revolting substance, the way dust is represented in *A Passage to India* and other novels by Forster redefines itself not as a filthy matter. Because of its mobility, dust is not only alarmingly visible, but also epitomises what is foreign, unfamiliar, marginalised and undesired.

Just before Aziz's trial, 'clouds of dust moved hesitatingly' in the Indian sky (199). The dust here wavers between a settled and an unsettled condition. Its tentative movement is revealing of the power struggle between Indians and the Anglo-Indians. When Aziz wins the trial, Mrs Turton's wishes that Aziz is ground 'into the dust' are not fulfilled. Once he is announced innocent, the man who pulls the punkah, a cloth fan, continues 'rhythmatically to agitate the clouds of descending dust' (217). By winning his case, Aziz gains his freedom and defies the Anglo-Indian expectations which presume that his mobility, literally, will be confined to the rules imposed on his country. Like the Indian dust, Aziz defies colonial rules and expectations. Although marginalised and alienated like the Indian people under British rule, dust is autonomous and confirms its existence when it is aroused just before it is about to hit the ground. The English's attempts to control the Indians and the Indian dust fails. The dust is agitated again to return to its mobile condition, albeit acceptable only to the natives.

The failure of the colonisers is made explicit in Forster's assertion that the English 'entered the country with intent to refashion it, but were in the end worked into

its pattern and covered with its dust' (199). Forster anticipates the failure of the English in their attempts to organise and 'civilise' the lives of the Indian people and their land, and demonstrates through the images of the fragmented particles of dust, how the diversity of the country swallows their orderly plans. Drawing on Emily Eden's letters from India, Flint explains that when dust storms happen in India: '[i]t is as though the substance of the country is performing a kind of reverse colonisation'.[118] Although the foreignness of the substance may be understood as intimidating to the English whose bodies are not used to the Indian environment, the mobility of dust and its uncontrollable movement is what puzzles and disturbs the colonisers in *A Passage to India*. The Indian dust does not conform to the English's expectation that it can be regulated and controlled. Dust not only defies the empire. By failing to adhere to human expectations, dust's mobility shows its nonhuman capacity to challenge human agency.

Despite the geographical, socio-historical, religious and political difference between the Italian setting and the colonial setting in Anglo-India, they are both foreign environments to the English characters. As in India, dust is visible in different aspects of Italian life. The towns are dusty, and over the furniture in the Italian house 'lay a deposit of heavy white dust'.[119] In a different manner from the English suburban houses in *The Longest Journey* where the housekeeper 'kept the pretty things well dusted', dust in Italy is not portrayed as a problematic substance that needs to be wiped or mopped (33). Instead, the Italian characters in the novel seem to coexist with dust in their households which 'was only blown off […] to thicken on another' (92). The not unwelcomed presence of dust in the Italians' everyday life in the novel demonstrates

[118] Flint, p. 46.
[119] Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, (England: Penguin Group, 2007), pp. 32, 92. Further references to this story are given in the text.

the natural and accepted position which dust holds as a familiar substance that contributes to the texture of the Italian environment.

Forster's depiction of dust can easily feed the argument that his writings stereotype the Italian environment and its people and exclude Italy from 'the order of contemporary society'.[120] Despite Forster's frequent references to dust as an image that marks the Italian and the Indian environment equally, dust in this context is not used to refer to uncleanliness.[121] By examining the role this substance plays in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, I want to argue that the depiction of dust is far from an emphasis on the superiority of the English as more civilised, but is rather used as a tool to assert Italian traditions and to displace the English from the deluded modernised environments they inhabit in the suburbs which, according to Ingold, 'convert the world we inhabit into furnished accommodation'.[122] In the novel, there is an obvious interest in the Italian countryside where the 'eternal olives' and 'innumerable flowers' exist (47, 19). Annemarie McAllister suggests that England's urbanisation is a strong factor in raising the interest of the English in rural Italy, as it 'offers an escape from the urban but also a reminder of, or tribute to, a world which has been lost'.[123] The association between an interest in the Italian rural environment with wistful sentiments and yearning for a lost English past may be true if the landscapes in the novels are understood merely as cultural projections of a nostalgic Edwardian ethos. Despite the considerable comparisons in the novel between the landscape of Sawston and Monteriano, examining Forster's depiction of the Italian landscape demonstrates that the different

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[120] Roszak, p. 181. According to *The Baedeker of Central Italy and Rome*, 'The popular idea of cleanliness in Italy is behind the age, dirt being perhaps neutralized in the opinion of the native by the brilliancy of their climate' (London: Dulau and co., 1890), p. 32

[121] This does not mean that Forster does not refer to uncleanliness, especially in his portrayal of Gino whose hands 'were not particularly clean' (23).

[122] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 123.

[123] Alessandro Vescovi, Louisa Villa, Paul Vita, *The Victorians and Italy: Literature, Travel, Politics and Art* (Italy: Polimetrica, 2009), p. 21.

images are not the product of an English 'fascination' with Italy as McAllister suggests. Attending to the significance of the material texture of the Italian environment reveals Forster's interest in the different roles which materials such as dust play in an open environment that is 'unspoiled in all [its] simplicity and charm'.[124] The dust's presence in the novel is also suggestive of how the material environment gains more significance for travellers. The difficulty suburban bodies face as they move and interact with the Italian environment is caused by the presence of substances such as dust which do not meet their expectations.

When Philip arrives in Italy to take Lilia's baby to England after her death, he is not convinced that the Italy he sees is the Italy he has been dreaming of for years, '[f]or there was enchantment, solid enchantment, which lay behind the porters and the screaming and the dust' (71). Philip has a romanticised image of Italy that is stable and firm, suggesting not only a built and a static environment that is different from the dusty Italy he interacts with during this visit, but also a place that meets his expectations.[125] Dust is depicted as a barrier between his current experiences and the romantic vision of Italy which he believes 'purifies and ennobles all who visit her' (6). It is also an intruding substance which violates and fails to fit with his preconceptions of Italy. Philip longs again for an unreal place, '[f]or he saw a charming picture, as charming a picture he had seen for years […] beyond the walls, olive-trees in the starlight and white winding roads and fireflies and untroubled dust' (87). The place Philip visualises is one that is premeditated and influenced by the world he inhabits in England. The dust he imagines is not mobile and does not surround his body in its movement from one place

[124] Lilia's description of the people in Monteriano, p. 9.
[125] This example is explained further in Chapter Four on Travel and Tourism.

to another. The dust he expects is untroubled, unmoved and pacified, just like the asphalted streets of suburban Sawston.

Amato suggests that 'twentieth-century Western civilisation sought to control the surfaces of things', and Philip, in his concrete vision of Italy that is obviously influenced by the built environment in Sawston and his Baedeker, imagines a type of dust that is similarly controlled and less mobile.[126] It is not only Philip who has this illusory view of Italy, but also Lilia Theobald who takes Philip's advice to visit untrodden places in Italy. Attempting to escape the judgmental society of Sawston, Lilia marries Gino, an Italian man from Monteriano, a place where 'one really does feel in the heart of things […] it is impossible that the Middle Ages have passed away'.[127] Wilfred Stone notes that for the past century and a half, Italy has been depicted in the writings of the Northern Europeans, including those of Forster, as 'a powerful symbol of release from repression for all the sensuous and passionate side of life that Protestant restraints have made illicit'.[128] Understanding the difference between the English and the Italians through the differences between Protestant and Catholic conventions shows Lilia's marriage to Gino as a rebellion against English traditions. But the text equally demonstrates how although Lilia's marriage may appear ostensibly as a release from English conventions, it also means putting herself under new social and physical restrictions that literally limit her freedom of movement. Nonetheless, it is not until Lilia interacts physically with the Italian countryside that she realises the extent to which she is restricted by the social traditions of Italy, and also how the unfamiliar material texture of Monteriano challenges her expectations.

[126] Amato, *Surfaces*, p. 126.
[127] Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, p. 8.
[128] Stone, p. 172.

If dust's mobility represents newly emerging English identities in *Maurice*, the dust in Italy asserts the continuity of tradition. Dust's relationship to continuity is noted by Steedman, who states that dust demonstrates 'the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being gone'.[129] Italy, according to Stone, is portrayed by certain writers as a place which frees its English visitors from their domestic social codes. Yet, the female characters' movement in the Italian settings in both *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and in *A Room with a View* is portrayed as restricted, if not more so, than it is in England. The antiquity of the place is manifested in the old Italian traditions that Gino imposes on his English wife. However, these traditions are not taken into account by Lilia who comes to Italy with a belief that her Englishness, age, and money simply make her 'immeasurably superior' to Gino and the Italian traditions (32). It is not until she is attacked by the Italian dust of the country that she realises the strong existence of the past in Italy. Throughout the novel, there is a constant reminder that Lilia enjoys taking solitary walks, an activity Gino does not approve of: '[t]his is Italy' he emphasises (44). Lilia does not see a reason why she should not be allowed to walk alone, and does not imagine any danger or wildness in the Italian country, for according to the narrator who agrees with her, 'there was scarcely a touch of wildness in it – some of those slopes had been under cultivation for two thousand years' (42). Dust, the remains of old matters and a marker of the place's history becomes in its movement and foreignness a restraint to Lilia, and a retainer of the status of Italian tradition.

Lilia decides to walk alone at night without Gino's permission. Unlike the easy walks Lilia takes on the paved suburban grounds in England, this walk becomes more

[129] Steedman, p. 164.

difficult as the distance between her and the house increases.[130] The interaction between her feet and the strange texture of the Italian earth starts to slacken her body and weaken her energy. Lilia loses track of time and decides to follow the carriage which she refused to ride earlier. She runs and stumbles to catch the speeding carriage, but 'before she regained the road, the thing swept past her, thunderous, ploughing up chocking clouds of moonlit dust' (48). Lilia's movement is hindered by a variety of elements in the environment that include dust. The sweeping carriage forces the dust on the road to irritate and dislocate from its original place. Dust chokes Lilia and leaves noticeable effects on her body. It is also 'moonlit', an image that enhances the darkness of the place and emphasises the presence of dust and its visibility.

The material power of dust forces Lilia to faint, and 'when she revived she was laying in the road, with dust in her eyes, and dust in her mouth, and dust down her ears. There is something very terrible in dust at night-time' (48). The image of the dust moves from its obscure visual presence as 'moonlit' and becomes something that is tangible and felt through Lilia's body. The physical encounter between Lilia and the dust here does not reveal the quality of the dust itself, but rather its effect in this specific interaction and context. The dust's materiality is significant in this example, but it transgresses its material bounds to highlight more the important themes of its visibility and presence. Lilia, an Englishwoman who is used to taking solitary walks in England, is forbidden to walk alone in Italy. Dust has a strong impact on her body as it first constrains her mobility, captivates her, and then prevents her from moving. Dust not only forces Lilia to fall on the ground, but it blocks her senses and alienates her from her surroundings. The dust's agency is gained due to its mobility and unexpected presence which both surprises Lilia and weakens her body.

[130] Forster refers to asphalt in Sawston in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, p.13.

Lilia is reminded of the powerful status of Italian tradition and her fall literally and figuratively forces her body to mingle with the earthly dust. Amato suggests that groveling in dust connotes 'indecency and immorality', a connotation that makes Lilia's walk at night behind Gino's back immoral, according to Italian traditions.[131] However, by controlling her mobility and forcing her to fall down, dust strips away Lilia's identity as an English suburban woman for we learn throughout the novel that what distinguishes Lilia from other women in Sawston is her unrestricted mobility. Lilia does 'not like music, or reading, or work' (43). She is also not good at domestic chores. Lilia's character is associated with constant movement for she often takes solitary walks and she even 'learned to bicycle for the purpose of waking the place up' in Sawston (8). However, this is all deemed impossible in Monteriano. After her fall Lilia decides to walk back home and 'without further effort she slowly climbed back to captivity, shaking her garments as she went' (48). The trace of dust on her clothes is a reminder of the inappropriateness of walking at night. It is also an indication that the Italian traditions, demonstrated by Gino's orders and the troubled dust of the country, have control over her suburban identity and her ways of inhabiting the earth and moving through places.

Lilia's interaction with dust forces her to see the true nature of both Gino and Italy, and accordingly, she writes a letter to Mr Kingcroft saying '[c]ome and save me' (50). The mobility of dust in the Italian and Indian settings presents a strange, foreign, and dangerous behaviour to the English characters. It is not the material qualities of this substance that emphasises its difference, but rather its continuous movement and presence in the characters' everyday surroundings. In both the Indian and the Italian settings, dust's vitality is strongly linked to the geographical environments of these

[131] Amato, p. 22.

places that determine both the dust's quality and behaviour. The shocking presence of dust as an unfamiliar substance in the novels show how human agency is decentreed when the nonhuman acts outside human knowledge and prediction.

The contrasting images of settled and unsettled dust in Forster's fiction convey important literal and metaphorical meanings. His use of this matter is not merely evidence of dust's ubiquitous visibility at the time when his novels and short stories were written and published. The close attention to this paradoxical substance demonstrates his strong interest in the material dimension of the world we live in. Forster uses dust to describe the process of change in the texture of the material environment in the English landscape. The different ways people have started to encounter places in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries caused dust to develop a strong mobile quality and to acquire a somewhat welcomed disruptive agency.

Where dust has often been associated with time and history, as has been demonstrated in the critical works of Steedman, Amato, Connor and Marder, Forster's engagement with dust highlights its special significance where its physical qualities, especially those of movement and settlement, strongly reflect the geographical locations in which they are depicted. More evidently, through the analysis of the different perceptions and interactions with dust in England, Italy and India, it becomes clear how the meanings associated with dust, especially its behaviour, keep changing not only through time, but also from one place to another. Tracking the depiction of dust in Forster's texts and focusing on its behaviour in the different settings enables us to observe Forster's mixed views towards tradition and modernity, a controversial topic for many of his critics. The depiction of mobile dust and its effects demonstrates Forster's interest in using a small and marginalised substance to anticipate and describe

the emergence of the force of inanimate things. This force, according to Forster, is gained through dust's ability to shift qualities, to be noticed, and to move easily beyond conventions. The discussion at the beginning of this chapter demonstrated how Forster's uneasiness about the mobility of dust, and its negative associations with the modernity that is changing the social and material texture of England, is later met by a more open view to its behaviour which, despite its chaotic outcomes, associates the movement of dust with the emergence of modern identities that pave the way for positive changes.

Forster's depiction of this substance to reflect on material, political, cultural, and social changes reinforces the significant role which humanities in general, and Forster's work in particular, are able to play in predicting current issues in critical debates. This chapter engages with the ways in which the recent material and mobilities turn understand humanity's existence in a world of continually changing relationships and agencies between humans and other animate and inanimate beings. Focusing in this chapter on the different meanings that dust holds has generated various discussions that demonstrate Forster's complex attitude towards modernity and the way the nonhuman participates in people's everyday encounters with the world. In the following chapter, I will elaborate on how the active presence of the nonhuman can help reorient and deepen our understanding of themes such as alienation and belonging.

Chapter Two

Vibrant Surfaces: Alienation and Belonging in Forster's Material Landscapes

Forster's attentiveness to nonhuman elements of the world in his fiction invites a reading that evaluates their role in human perception, especially of the different landscapes that his characters inhabit. Forster's texts are mostly discussed for their depiction of various geographical landscapes. Robert Burden identifies Forster's landscapes as 'topographical symbolism', and argues it is in the English setting where

> Forster develops a sense of the land beneath the landscape, its ancient rocks and the history that lies in them as the location of the "real England", where there is evidence of a once close relationship between human and nature, and a countryside unspoilt by modernity.[132]

Burden's approach is interested in the landscape as a separate symbolic entity with its own history and echoes the previous archetypal understanding of landscapes as detached places that are viewed and looked at from a distance. However, landscapes in Forster's novels can be understood beyond their meanings as mere backgrounds or disengaged symbols. They are experienced physically by characters who travel through them. In this chapter, I am interested in exploring how Forster's texts negotiate the material and metaphorical representation of the different landscapes in his works through observing the ways in which his characters encounter the world in their everyday lives.

The treatment of places and landscapes as symbols contributes to the ongoing discussion on how the portrayal of the English countryside in Forster's novels, especially in *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*, is evidence of his nostalgic

[132] Burden, p. 64.

ideologies of rural and pre-modern Englishness.[133] I argue that such readings that dominate Forster criticism have overlooked the human-world relations that show the extent to which the nonhuman elements of the world are integrated in human everyday life. The examples that I analyse in this chapter and the next reveal how characters' bodies are imbricated in the material world and how their consciousness is firmly situated in their bodies as much as in their minds. My attention to the role the human body has in shaping characters' consciousness inevitably places my analysis within phenomenological approaches to studying landscape. I argue that such approaches have plenty to contribute to the existing research on the representation of places in Forster's fiction, whether set in England or abroad. This chapter explores how the characters' consciousness is incarnated in their bodily responses to the world around them, and thus to their identities, opinions and sense of belonging. I propose that the study of place in Forster's writings without taking into consideration the role of human perception and sensuous responsiveness is limiting in the way it overlooks their fundamental role in the characters' actions and reactions to their surroundings, and in shaping the narrative as a whole.

Examining different examples from Forster's novels where characters are closely interconnected with the landscape demonstrates that the relationship between characters and place is not as straightforward as it may seem. The depiction of human-world encounters not only shows how these texts assert the body as an essential mode of human perception but also compels us to question the extent to which these places are a projection of the characters' premeditated assumptions and ideologies. Using

[133] See Tambling's 'Introduction' (1996) and Bradshaw's 'Introduction' (2007). Also, see John J. Su, 'The Beloved Republic: Nostalgia and the Political Aesthetic of E. M. Forster,', in *Modernism and Nostalgia: Bodies, Locations, Aesthetics*, ed. by Tammy Clewell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 198-215.

phenomenology as a way of understanding human-world relations critiques established sociocultural perspectives that study similar encounters without taking human subjective experiences into consideration. Although the characters in Forster's literary texts may be seen as significant parts of a larger sociocultural and economic web of relations and interactions, I argue that Forster is equally attentive to the mundane and everyday embodied interactions between people and the material world.

In his study of landscapes, Wylie observes how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology transforms the traditional meaning of landscape that is understood through 'observation, distance and spectatorship' to become 'a milieu of engagement and involvement. Landscape as "lifeworld", as a world to live in not a scene to view'.[134] The emphasis on an embodied engagement with the world is also the basis of Ingold's work, which identifies not only the human body as embedded in the life world but also that the 'human body itself is grounded in movement'.[135] In disciplines where the study of landscape and places is prominent, such as human geography, sociology and anthropology, one can observe the numerous attempts that have been made since the beginning of the twenty-first century to follow a phenomenological approach that accentuates the importance of examining bodily movement in order to understand human perception, and that more importantly realises that the landscape is best studied in its dynamism and through embodiment.[136]

My analysis in this chapter examines the multisensory interactions between characters and the material textures of the earth through the activity of walking. It

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[134] Wylie, *Landscape*, p. 149.
[135] Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, in *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot*, ed. by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), p. 2.
[136] In their editorial introduction, Phil Macnaghten and John Urry claim that 'the body senses as it moves', in *Bodies of Nature* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2001), p. 8. See also Kenneth R. Olwig who also suggests that movement is the foundational feeling of belonging to the land in his article 'Performing on the Landscape versus Doing Landscape: Perambulatory Practice, Sight and the Sense of Belonging', in *Ways of Walking*, pp. 81-92 (p. 85). Other works also include Merriman's *Mobility, Space, and Culture* and many others whose works will be mentioned throughout this thesis.

demonstrates how analysis of the characters' walks provides a new way of understanding how perception is treated in Forster's texts. By attending to embodied practices, my analysis decentres the role of vision as the privileged sense of perception and encourages a broader sensory approach to studying human-world relations. When writing about walking, Tim Edensor notes that:

> As a geographically and historically located practical knowledge, walking articulates a relationship between pedestrian and place, a relationship which is a complex imbrication of the material organisation and shape of the landscape, its symbolic meaning, and the ongoing sensual perception and experience of moving through space. Thus besides (re)producing distinctive forms of embodied practices (and particular bodies) walking also (re)produces and (re)interprets space and place.[137]

Attending to characters' walking experiences involves the study of the material textures of a place, the characters' bodies, the way they move, and their perception of their surroundings. In literary criticism, it is often the romanticised and exceptional walks that are studied, such as those of the long-nineteenth century.[138] Nonetheless, it is everyday walking experiences that are of concern in this chapter. The walking activities that I will explore in what follows are not planned, forced or sought, but are rather implicated in the characters' everyday lives. I will thus approach walking as a practice that is predominantly framed by bodily habits.

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[137] Tim Edensor, 'Walking in the British Countryside: Reflexivity, Embodied Practices and Ways to Escape' in *Bodies of Nature*, p. 82.

[138] See books written on walking in the Romantic and Victorian period such as Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1993), and Edwin Valentine Mitchell, *The Joys of Walking: Essays by Hilaire Belloc, Charles Dickens, Henry David Thoreau, and Others* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2012). Edensor also suggests in 'Walking in the British Countryside' how '[t]he recovery of sensual experience continues to be a common theme in Walking Literature and a goal sought by walkers', p. 86.

The different parts in this chapter explore the scenes where the characters' walks are carefully depicted and will accordingly examine how the theme of alienation and belonging to a certain place is visible in the characters' material relationship with their surroundings. Forster's attentiveness and careful depiction of the earthly surfaces that his characters sense through their feet show the degree of connectedness or lack thereof according to the degree of friction they create during their movement. It is in these moments of friction and non-friction that the differences between subjects and objects, material and immaterial emerge or dissolve. Merleau-Ponty notes that the human body is ultimately 'stitched into the fabric of the world', suggesting that the human experience, which is also shaped through the human senses, is one that is essentially tied to place.[139] According to Wylie, it is Merleau-Ponty's work which suggests that the human body is the very basis of human intention and awareness.[140] While this view, according to Wylie, has been subject to much criticism by radical and Marxist traditions as well as object-oriented perspectives that hold non-subjective approaches to understanding the world, I want to argue that Forster's texts demonstrate that attending to human perception does not necessarily mean overlooking the significance, power, and presence of the nonhuman, but rather emphasises the fact that humans cannot exist independently from the material world around them. More importantly, showing interest in human physical interactions with their immediate environments exposes a powerful and effective dimension of the material world that only manifests itself in relation to human perception. [141]

[139] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p.12.
[140] Wylie, p. 148.
[141] Wylie explores the different critiques of landscape phenomenology elaborately in his book *Landscape*, p. 180.

Frictionless Walks

In the opening of *Howards End,* Ruth is depicted in the garden of the eponymous house. In her letter to her sister Margaret, Helen describes Ruth:

> Mrs Wilcox was already in the garden. She evidently loves it. No wonder she sometimes looked tired. She was watching the large red poppies come out. Then she walked off the lawn to the meadow, whose corner to the right I can just see. Trail, trail, went her long dress over the sopping grass, and she came back with her hands full of the hay that was cut yesterday – I suppose for rabbits or something, as she kept on smelling it. […] And finally, Mrs Wilcox reappears, trail, trail, still smelling hay and looking at the flowers. (2)

Ruth is portrayed in complete harmony with her surroundings. She does not observe the landscape from a distance, but her body is immersed in the material textures of the earth. At first, she watches the growth of her flowers and is later depicted walking in a borderless landscape. As she walks, Ruth's dress trails slowly and continuously over the moist grass, and the sopping grass could not but have left marks on her long dress. The soaked grass also suggests a soft surface that envelops Ruth's feet, and thus her body is immersed not only metaphorically but also materially in the earth. Ruth's feet are also hidden by her long dress which make her appear as a natural part of the garden. Proximity is also manifested in her sensory interaction with her surroundings through the act of smell and touch. The excessive repetition of 'trail' (more than six times) to describe Ruth's walk also emphasises an intense degree of embodied connectedness with nature and closeness to earth. Similarly, in chapter three and after the arrival of Mrs Munt,

> She approached just as Helen's letter had described her, trailing noiselessly over the lawn, and there was actually a wisp of hay in her hands. She seemed to belong not to the young people and their motor, but to the house, and to the tree that overshadowed it. (21)

Ruth's movement is characterised by tranquillity and silence, and her connectedness is induced through the lack of friction or roughness between her body and the earth's surface. The text also highlights Ruth's rootedness by detaching her from the modern world and its fast-accelerating mobility, and by associating her with allegedly stable and static objects, such as the house and nature.

Literary criticism of *Howards End* has long associated Ruth's rootedness and traditional rural Englishness with the image of her country house. This approach affirms that the novel is seen through the centrality of the house that is perceived in Trilling's words, as 'a symbol of England', a claim that is later reasserted by different critics such as Cavaliero who argues that Howards End is 'a symbol of continuity'.[142] Similarly, the house is considered by Norman Page to embrace a traditional 'way of life and a system of values', and by John J. Su as a place 'which embodies the national ethos'.[143] When Page writes about traditional Englishness he also suggests that the house represents 'the traditional England' in opposition to the 'new England' that is symbolised by motoring.[144] Seeing motoring as a symbol of modernity is reiterated in Thacker's study of *Howards End* in which he argues against the nostalgic tone of the novel that critics before him have emphasised. Although he approaches the novel from a different perspective that acknowledges the sense of movement that prevails in the text, Thacker's analysis does not transcend the view that the house is one of many other

[142] Trilling, p. 118, Cavaliero, p. 106.
[143] Norman Page, *E. M. Forster* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1987), p. 73. John J Su, 'Refiguring National Character: The Remains of the British Estate Novel', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 48.3 (2002), p. 557.
[144] Page, p. 76.

'national places' in the text that are 'juxtaposed against repeated references to "cosmopolitanism"' which, he argues, is 'Forster's synonym for modernity itself'.[145]

The theme of rootedness, connectedness and belonging that has long concerned criticism of *Howards End*, especially in relation to Ruth, and is often evoked by highlighting the fixity of the house and its symbolic significance. However, I would like to argue that although the house is a central figure to the characters and to the novel's overall structure and meaning, understanding it as a static place that stands on its own is problematic and undermines the authenticity of the house which critics have previously claimed. For instance, Jo Hegglund sees the house as a space that is 'already infected by the mass culture it seems to exclude',[146] whereas a more recent account by Harrington Weihl proposes that that the house partly fails 'in its role as the authentic monumental space that Forster sets it up to be'.[147] Those readings which question the role of the house in the novel encourage my own examination of belonging in *Howards End* from a different perspective that looks beyond the house's location, architecture and symbolic references, and that reconsiders its significance to Ruth by attending to her everyday interactions with the place.

Ruth is seen by different critics to embody the house and its spirit. She is the one 'who has absorbed all that is best of the house', and the character that 'represents England's past'.[148] Because of her traditional rural Englishness, critics regard her presence in the novel as a celebration of stability in a changing world. Because she holds different values from the rest of her family, Ruth is an outsider to the modernity

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[145] Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity*, p. 47.
[146] Jon Hegglund, 'Defending the Realm: Domestic Space and Mass Cultural Contamination in Howards End and An Englishman's Home', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 40.4 (1997), 398-423 (p. 400).
[147] Harrington Weihl, 'The Monumental Failure of Howards End', *Studies in the Novel*, 46.4 (2014), 444-463 (p. 459).
[148] Page, p. 67, Trilling, p. 121.

that they epitomise and that is sweeping England. She is strongly linked to the countryside and the simple life of the village that is often contrasted in the novel with the modern and itinerant life of London. While the house's stability and continuity are expressed as important to Ruth and her identity, depictions of her walks in the garden and proximity to nature through her senses are of more significance. Ruth is rarely depicted in the house, and we do not learn about the rooms and furniture in the house through her for she spends most of her time in the garden as she 'evidently loves it', and when she dies it was 'especially in the garden, that they felt her loss most' (2, 96). Moreover, when she invites Margaret to visit Howards End, Ruth asks the latter to sleep there because she wants her to enjoy the garden outside the house and persuades her that: '[i]t is in the morning that my house is most beautiful. […] I cannot show you my meadow properly except at sunrise' (89). Attending to Ruth's relationship with her surroundings reveals how she is more in touch with her garden than the house itself. Moreover, her interactions with the garden are not just visually established at a distance like those of Mrs Failing in *The Longest Journey*.

Instead of walking in her farm and interacting with it, Mrs Failing prefers to avoid the rain and 'looked at the drenched world with a pleased expression, and would smile when a cloud lay down on the village, or when the rain sighed louder than usual against her solid shelter' (85). Mrs Failing's body is protected from the material influence of the landscape, which gives her a privileged perspective that is primarily constructed through an idealism that is supported by her sense of vision. Landscapes have been traditionally defined as sceneries and have accordingly been studied visually. Therefore, as Wylie argues, 'landscape is not only something we see, it is also a way of seeing things' and 'how we look at things is a cultural matter; we see the world from

particular cultural perspectives'.[149] This common approach to landscape, often taken by cultural geographers, not only suggests that landscape is perceived visually, but also that humans impose their own ideas and culture onto it. Similar approaches have dominated the study of place in literary criticism and, by extension, Forster's texts, to date. Suggesting that we encounter the world through pre-established set of ideas also emphasises and encourages reading Forster's interest in the depiction of the countryside as nostalgic. I argue in what follows that the portrayal of what is often thought of as nostalgia and sense of connectedness is not just a mental state that holds cultural meanings but one that is imbricated in the characters' bodies, and is developed due to habitual and processual activities that make the idea of rootedness literally possible.

The encounter that is speculated in the depiction of Ruth is not visual. She is not interested in 'seeing' or 'gazing' *per se*. Her bodily engagement with the materiality of the natural environment invites a reading that foregrounds the body as an essential mode of perception and through which we can evaluate her relationship with the world. Looking back at Ruth's walks and trails shows her interconnectedness with her surroundings and thus the evaluation of her relationship with place cannot be seen separately from nature itself. Ruth's body mingles with the earth's texture and her noiseless trails make it easy for the reader to forget that there is a solid terrestrial surface separating Ruth from the earth of the country. Ingold, whose understanding of landscape and surfaces is largely in debt to James Gibson's pioneering work *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979), claims that the surface of reality is a western illusion by arguing that '[l]ike other creatures, human beings do not exist on the other side of materiality, but swim in an ocean of materials'.[150] This suggests that

[149] Wylie, p. 7.
[150] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 24.

humans do not merely project mental images onto the material world through the act of seeing, but are, in complex ways, physically and mentally framed by it. Ingold's phenomenological approach thus rejects the long-standing Cartesian division between mind and matter, as 'through living in it, the landscape becomes a part of us, just as we a part of it'.[151] The idea of an inseparable connection between humans and the landscape is certainly depicted in Ruth's walks in the garden.

Forster's sympathetic representation of Ruth may be read as a nostalgic attachment. Through detaching her from the modern world of motorcars, it is easy to see how critics understand this distancing as revealing of Forster's nostalgic sentiments which are understood by Tambling as 'clinging to an ideology of "Englishness"' and to the locality of rural England.[152] Such readings of Forster's texts, especially *Howards End*, that are mostly framed or overshadowed by Ruth's attachments, chime with Wylie's discussion of the criticism of the idealistic and romanticised approach that characterises Merleau-Pony's phenomenology in general and Ingold's work in particular. However, I want to demonstrate that Ruth's relationship with the country has more to say about the role of the material in habitually experienced landscapes, and how the interplay between the materiality of places and human consciousness is determined by bodily habits.

When studying the relationship between humans and landscapes, Wylie observes that phenomenology is criticised from two standpoints. The first one is that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology 'has, from its inception, been haunted by nostalgia – nostalgia for a supposedly more authentic, engaged and "natural" perception of the

[151] Ingold quoted in Wylie, *Landscape,* p. 161. Also see how Amato's work on surfaces offers a different understanding of surfaces. Instead of seeing surfaces as a form of connection, he explains how surfaces 'make contrasts, juxtapositions, and dualities. They establish dimensions, lend spatial and linear form, and have tops and bottoms and ends and edges' in *Surfaces: A History* (California: University of California Press, 2013), p. 18.
[152] Tambling, p. 3.

world' and 'that phenomenological approaches ruin the risk of romanticising the pre-modern'. The second issue is that phenomenology is 'too humanist' by its 'focusing upon individual agency at the expense of theorising the role of historical and material contexts'.[153] Wylie notes that similar criticism is widely accepted in cultural geography. Nonetheless, focusing on or emphasising individual practices, emotions, and perceptions is not necessarily fully humanist, for perceptions themselves and/or actions and responses to the world are indeed dependent on the nonhuman to a large extent. While some might argue that the immediate effect of the nonhuman overlaps with or is determined by ideological and culturally pre-established assumptions, this approach has its limitations. The human-focused approach which suggests that the mental state projects what it wants or creates meaning from the surroundings is limited because it is itself dependent on its surroundings.[154] In his recent book *Materialism,* Terry Eagleton argues that 'to be self-determining does not mean ceasing to be dependent on the world around us. In fact, it is only through dependence (on those who nurture us, for example) that we can achieve a degree of independence in the first place'.[155] Furthermore, '[i]f the body is the medium of agency, it is also a cause of affliction. It is what renders us vulnerable as well as productive'.[156] Eagleton demonstrates that there cannot be fully human and nonhuman views. The world consists of the tensions between both. Having autonomy and self-determination does not mean that the body acts rationally. The body itself, like the mind, is caught in a complex web of material stimuli that shape its habits. While Forster's dwelling on the connectedness of nature may appear as merely nostalgic, or as one that romanticises a non-existing rurality that is detached from socio-

[153] Wylie, pp. 181- 182. Also find in the same pages how Ingold's work is criticised in a similar manner to that of Merleau-Ponty's.
[154] This is more evident when Margaret Schlegel visits Howards End, see p. 90 in this chapter.
[155] Eagleton, p. 14.
[156] Ibid, p. 21.

economic constraints, a comprehensive reading of his depiction of human-world relations demonstrates strong tensions between humanistic phenomenological views, and an awareness of the extent to which the nonhuman world can limit human autonomy and equally shape human minds and habits in his novels.[157] It is true that critics have long sought to study Forster's humanism, sceptical-humanism, or even anti-humanism, through his fiction and non-fiction. Nonetheless, this topic has primarily tackled characters' social and personal relations rather than their embodied relationships with the world. [158]

In her trails in the garden, Ruth is exceptionally attentive to the objects around her. When objects are noticed by humans, they become part of the network people create with place. It is useful here to read Ruth's engagement with the land in the light of 'actor-network theory' (ANT). In ANT, natural objects that are found in the novel, such as flowers, sopping grass, or hay, would be considered as 'actants' that are equal in their effectivity within the network to humans.[159] They only become, though, valuable and part of the network once they are 'imbued with meaning and matters of fact and concern'.[160] The importance of such natural objects lies in their material and moral significance to the humans interacting with them. This means that the countryside will not act as an anchor for stability and attachment for all the characters. It is only

[157] This will be further discussed in Chapter Three.
[158] See the different references to studies on Forster's humanism in footnote 2 and 8. Also, see Sunil Kumar Sarker who suggests in his study of *A Passage to India* that 'all Forster's novels, including, of course, *A Passage to India*, are flushed with the spirit of humanism' in *A Companion to E. M. Forster* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2007), p. 517, whereas Crews observes that '[i]t is a commonly accepted and easily verifiable fact that E. M. Forster is a sceptical humanist both by temperament and by philosophical conviction', in 'The Longest Journey and the Perils of Humanism', *ELH*, 26.4 (1959), 575-596 (p. 575).
[159] 'Actant: is any agent, collective or individual, that can associate or disassociate with other agents. […] actants are considered foundationally indeterminate, with no a priori substance or essence, and it is via the networks in which they associate that actants derive their nature.' See George Ritzer, *Encyclopedia of Social Theory, Volume I* (California: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 1.
[160] Bruno Latour (2004) quoted in Casey D. Alan 'On Actor-Network Theory and Landscape', *Area*, 34.3 (2011), 274-280 (p. 276).

those characters who share certain characteristics or values with the natural landscape that can be identified with it and its fertility. When this happens, the type of material interaction or network that is created between the character and the place stimulates feelings of stability and belonging, as here with Ruth.

Jane Bennett writes about what she calls 'Thing-Power Materialism' which 'emphasises those occasions in ordinary life when the us and the it slipslide into each other, for one moral of this materialist tale is that we are also nonhuman and that things too are vital players in the world'.[161] Influenced by Bruno Latour's ANT, Bennett depicts the point at which it becomes possible not to differentiate between the human and the nonhuman, the agent and the receiver. The human body and any other inanimate objects intermingle and become equal entities in this interactive network which they mutually and continuously weave as the body moves. This does not mean that humans lose their subjectivity and are reduced to objects, or vice versa, but rather suggests that during this type of interaction, it becomes possible for objects and/or places to share their material qualities with bodies that are in direct interaction with them. If we accept Bennett's notion, it becomes possible to consider Ruth's constant attentiveness to her garden and her regular interaction with nature as the reason behind her connectedness and her description in the novel as 'a wisp of hay, a flower' (76). The close interaction with the environment, however, only occurs when Ruth and other characters are attentive to and in immediate contact with their surroundings, and when their bodies mingle with the material textures of the world.

Taking Ingold's interest in walking and his approach which suggests that mind and matter are inseparable, we can read Forster's portrayal of connectedness and belonging as meanings that are not only mentally determined, but that are also

[161] Bennett, 'The Force of Things', p. 349.

epitomised in the characters' immediate encounters with the landscape. It is through Ruth's way of walking that we know more about her and her sense of belonging. Ruth's noiseless walks shows how there is no friction between her and the earth, which suggests a sense of easiness and connectedness. The surfaceless state that the novel conveys in the depiction of Ruth and the connectedness of her body with the environment is reinforced when walking is contrasted with motoring in the novel. While Ruth's feet are embraced by the soaking earth during her walk, the wheels of motorcars agitate surfaces and force them to disintegrate. The recurring images of dust in the novel convey the rough relationship between motorcar wheels and the surface of the earth, and Ruth's stability is contrasted to the 'throbbing' motorcar (21).[162] The depiction of Ruth suggests that there is no friction, making her appear as one with nature, for friction suggests resistance in literal terms when two materials of different qualities interact, but also figuratively when there is a conflict in temperament and nature. In *The Longest Journey,* the farmer Robert Wonham's walk is carefully depicted by Forster. In his visit to Mrs Failing's house, '[h]e walked heavily, lifting his feet as if the carpet was furrowed' (231). The way Robert walks suggests a closeness between his body and the earth, for even when he walks indoors, his habit of walking 'heavily' in the fields is depicted as incompatible with the setting in Mrs Failing's drawing room.

Ingold's emphasis on feet could be traced to the editorial of *Ways of Walking* where he argues with Vergunst that 'the body itself is grounded in movement, walking is not just what a body does, it is what a body is'.[163] We can take this principle and

[162] While Forster criticism has often overlooked the relationship between Ruth and the earth in her walks in the garden, the Merchant Ivory adaptation of *Howards End* (1992) is attentive to her connectedness, especially in the beginning of the film that starts with a close-up shot of Ruth's long dress trailing on the wet grass of her garden. For more reading of the film, see Nour Dakkak, 'Walking, Strolling and Trailing: Ivory's Adaptation of Movement in Forster's *Howards End*' in *Only Connect: E. M. Forster's Legacies in British Fiction*, ed. by Elsa Cavalie and Laurent Mellet (Bern: Peter Lang, 2017), pp. 211-226.
[163] Ingold and Vergunst, p. 2.

conclude that Robert's connectedness is not portrayed as a wistful image because he is the son of nature, but it is developed because of bodily habits that persist throughout his everyday performances. However, Robert's walk is also connected to his identity and his perception. In his study of walking and perception, Ingold does not just plead for a renewed attention to the body, but argues that

> a more literally *grounded* approach to perception should help to restore touch to its proper place in the balance of the senses. For it is surely through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually 'in touch' with our surroundings.[164]

Ingold's renowned emphasis on walking and perception through feet is aimed at creating a perceptual balance that he claims is missing in the modern sedentary Western world. Ingold is also critical of the mechanised way of walking that he believes is dominant in the West due to the obsession with surfacing the environment. Ingold is even sceptical of walking on solid surfaces and claims that 'to feel the earth and walk on the ground is not to make external, tactile contact with our surroundings, but to mingle with them'.[165] Thus, walking to Ingold is elevated beyond its status as a bodily movement to commute from one place to another or for its own sake, and becomes a celebrated processual practice that is especially facilitated when the earth is raw and unsurfaced, which allows feet to sink inside the earth and intermingle with its material texture. While this closeness and direct physical encounter is celebrated in *The Longest Journey* and also in *Howards End*, what Ruth's walks emphasise is the sense of stability that is developed in the habitual multisensory interaction between her body and the landscape. This stability is threatened by the various motoring activities in the novel, a

[164] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 45.
[165] Ibid, p. 115.

modern practice that Forster observes as one that mediates between humans and the world.[166] The novel then pleads for a multi-sensory connection with the world's materiality, but not necessarily for the reasons that Ingold proposes in his study. Analysing the different human-world encounters in the different settings in Forster's texts shows how being in touch with nature through one's body increases the chances of interacting with unforeseen distinctive materialities which, by extension, enlarges the characters' sensory repertoire and thus human values such as sympathy.

Walking and Sympathy

The Longest Journey was the novel that Forster was 'most glad to have written'.[167] Yet Forster himself and other critics generally agree that it was 'seriously flawed' and suffered from a number of problems.[168] This negative response is indeed reflected in the novel's limited presence in Forster criticism, and also in the way its characters and events have been read. Robert, for instance, is conceived by Crews as a 'civilized and imaginative farmer, a "natural man" who was nevertheless a highly articulate spokesman for naturalness'; however, his relationship to nature makes him an 'implausible person' and a 'symbol of man's secular vigor and potential decency'.[169] The characters in this novel, namely Robert and his illegitimate son, Steven, are seen merely as crude symbols. Yet, it is still possible to observe the importance of nature as a source of their values. Crews touched upon Forster's assertion that explains how:

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[166] The altered relationship between humans and the world through motoring is further complicated in Chapter Five.
[167] Forster's introduction to the novel p. xxi.
[168] Carola M. Kaplan, 'Absent Father, Passive Son: The Dilemma of Rickie Elliott in *The Longest Journey*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 33.2 (1987), 196-210 (p. 196). In the 'Author's Introduction' to the novel, Forster writes 'I can remember writing it and how excited I was and how absorbed, and how sometimes I went wrong deliberately, as if the spirit of anti-literature had jogged my elbow. For all its faults, it is the only one of my books that has come upon me without my knowledge', (p. xxi).
[169] Crews, 'The Longest Journey and the Perils of Humanism', p. 583.

> [o]ne's notion of the Good need not be derived solely from books, […] that "some people find it out of doors." Robert and his son Stephen exemplify this possibility. This is not to say that they find nature itself an unmixed good or an Emersonian preceptor of moral truths, but simply that they find good within nature.[170]

Crews touches upon the significance of nature as the source of 'Good', and that such virtues 'seem somehow to have been drawn from the soil. They are strong because their sense of the Good is contiguous with their sense of reality in the countryside'.[171] Yet, the relationship between virtue and the land is not explicated in Crews's reading for he does not explain how goodness could be found in nature. The bond that Robert and Stephen constitute with nature is complex and cannot be just addressed as a symbol of Forster's ideal imaginings. Tracing how Robert's proximity to the land develops from being a plain material interaction with the earth's surface into forming a part of his identity and eventually adding a social significance in his relationships reveals complexity in Forster's attitude to nature and its influence on humans and their values.

The close relationship between Robert and the land is explained not just through walking, but also through the description of his hands, 'the only rough hands in the drawing room, the only hands that had ever worked' (231). Robert's coarse hands are evidence of his processual embodied relation with the earth. In her study of modernist literature, Garrington highlights the role of the haptic, or the sense of touch, through her focus on hands and skin as the bodily organs that mediate between humans and the environment. Garrington argues that: '[t]o study touch, then, is to study the whole body in its carnal, fleshy reality: yet that body is represented most conspicuously by the

[170] Ibid, p. 585.
[171] Ibid, p. 586.

human skin, the "cultural border" of "reciprocal contact"'.[172] Garrington's study highlights the significance of human skin in modernist literature and understands human embodiment through the sense of touch. Her generative study offers a new way of conceiving the treatment of the senses, and explores how the tactile informs physiological and psychological identity and contributes to characters' sense of self and development. While Forster is not considered an archetypal modernist writer, his works do reveal a similar attentiveness to the significance of the sense of touch and the role of the skin in registering a certain type of habitual contact with the world. His texts equally invoke other multisensory encounters which the texts demonstrate are fundamental to human identity.[173]

The Longest Journey shows that Stephen's body expresses the natural and instinctive connection with the land as a product of routine. For instance, Stephen's face 'had after all a certain beauty: at all events the colouring was regal – a steady crimson from throat to forehead: the sun and the winds had worked on him daily ever since he was born' (90). Stephen's face is portrayed as a blank canvas on which nature leaves its marks as colours. When it is depicted, Stephen's body is not described as a single individual entity but as a relational body which is in regular contact with nature and is shaped by it. We first know of Stephen through the sound of his feet, for as he approaches Mrs Failing 'there was a crunch on the gravel' (86). We also learn about Stephen primarily through his relationship with the countryside.

Criticism of *The Longest Journey* has often been concerned with its main protagonist, Rickie, to whom Stephen, the son of a farmer and his half-brother, is often compared. Stephen's physical strength is frequently juxtaposed with Rickie's weak

[172] Garrington, p. 191.
[173] Forster asserts the importance of the sense of touch through his emphasis on what he calls direct encounters. This will be tackled in the different chapters of this thesis especially in Chapter Five.

body and lame foot, and his relationship with the countryside is foregrounded in most of the novel's criticism. Brian May sees the novel as one which 'celebrates the English countryside', and that Stephen is the 'Wiltshire earth brother' whose morality will triumph over the conventions of the fictional suburban Sawston.[174] Stephen's bodily strength is also emphasised by critics such as Christopher Gillie who observes that Stephen's powers lie in his physicality.[175] Page notes that his life is lived 'unselfconsciously and instinctively, and is so closely bound up with the Wiltshire landscape'. This close relationship with the countryside, Page observes, allows him to be 'a personification of natural forces'.[176] While the previous approaches highlight the significant symbolic meanings that Forster's characters may epitomise, they overlook the emphatically invoked processes that Forster dwells upon in his writings. There is more to Stephen's relationship with nature than his physical strength. Forster's portrayal of Stephen and his father, Robert, reveal how the material textures of the environment influence their habitual interactions with the earth. The characters' skin and way of walking suggest meanings that are beyond images of symbolic rootedness and stability. Both their bodies and their embodied encounters demonstrate the ways in which the material environment impact humans by participating not only in their identity formation, but also their bodily habits.

Foregrounding human experience is not the only contribution that a phenomenological reading of the text offers. The characters in these novels are imbricated with their material environment for it imposes itself on their bodies and skin, the way they walk, move, and, accordingly, their sense of belonging. The texts'

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[174] Brian May, 'Modernism and other Modes in Forster's *The Longest Journey*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 42.2 (1996), 234-257 (pp. 235, 237). It is worth noting that Forster draws a link in his fiction between solid surfaces, characterised by asphalt as a marker of suburban textures, and social distance and coldness. This is explained in more detail in Chapter Three.
[175] Christopher Gillie, *A Preface to Forster* (New York: Longman Inc., 1993), p. 113.
[176] Norman Page, p. 63.

elaborate descriptions of the characters' relationships to their surroundings suggest how the sentiments induced in Forster's writings are linked with such everyday practices. Attending to mundane interactions reveals how the feelings of rootedness and connectedness in Forster's texts are primarily the product of embodied habitual encounters where characters feel more comfortable and most natural.

Just like Ruth, we hardly see Stephen inside Cadover, the country house in Wiltshire, as he is mostly portrayed outdoors, even at night where

> it seemed rather strange that he was alive. The dry grass pricked his cheek, the fields were invisible and mute, and here was he, throwing stones at the darkness or smoking a pipe. The stones vanished, the pipe would burn out. But he would be here when the sun rose, and he would bathe, and run in the mist. He was proud of his good circulation, and in the morning it seemed quite natural. But at night, why should there be this difference between him and the acres of land that cooled all round him until the sun returned? (241)

The boundaries between Stephen's body and the landscape are determined by his sensory perception. In day time, the light confirms the difference between him and nature. At night, darkness prevents his visual and auditory senses from perceiving the world. Their absence makes his body closer to earth, and only his skin senses the dryness of the grass. The close link between Stephen and nature, which is also emphasised in his mundane activities of bathing and running in the farm, show how there is almost no dividing surface between his body and the material texture of the place. It is in darkness where Stephen feels most connected to earth and where the contrast between subject and object becomes almost non-existent. Here, the landscape is not static and fixed but dynamic – an example of how, as Emma Waterton writes, landscapes 'are imagined as fluid and animating processes in a constant state of

becoming. More importantly still, our precognitive and embodied interactions with them draw us into equally fluid practices and performances.[177] The land is not found and felt in its totality, but through these different performances in which the subject and object are in an entangled web of affecting and effected relations.

The influence of the material world and Stephen's familiarity with it develop his sense of connectedness, stability and belonging. Paul Peppis writes in his essay 'Forster and England' that:

> Forster's English fictions idealise "traditional" Englishness and locate the essence of England in the rural south, strategies compatible, as analysts of Englishness demonstrate, with a broader period project to relocate the essential English place, rehabilitate Englishness for the competitive realities of a new century.[178]

Reading Forster's texts as products of their time may indeed be considered as part of a wider project to find a place that represents true Englishness in the flux of modernity in the early twentieth century. Moreover, Bradshaw's reading of *Howards End* as a 'condition of England' novel, although different in tone to Peppis's, similarly considers the text as a reflection of the socio-economic realities of the time. Bradshaw claims that the depiction of rurality in the novel 'tells us far more about the true state of things in rural England than the narrator's nostalgia for a pre-motorcar – and suburbia golden age'.[179] Although such texts may offer critics a rich insight into the socio-economic changes affecting the rural scene at the time, I want to argue that the depiction of rurality in the two novels may be approached as a critique of the social implications of

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[177] Emma Waterton, 'Landscape and Non-Representational Theories', in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. by Peter Howard, Ian Thompson and Emma Waterton (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 66-75 (p. 70).
[178] Paul Peppis, 'Forster and England', in *The Cambridge Companion*, p. 48.
[179] Bradshaw, '*Howards End*', in *The Cambridge Companion*, p. 167.

modernity, especially through the relationship between man and nature. Forster's anxieties about the impact modernity was having on people's relationships with nature, and by extension humans' virtues and benevolence can be analysed through his depiction of walking.

I have shown above how habitual walks in the two novels, *Howards End* and *The Longest Journey*, demonstrate the proximity between the characters and their surroundings and reveal the amount and type of interactions they have with nature. In what follows, I elaborate on the significance of walking by demonstrating the ways in which the novels convey this activity as a practice that can even develop human sympathy. In *The Longest Journey*, Robert is characterised through his heavy walk, which literally and metaphorically ties him to nature, but the way he walks is also linked to his sympathetic and sensitive qualities.

Frederic Gros writes in his *Philosophy of Walking* that: 'walking reminds us constantly of our finiteness: bodies heavy with unmannerly needs, nailed to the definitive ground'.[180] Walking also 'means reconciling yourself to it through that exposure to the mass of the ground, the fragility of the body, the slow remorseless sinking movement'.[181] Walking means being physically under the influence of the various materialities that cover the earth's surface, which makes people more receptive, tolerant, and sympathetic not only to different materials but towards people. Walking brings people literally down to earth. We see how Robert 'advanced into love with open eyes, slowly, heavily, just as he had advanced across the drawing-room carpet' (232). Robert's way of walking is suggestive of his temperament and social relations, which makes the novel indicative of an association between everyday embodied performances

[180] Frederic Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, trans. by John Howe (London: Verso, 2014), p. 186.
[181] Ibid, p. 187.

and human sentiments and inclinations. Robert's sympathy does not just determine his relations with humans, but also with nonhuman entities:

> for he knew when the earth was ill. He knew, too, when she was hungry: he spoke of her tantrums – the strange unscientific element in her that will baffle the scientist to the end of time […] As he talked, the earth became a living being – or rather a being with a living skin – and manure no longer dirty stuff, but a symbol for regeneration and of the birth of life from life. (232)

Although Robert's description of the earth may seem abstract or romanticised, his relationship to it is materially delineated. The earth is not a detached object to look at and approve of from a distance, but is rather an anthropomorphised entity that influences his body and sensibility as much as he influences her. Robert speaks of the earth's different moods and needs which immediately elevates its alleged position of an inanimate thing to use and cultivate to an entity that has human qualities. By doing that, both Robert and the earth are portrayed in equal terms where none is privileged over the other.

The previous example does not mention Robert's relationship to the soil, but rather his interest in manure. Manure is more than just an organic matter. It is a substance that is composed of different types of animal and green waste. Manure is a foreign substance that is added to the soil in order to improve its quality and structure. Soil, then, cannot be defined as a native or a unique local substance to a land for it is composed of different layers of strange substances that identify its quality and value. It would be naïve to only read the relationship between the farmer and his native soil as a romanticised image of the once existing connection between humans and nature. The intimacy between Robert and the soil of the earth emphasises the significance it holds

for his life and his identity, and shows his receptivity to various materialities whose origins he is not acquainted with.

Soil, the matter that farmers encounter intimately in their everyday life, has been of interest to twenty-first century researchers such as the archaeologist Roderick B. Salisbury who pleads that more attention should be given to the study of sediments as a significant factor in identity formation. He argues that:

> in interpreting soil we can reach a more nuanced understanding of how community identity forms, how memory is inscribed through the mundane tasks of everyday life, and how the intersubjective phenomenological experiences that farmers share influence their notions of place. […] The soil forms part of the background on which social things happen, rather than being an integral part of those social happenings.[182]

Such interest in soil aims to reposition its status in material culture studies, and accordingly prove that it has an integral part in forming the identity of those who interact with it on a daily basis.

Attending to the materiality of the soil as inseparable from people's identities demonstrates the importance of studying places not as backgrounds or detached entities whose values are determined by culturally framed human projections, but rather as close material objects whose value is determined by the presence they have in people's identities. Therefore, being sympathetic to a nonhuman object that has a significant role in shaping humans means being sympathetic to other humans as well. However, it is worth noting that Robert's receptiveness to nature, and by extension to soil, manure and the earth, is also bound up with his familiarity with them. Connectedness, therefore,

[182] Roderick B. Salisbury, 'Engaging with Soil, Past and Present', *Journal of Material Culture*, 17.1 (2012), 23-41 (p. 24).

does not merely mean being proximate to something or interacting with it, but suggests a certain processual and habitual encounter.

Soil is also a part of Robert's social life as he converses about it to strangers. When he visits Mrs Elliot, 'they met again, to speak not of Byron but of manure. The other people were so clever and so amusing that it relieved her to listen to a man who told her three times not to buy artificial manure ready made' (231). Manure here trespasses its physical state to become a topic that could be discussed like poetry, a part of a social interaction between two people that brings them closer together. Medalie observes that investigating Forster's humanism in his works, especially *Howards End*, 'includes an enquiry into the value and efficacy of Culture. The Arnoldian echoes in *Howards End* recall Matthew Arnold's belief that Culture could be an elevating and democratising social force'.[183] However, *Howards End* and *The Longest Journey* reveal that instead of culture, nature brings people together and can be perceived as the democratising force because it increases people's sympathetic nature and renders them closer to the reality of the world and other people.

The novels' depiction of rurality, and the anxiety that is associated with modern technologies, do more than just reinforce Forster's attitudes against modernity. The technological advances that separate people from nature to a certain extent are seen not only as mediators but also as tools that inevitably participate in reducing people's sympathetic nature.[184] As I have briefly shown in Chapter One, when a cat is run-over in Margaret's motoring trip with the Wilcoxes, they are described as having 'no part with the earth and its emotions […] and the girl whose cat had been killed had lived more deeply than they' (223). Margaret is upset as the Wilcoxes and their convoy do

[183] Medalie, 'Bloomsbury and Other Values', p. 39.
[184] This idea will be further discussed in Chapter Five, especially in relation to 'The Machine Stops'.

not stop after hitting the cat even after Margaret's insistence. Accordingly, 'she jumped straight out of the car. She fell on her knees, cut her gloves, shook her hat' (222). Jumping from the car and hitting the ground impacts Margaret's body and makes her regain the sensibility she believes is lost in motoring.[185] The impulse that makes Margaret jump out of the car is one that allows her to regain her sense of touch, and by extension her proximity and sympathy to those endangered by the accident. Margaret's disapproval of the Wilcoxes' indifference suggests that the Wilcoxes, through their love of motoring and disengagement with the natural world – the earth, animals, humans, and the girl who was only financially compensated – appear more apathetic than other characters such as Ruth and Margaret.[186] The novel's anxiety about losing contact with nature can thus be seen in the light of the implication that apathy has more room to develop when humans are protected from the hindering influence of the nonhuman. The portrayal of rurality in Forster's texts therefore suggests that being in contact with nature increases human sympathy and receptivity, and can thus determine social relations.

Because motoring increases human freedom and agency over the nonhuman, motoring becomes associated with developing apathy in the novel, whereas walking is rendered as an activity that increases people's sensitivity and compassion. In a surprising remark in the final chapters of *Howards End*, Mr Wilcox decides to walk instead of taking the motor with his son, Charles,

> "It's a good half-mile," said Charles, stepping into the garden […] "You go on as if I didn't know my own mind," said Mr. Wilcox fretfully. Charles hardened his mouth. "You young fellows' one idea is to get into a motor. I tell you, I

[185] In the novel, Margaret 'lost all sense of space' in the car (207).
[186] The relationship between motoring and apathy is discussed more elaborately in Chapter Five.

> want to walk: I'm very fond of walking." […] Charles did not like it; he was uneasy about his father, who did not seem himself this morning. There was a petulant touch about him – more like a woman. Could it be that he was growing old? The Wilcoxes were not lacking in affection; they had it royally, but they did not know how to use it. (346)

Mr Wilcox's altered, more feminine nature is associated here with his preference for walking. This change is of significance because we learn that Mr Wilcox, the father, is fond of motoring. He and Evie enjoy motoring in the countryside such as Yorkshire (74), and 'motoring and shooting' (152) are acknowledged by Helen not only as part of his lifestyle but also as what contributes to his lack of interest in many issues that the Schlegels care about, especially that he mocks the Schlegels twice for walking over the Apennines (186, 190). The narrator's voice in the previous passage clarifies that the Wilcoxes are not necessarily uncaring, but that they find it difficult to express their emotions. The awkward link in this passage between affections, walking and motoring reveals Forster's complicated attitude towards walking, modernity and emotional development.

Forster writes 'What I Believe' more than a decade after the publication of *Howards End*:

> I believe in aristocracy […] Not aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet.[187]

Instead of seeing culture as a democratising force like Matthew Arnold, Forster believes in human communication and sympathy, which he also associates with nature. It is not

[187] Forster, 'What I Believe', p. 70.

just Forster's own voice in his essays that asserts these values, but also his literary works. Forster's novels anticipate these thoughts that he expresses in his later essays and explores them in the different events in his narratives. The values he celebrates are: '[t]olerance, good temper and sympathy – they are what matter really, and if the human race is not to collapse they must come to the front before long'.[188] Linking Forster's liberalism and human values with his anxieties about the decline of rural life reorients our understanding of the significance of nature in his texts. Rural life to Forster facilitates connection with the different materialities that constitute nature, and thus with human beings from different backgrounds and natures. Promoting interaction with nature and other humans epitomises important values such as sympathy, connectedness, and tolerance. Characters such as Ruth and Robert are more than just mere symbols for these qualities. They are depicted as physically and materially shaped by the different materialities that constitute the environments they inhabit. The rural landscape defines their bodily habits which, in their own turn, help to enlarge the characters' sensorium.[189] This does not necessarily suggest that nature makes people more sensitive. Sensitivity and compassion are inert, but being in physical contact with nature helps in their release.[190]

Forster's close depiction of characters in rural England may imply that his texts are traditional and disapproving of modernity. However, a reading that sheds light on his attentiveness to the everydayness of his characters' lives and his contemplation of the world-human encounters in his texts reveals that such encounters do not merely frame the characters' values and social relations in the different narratives. The texts'

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[188] Ibid, p. 65.
[189] This idea will be explored more fully in Chapter Five.
[190] Forster's plea for physical connection is challenged in social studies. See Mary E. Virnoche and Gary T. Marx, '"Only Connect" - E. M. Forster In An Age Of Electronic Communication: Computer-Mediated Association And Community Networks', *Sociological Inquiry*, 67.1 (1997), 645-650.

awareness of the different ways the material world weaves into human lives chimes with modern ideas and topics that are of current concern in different disciplines.[191]

Hospitable and Hostile Textures

I have shown in the last two sections how the mundane practice of walking is used by Forster to examine the themes of connection and belonging between characters and the places they inhabit. Such themes are framed by the characters' ways of walking, which are mostly determined by their bodily habits. I have also demonstrated that Forster's depiction of rurality in his texts is more than just Edwardian nostalgic sentimentality. The countryside offers him a place that facilitates physical encounters with nature and with other people that, he implies, are essential for maintaining certain values. The discussion also suggested that although attending to human experience may encourage a humanistic approach to human-world relations, the characters' encounters with the different places in the novels and their bodily habits are largely shaped by the nonhuman material textures of the environment. Nonetheless, *Howards End*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, and *A Passage to India* also include examples where characters walk in places they are not familiar with. Attending to the ways in which unfamiliar materialities interact with the characters' bodies shows us the extent to which these characters can project their own mental state onto their surroundings, and how the earth's texture manifests its power by either facilitating or hindering people's movement.

In 'What I Believe', Forster writes about 'a secret understanding' between those who are sensitive, an idea that unequivocally defines the relationship between Ruth and

[191] Forster's attentiveness to everydayness is discussed more elaborately in Chapter Four.

Margaret in *Howards End*. Margaret is often described as the 'spiritual heir' of Ruth Wilcox, and she inherits her house (102). The tie that Margaret creates with the house is akin to that Ruth has with the house. Although Margaret was invited by Ruth to visit Howards End in the first few chapters in the novel, she only makes her first visit after Ruth's death. The first thing Margaret sees and inspects in the house is the garden. As soon as she arrives there, she starts noticing the different trees and objects mentioned to her before by the late Mrs Wilcox and in the letters by her sister, Helen. When she walks in the garden, Margaret 'was struck by the fertility of the soil; she had seldom been in a garden where the flowers looked so well, and even the weeds she was idly plucking out of the porch were intensely green' (208). Her memories of Ruth's description make Margaret attend to the greenery, soil, and even weeds. The novel also asserts how even before she sees the rest of the house, Margaret 'had already decided that the place is beautiful' (208). This presumption suggests that she directs her experience towards the place before truly exploring it. Nonetheless, Margaret's appreciation of the place, which is mostly shaped by the act of seeing, is still dependent on her immediate experience that is shaped by certain material conditions that allow her to have an embodied encounter that meets her expectations. Margaret observes the soil's fertility and plucks the weeds directly with her hands. Yet, what is significant is that Margaret is a Londoner, and the act of plucking may not naturally occur to her. Sara Ahmed suggests in her article 'Happy Objects' that when objects are shared, 'it is not necessarily the feeling that passes. To share such objects (or have a share in such objects) would simply mean you would *share an orientation toward those objects as being good*'.[192] Having a conversation with Ruth about Howards End earlier in the

[192] Sara Ahmed, 'Happy Objects' in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 29-51 (p. 38).

novel appears as an enough of an excuse that frames Margaret's appreciation of the house right away. Therefore, Forster shows how personal relations contribute to the formation of deliberate attitudes towards places. Before she explores the house and the garden fully, Margaret becomes conclusive about her feelings, which are similar to Ruth's, towards the garden and the house.

As well as developing a similar attitude to Ruth's towards Howards End, the novel emphasises how Margaret manifests a physical resemblance to her. This becomes evident when Miss Avery, a childhood friend of Ruth, mistakes Margaret for Ruth during her walk in Howards End: '"Oh! Well, I took you for Ruth Wilcox." Margaret stammered: "I – Mrs Wilcox – I?", to which Miss Avery replies 'In fancy of course – in fancy. You had her way of walking' (210). Margaret and Ruth's shared way of walking suggests a shared way of perceiving and interacting with place through movement. In her walks, Margaret's body is shaped through the textures and the material constituents of the walked ground; as Olwig notes, 'the touched, smelled and the heard proximate material world is thereby woven into the walker's sensory field'.[193] The characters interact with the textures of the material world surrounding them as they walk, and their bodies are in harmonious conversation with the earth as they mingle with the natural elements of the garden in Howards End.

In different instances in the novel, especially after her visit to Howards End, Margaret imitates the character of Ruth through her bodily movement. During Evie Wilcox's wedding in Shropshire, Margaret talks with Henry in the garden while she is 'stooping over the mowing machine and playing with the grass which she trickled through her fingers like sand' (259). The way Margaret interacts with the grass and the earth is smooth and effortless. The grass, just like the hay in Ruth's hand, mingles with

[193] Olwig, p. 84.

Margaret's body. There is fluidity in this communication between Margaret and the earth which reflects a natural bond between her body and its surroundings. Margaret stoops to play with the grass in much the same way as Ruth 'stoop[s] down to smell a rose' (21). Both Ruth's and Margaret's bodies bend toward natural surfaces of the earth, allowing them to demonstrate a strong relationship with the land and hence makes them appear more rooted and strongly connected to the country. The relationship between Margaret and Ruth is indicative of the possibility that being perceptive to others through social relations can enable a certain relationship between oneself and the world. When Margaret goes to prepare herself to leave Oniton, a country house owned by the Wilcoxes, she 'was sent to dress, and the housemaid to sweep up the long trickle of grass that she had left across the hall' (260). In a contrasting image to that of the Wilcoxes who, as they drive in the motorcar, are seen by Margaret to leave 'a little dust and a little money behind', Margaret, like Ruth, becomes part of nature and her body leaves traces of the earth and its grass inside the house itself (261). It seems to us that Margaret's body is not human, but rather a walking piece of earth that sheds grass as it moves across space.[194]

The embodied encounters between Margaret and the different natural landscapes are very similar to the relationship Ruth once had with her garden. Her interactions can be identified as frictionless where she appears as one with nature. When she sits on the ground with Henry in the garden of Howards End to talk about their future, 'Margaret drove her fingers through the grass. The hill beneath her moved as if it was alive' (352). Margaret's hand drives, emulating the movement of a motorcar, but

[194] Forster shows that even having a certain connection with a place requires a certain privileged status. Nonetheless, it is not within the scope of this research to address the socio-economic issues in the novel. However, I will elaborate on the role of socio-economic factors in determining the relationship between people and place in Chapter Three, especially in the way the character of Leonard Bast is treated.

here her body is not separated from the earth the way it was during her motoring trip, but is in direct interaction with the surface. Just like Ruth's body, Margaret and the earth appear to us as one entity, where the movement of the former causes a movement in the latter. The text depicts again a surfaceless state between her body and the earth revealing a strong sense of connection and rootedness. The material aspect to the relationship both Margaret and Ruth enjoy with the landscape compliments the spiritual connection Forster suggests they have. When Ruth leaves the house to Margaret Schlegel, Forster articulates a rhetorical question regarding the validity of her decision: 'Has the soul offspring? A wych-elm tree, a vine, a wisp of hay with dew on it – can passion for such things be transmitted where there is no bond of blood?' (102). Attentiveness to the natural substances of the earth and the countryside and the ability to connect with them are what makes it possible for the two characters, Ruth and Margaret, to be analysed in relation to each other.

The novel suggests how interpersonal relations can determine the way humans perceive and interact with the world. When immediate experiences conform to human expectations, the encounters appear easy and natural. Ingold observes how Western ontology asserts

> that meaning does not lie in the relational contexts of the perceiver's involvement in the world, but is rather laid over the world by the mind. Humans alone, it is said, are capable of representing an external reality in this way, organising the data of experience according to their diverse cultural schemata'.[195]

[195] Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 51.

Ingold criticises the Western primacy of the mind and its emphasis on producing mind/body and nature/culture dualities. He is also sceptical of the assumption that reality is external to us and argues that meanings are to be found in the different relations that humans constitute through their involvement with other material surroundings. The emphasis on human-world relations accordingly places more significance on the material context that contributes to both the production of meanings and the formation of human identities. Forster's attentiveness to the material context that surrounds his characters in his different narratives prompts a questioning of the extent to which they influence their participation in the world. While Margaret's connection with the house was initiated by her relationship with Ruth before her visit and immediate physical encounter with its space, Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Passage to India* describe walks where the sense of detachment and alienation is more dominant. The material textures of the natural environments do not necessarily meet people's expectations. When the physical qualities of new places defy people's knowledge, their materiality gains more prominence and becomes more affective.

The first chapter of this thesis examined Lilia Theobald's walks in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and explored how, by walking in Italy, her body becomes vulnerable as she walks in a place that she is not used to. The novel highlights how Lilia enjoys aimless walks, a practice that Gino does not understand for he tells his friends: 'she asked me to accompany her sometimes – to walk without object!' (39). Being alone in her walks is not that essential to Lilia, but wandering around aimlessly is. Not having a prior knowledge of a route or destination allows Lilia to interact with places more directly and without presumptions. Yet, she realises that the place is made of

> vast slopes of olives and vineyards, with chalk-white farms, and in the distance other slopes, with more olives and more farms, and more little towns outlined

> against the cloudless sky. "I don't call this country," she would say. "Why, it's not as wild as Sawston Park!" […] But it was terrible and mysterious all the same, and its continued presence made Lilia so uncomfortable that she forgot her nature and began to reflect. (42)

Lilia has a pre-determined unreliable idea about the countryside of Monteriano. The Italian landscape does not warn her, especially when compared to the suburban park in her hometown in England. However, her naivety is shaken as soon as she starts her walk. Lilia's social inferiority in Italy is emphasised by depicting her body as being unaccustomed to the materiality of Italian landscape.[196] Lilia finds the walk more and more difficult, especially when she decides to run after a coach: '[Lilia] tried to cut off the corner of the zigzag, stumbling over the great clods of earth, large and hard as rocks, which lay between the eternal olives' (47). Her movement is not only hindered by the substances that cover the countryside, but the surface's texture is also characterised by stiffness and roughness that distance her from the earth. The scene shows that Lilia's interaction is completely opposite to that of characters such as Ruth, Robert, Stephen and Margaret. Instead of seeing her as inseparable from nature, the hard properties of the earth become more prominent and thus the distance between the subject – Lilia – and the materiality of the objects – dust and rocks – is highlighted and emphasised.

In her book, *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett argues that 'every nonhuman body shares with every human body a conative nature (and thus a "virtue" appropriate to its material configuration)'.[197] Therefore, the materiality of nonhuman objects or things may not necessarily define their status, as their influence and position become determined by their impulse instead. Bennett's approach studies human-world relations, yet without

[196] I have already discussed the relationship between Lilia and the material landscape of Monteriano, especially dust, in Chapter One.
[197] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 2.

giving priority to human bodies as epistemological entities that know what things and objects can do. She explains that her 'thing-power' approach

> aims instead to attend to the it as actant; I will try, impossibly, to name the moment of independence (from subjectivity) possessed by things, a moment that must be there, since things do in fact affect other bodies, enhancing or weakening their power.[198]

Bennett's attempt reveals the recent materialist interest in reading objects or things as self-determining entities that exist outside human subjectification. Yet, Bennett explains the impossibility of doing so, as the way objects are perceived will remain largely under human observation and categorisation. The relational encounters between actants and humans in Forster's fiction, as I have shown, have plenty to reveal about the powerful effect that the nonhuman world has on the development of his characters. Whereas in *Howards End,* the things that were in touch with Ruth's and Margaret's body strengthened their connection to the land and their bodies became almost at one with nature, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread,* the material texture of the surface weakens Lilia's vulnerable walking body and forces her to collapse as she 'felt very ill, and fainted' (48). Lilia's experience during this walk changes her attitude towards walking and the narrator explains that this was her last walk before her death. The power that rocks and mud have on her body have not only left a physical effect of tiredness and fatigue, but also changed the way she thinks about walking and, seemingly as a consequence, her marriage.[199] The novel shows the power of the nonhuman in hindering Lilia's mobility by not conforming to her expectations of a tame place that she could walk in. The nonhuman becomes more prominent once the scene manifests

[198] Ibid, p. 3.
[199] Further analysis of the incident can be found in Chapter One where the effect of dust is explained in more detail.

how friction increases before Lilia's body loses control. Instead of reaching an equal status by connecting, the difference between the subject and the object grows, and so does the unfamiliarity with the place and the sense of disconnectedness and alienation.

The hostility that characterises the encounters between English travellers and the Italian environment is acknowledged in Suzan Roszak's excellent discussion of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* in which she explores what she proposes are Forster's attempts to exclude Italy from contemporary society and to highlight the difference between it and the '"modern" English landscape'.[200] Roszak observes that during the novel, 'the weather becomes emblematic of the boundary between contemporary Italy's national character and that of Forster's modern England'.[201] Roszak sees the weather as having not only a physical destructive force, but also the ability to change the characters' ideologies. However, I would also add that this strangeness and difference even works at the minute level of everyday interactions between characters and place.[202] Unlike *Howards End*, surfaces act not as a way to connect, but rather as a separator which highlights the difference between Lilia and the landscape.

The vulnerability of the walker's body is highlighted when exposed more directly to the unfamiliar material textures of the environment which make walking an unpleasant exercise for those who want to remain at a distance. In the beginning of *A Passage to India*, Aziz loses his tonga and is consequently forced to walk in the British territories of the city. Aziz does not like walking and before losing his tonga he commuted on his bicycle which 'had neither light nor bell nor had a break, but what use are such adjuncts in a land where the cyclist's only hope is to coast from face to

[200] Roszak, p. 181.
[201] Ibid, p. 182.
[202] This chapter only discusses Lilia, but Chapter Four will explain more thoroughly the different experiences that Forster's travellers encounter in unfamiliar landscapes.

face, and just before he collides with each it vanishes?'.[203] The tropes of intimacy, proximity and distance that characterises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised in *A Passage to India* is visible in Aziz's ordinary commuting activities.[204] Aziz does not want to be close to people, to react to their appearances, or to even to stop and communicate with them. The bicycle serves that purpose as it allows him to push against the stream of people in the streets quickly. Through cycling, the place is liquefied where the land becomes non-existent to his body, and his presence becomes less significant to the place and the people walking in it. However, when his bicycle is broken and his tonga is lost, Aziz is forced to walk. This activity to him is 'an unwonted exercise' (15). This does not denote that Aziz is weak, for 'he was an athletic little man' and 'really very strong' (15). However, it is because

> walking fatigued him as it fatigues everyone in India, except the newcomer. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. (15)

The weariness of walking is a result of the activity's physical and social unpredictability. The difference between cycling and walking to Aziz is that the latter forces him to be, in Ingold's words, 'in touch' with both people and the earth.[205] Through walking, Aziz is not only compelled to physically feel the texture of the ground, but also to be affected by its materiality. The place that is situated in the British territories is also called the Civil Lines. The name itself indicates order and organization. The physical construction of the place that is 'sensibly planned' (6)

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[203] E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, p. 13
[204] See the discussions on the theme of intimacy and distance in Daniel Ryan Morse, 'Only Connecting?: E. M. Forster, Empire Broadcasting and the Ethics of Distance', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 34.3 (2011), 87-105, and Amardeep Singh 'Reoirienting Forster: Intimacy and Islamic Space', *Criticism*, 49.1 (2007), 35-45.
[205] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 32.

reasserts Aziz's ideologically established alienated stance towards this place that differs to a large extent from the Indian part of the city that he is used to.

Peter Childs notes that Forster began *A Passage to India* 'as a further exploration of sympathy and goodwill – a novel about connection between East and West'.[206] Forster's geographical representation of the Indian landscape has prompted critics to understand the novel's main tropes through the study of the places it depicts. John Sayre Martin notes that '[t]he India that Forster delineates […] is both muddled and mysterious. Its equivocal character is suggested in its very landscape'.[207] Benita Parry also explains a decade later that '[i]t has been repeatedly alleged in the critical literature that Forster's India is an amorphous state of mind, a figure of inchoate formlessness, a destroyer of meaning'.[208] The landscape in *A Passage to India* is one that conveys evasive meanings and where Forster depicts the West's inability to manage or understand its topography. Yet through examining the relationship between Aziz and the Anglo-Indian quarters of Chandrapore, we encounter a different type of ambiguity that characterises the relationship between Aziz and the place. The sense of alienation does not just surround Aziz, but also defines his relationship to the ground. The material texture of the earth's surface lacks stability and is in continuous change. This fluctuation in the earth's surface transmits mixed emotions which tire Aziz in both body and mind, and impacts his relationship with the place and how he identifies himself in relation to it. Aziz is not oblivious to the hostile nature of the land in the Anglo-Indian territories as he tries to avoid walking on it. The earth is hostile to him because its textures cannot be anticipated despite his regular interaction with it. Yet, it

[206] Peter Childs 'A Passage to India', in *The Cambridge* Companion, p. 190.
[207] Martin, p. 144.
[208] Benita Parry, 'The Politics of Representation in *A Passage to India*', in *A Passage to India: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. by John Beer (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), pp. 27-43 (p.29)

is easier for the newcomers to walk on this ground because they do not have any expectations of its changeable surface.

Vergunst writes about textures in his essay on everyday walking and suggests that they are not like surfaces as they 'do not clearly separate what is above from what is below as the person moves on', but are rather 'experienced relationally, though the degree and kind of friction caused by contact in movement between two substances'.[209] Aziz's attentiveness to the different textures of the Anglo-Indian ground demonstrates his awareness of the properties of the environment surrounding him. This textural interaction that is mainly defined by a rough contact caused by friction not only determines the inconsistent and changing relationship between his body and the Anglo-Indian ground and territory in general, but also shows how his social distance from those around him is framed by his relationship to the land and not the other way around.

Forster's careful portrayal of the Indian landscape demonstrates its affective role through its ability to form relations with characters that interact with it. Its nature, however, is different from that of the English countryside depicted in *Howards End* and *The Longest Journey*. Instead of providing Aziz with a sense of belonging as the countryside does to Ruth, Margaret, Robert and Stephen, the land's inconsistency and changing nature destabilises Aziz and tires him. Ahmed suggests that the way our bodies are affected by things is expressed in how our bodies turn towards these things. She argues that '[t]o give value to things is to shape what is near us', and thus there is a tendency to move away from the things we do not like. In doing that, she points out, 'we define the places that we know we do not wish to go'.[210] Aziz does not care for the

[209] Jo Lee Vergunst, 'Taking a Trip and Taking Care in Everyday Life' *in Ways of Walking*, p. 114. While Vergunst differentiates between surfaces and textures, Ingold and Gibson use the term surfaces to describe both the interface between substances and matters and the material properties of that interface.
[210] Ahmed, pp. 31, 32.

unsettled nature of the Anglo-Indian earth, and thus, both his mobility in the city of Chandrapore and the modes of transport he uses are determined by the feelings transmitted to him during his walk. As a result, Aziz's autonomy is disrupted and his body's energetic or fatigued state is defined by the changes in the textures of the Anglo-Indian earth.

This chapter has attended to the everyday human-world encounters in Forster's *Howards End*, *The Longest Journey*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Passage to India* and demonstrated the ways in which the renowned themes of rootedness and belonging are manifested in the relations between Forster's characters and the different materialities of the landscapes depicted in his fiction. The characters' encounters with their surroundings are found to be mostly evident in their habitually characterised and multisensory encounters, especially in the activity of walking. Analysing the different types of walks in Forster's novels reveals the extent to which his characters are the products of their material environments, and shows how their experiences and, more importantly, their identities are shaped to a large extent by their physical interactions with their immediate surroundings.

One of the aims of this chapter is to demonstrate how the natural and material landscape gains cultural significance when encountered habitually, and this is mostly evident in the country walks that are depicted in *Howards End* and *The Longest Journey*, and which show how connectedness and stability are embedded in the characters' habitual performances. Studying Forster's landscapes phenomenologically by focusing on the characters' experiences and perceptions of their immediate surroundings demonstrates how he privileges the body as an essential mode of perception. More importantly, it encourages a revaluation of the role of nonhuman

elements in shaping the characters' identities, sensitivities and experiences in his writings.

While my argument does not seek to discredit existing criticism, it certainly challenges well-established readings of Forster's landscapes that consider his depiction of rurality in England as only an expression of his nostalgic Edwardian sentiments and his landscapes abroad as mere epitomes of the difference and impossibility of connection between England and Europe, and the coloniser and the colonised. By emphasising the significance of the human experience, I argue that processual and habitual performances frame the characters' social traditions and identities. The relationship between the material environment and people's habits suggests that Forster approached nature not just as a model for his liberal values, but also as a dynamic entity whose materiality influences human sympathy and sensitivity. There seems to be a provoking and generative link between the materiality of nature and Forster's liberal-humanist values, two tropes that have not been explored before in the long history of Forster criticism.

Chapter Three

Modernity and Corporeal Limitations: Artificial Textures and Social Distance

Forster's concerns about the modern state of the world in the early twentieth century are commonly associated with doubt and ambivalence.[211] Randall Stevenson argues in his essay 'Forster and Modernism' that in his writings, Forster

> developed a late version of the Romantic vision which initially resisted pressures of modernity and industrialisation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like the Romantics, his early fiction emphasises inner qualities of spirit, imagination, or intuition and their affirmative resonances with an unsullied, non-urban world. Yet such affirmations invariably contain notes of uncertainty or precariousness.[212]

Although Stevenson considers Forster as a writer who responds to modernity with Romantic escapism, especially in his pre-First World War writings. Still, he confirms Forster's Romantic renderings as hesitant. Forster's uneasiness is identified by critics in his elaborate descriptions of the continuous changes affecting the urban landscape of England, of demolished and rebuilt houses, and of the unwelcomed relentless growth of suburbia. Page's reading of *Howards End* observes that Forster's 'key charge against London is its fluidity, its constant changing' and that 'London is condemned as too big and too unstable'.[213] The idea that the novel epitomises Forster's anxiety about the city's changeability and urban expansion is similarly recognised by Peppis who argues that the text 'critique[s] suburbia and the city, modernisation, and modes of Englishness

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[211] See S. P. Rosenbaum, *Aspects of Bloomsbury, Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), p. 88, Stuart Christie, *Worlding Forster: The Passage from Pastoral* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 18.
[212] Stevenson 'Forster and Modernism', p. 211.
[213] Page, pp. 74-75.

that authorise empire'.[214] A main reason for that criticism, Peppis suggests, stems from Forster's fear that '[s]uburbia and the city are literally taking over England's green and pleasant land, spreading repression, hypocrisy, and intolerance'.[215] Nonetheless, Peppis, like Stevenson, proposes that Forster's depiction of such changes 'position him alongside those who greeted the new century with concern, turning from the realities of urban modernity towards a mythic rural Englishness'.[216] Suggesting that Forster's attitudes are framed by nostalgia means that his works long for certain imaginings of a familiar rural past. However, I want to propose that despite Forster's turn towards the rural as an escape from modernity and his emphasis on the values with which the natural world endows humans, his texts equally suggest that the material and social effects of modernity are not just inevitable, but also irreversible. Forster's sentiments are not as concerned with the images of the past as much as with the alterations modern technology has on human mobility and sensory responsiveness to the environment. Because of modernity, Forster foresees a change in human perception, and accordingly in social values.

Although Forster's texts elaborately depict modernity's effect on English topography, I am more interested in demonstrating how the novels manifest this material change in the characters' embodied experiences. By examining *The Longest Journey*, *Howards End*, and 'The Other Side of the Hedge' (1911), I aim to show how modernity is manifested in the everyday experiences of Forster's characters. The effects of the technological advances in the modern world are conveyed through the changed ways in which humans engage with their surroundings and the new materialities that

[214] Peppis, p. 48.
[215] Ibid, p. 51.
[216] Ibid, p. 49.

characterise the textures of the modern environment.[217] I have shown in the first chapter how, although the waves of change may be a liberating force in some respects, Forster is sceptical about some of what modernity claims it brings to the world. Analysing the different types of walks portrayed in his texts can reveal the conflicting results that such material changes have both on the human body and social behaviour. It is through the depiction of the characters' walks that the texts present how modernity has indirect constrictions and limitations on human bodies and abilities, an important factor that alienates people from each other. My analysis will propose that the idealist hope which associated modernity and technology with the betterment and progress of human beings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emerges in Forster's texts as one that is unattainable and even suppressive.

Critics observe that one way through which people dealt with the oppressiveness of industrialisation and modern transport technologies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a return to leisurely walking.[218] Anne Wallace's study focuses on the significance of leisurely walking in English culture and 'on the articulation of peripatetic as a solution to the aesthetic problems connected with – both generating and generated by – the transport revolution and enclosure'.[219] Wallace argues that the literature of the nineteenth century assumed that 'the natural, primitive quality of the act of walking restores the natural proportions of our perceptions, reconnecting us with both the physical world and the moral order inherent with it'.[220]

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[217] Jonathan Wild notes that 'Edwardian writers from across a number of different literary fields were keen to incorporate the latest tangible incarnations of modernity in their work' in his book *The Great Edwardian Emporium* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 5. This will be discussed also in Chapter Five but with more focus on motorcars and modern technologies in science fiction.
[218] See Anne Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Frank Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth-Century Western Culture', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29.4 (1994), 583-625.
[219] Wallace, p. 9.
[220] Ibid, p. 13.

Wallace implies that walking develops a cultural meaning when it turns into a performance that brings people closer to nature and supposedly reverses the effects of the modern world. In other words, walking transforms into a bodily, social and cultural act of rebellion against modernity. Wallace also adds that

> Twentieth-century writers as diverse as E. M. Forster, Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Ursula Le Guin, A. R. Ammons, and Wendell Berry continue to use peripatetic as an index of our potential for achieving those continuities Wordsworth posited among the natural and the human, the past and the present, the rich and the poor, the material and the spiritual, the urban and the rural, the public and the private.[221]

The suggestion here is that Forster, like his contemporaries, deals with modernity by promoting Romantic endeavours such as leisurely walking to counter the effects of modernity. Such views are also embedded within the wider historical context in which rambling became a fashionable activity for urban dwellers, especially white-collar workers such as clerks.[222] While his texts do celebrate the values and significances that result from interacting with nature, the different walks in nature that Forster represents in his texts, such as *Howards End* and 'The Other Side of the Hedge', do not suggest that they diminish the effects of modernity in any way. While I tend to agree with Wallace's observation on the different meanings of walking in the texts she studies in her book, my approach is more interested in showing how walking can reveal the effect of modernity. Forster's works emphasise that modernity succeeds in becoming a material and cultural mediator between humans and their subjective experiences of the

[221] Wallace, p. 15.
[222] See Wild, *The Rise of the Office Clerk in Literary Culture, 1880-1939* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), Frank Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents', and Nicola Bishop, 'Ruralism, Masculinity, and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction, 1900–1940', *Journal of British Studies*, 54.3 (2015), 654–678.

world. Despite the freeing values modernity offers through breaking away from tradition and allowing people to experience a human construction of the world instead of a natural one, the texts show how modern built environments can produce boundaries that limit the human body and mind.

In order to observe how Forster's texts exhibit the limitations on the human body within modernity, I examine human interactions with different milieus enacted in walking and propose that it is through the effects of the material textures of the modern environment on the movement of the human body that we can, to a certain extent, draw a clearer picture of Forster's uncertainties. I argue that these doubts and reservations about modernity which stigmatised Forster's fiction for so many years stem from his scepticism over whether modernity does endorse democratic values, and its role in dealing with issues such as class inequality.

Illuminating Difference

Jonathan Rose argues in *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* that, although Forster is not strictly a modernist writer, '[f]or all his gentle liberalism, Forster embraced the class prejudices of modernist literature'.[223] Rose examines the preconceptions of the social changes that accompanied modernity, mainly in the rising numbers of white-collar workers moving into London and its suburbs, and suggests that Forster, primarily in his depiction of Leonard Bast in *Howards End*, is critical of modernity because it threatens the cultural gap between the middle classes and the working classes. However, I propose that to have a clearer perception of Forster's

[223] Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 402.

concerns and his alleged prejudices towards the rise of the lower classes, it is important to analyse the damaging effects of modernity that are projected in his novels. Forster seems sceptical of the specific kind of equality modernity promises to people from different classes, a closeness that is allegedly achieved through newly built suburbs and new transport technologies. I argue that Forster's pessimism about modernity is embedded within the idea I explored briefly in chapter two, that culture cannot be a tool for democratising societies for it thwarts the individuality and subjectivity that he considers essential for human development and communication.

Howards End explores the social, economic and cultural changes that reached their peak in 1910, the year that Virginia Woolf decided that '[a]ll human relations have shifted – those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature'.[224] My following discussion of the novel is framed by such changes and, while it might not focus on the socio-economic and cultural changes in depth, it still attends to the implications of such changes within Forster's ambivalent view of modernity, especially in relation to class. In *The Rise of the Office Clerk*, Jonathan Wild explains how a 'growth of a distinctive and effectively new class characterised the Edwardian period.[225] Wild's study investigates the significance of the newly-emerged class of white-collar workers in Britain, especially through its presence in the literary scene at that time. The rise of this class, mainly due to large numbers of people moving from the country to live in London's suburbs at the end of the nineteenth

[224] Virginia Woolf, 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown' (1924) <http://www.columbia.edu/~em36/MrBennettAndMrsBrown.pdf> [accessed 12th June 2018], p. 3.
[225] Wild, p. 1.

century, is one that is associated with modernity.[226] John Carey proposes that the spread of suburbs was also 'accelerated by developments in transport, such as electric trams and cheaper rail fares, which facilitated commuterism'.[227] Easing the access to modern technologies of transport changed the way people moved across space, offering new experiential and commuting opportunities to the aspiring lower classes. Modernity's role in reducing the gap between different classes is addressed by Richard Sennett in a chapter which uses *Howards End* as a case study to explore Forster's depiction of modernity. Sennett observes that the novel was written after the 'modern geographic transformation' that spread all over Europe.[228] In his observation of the portrayal of modernity in relation to the characters' bodies and movement across London, Sennett argues that

> Forster seeks to evoke a pervasive, if hidden, senate apathy as a result of the conduct of everyday life in the city […] an apathy among the wealthy and fashionable as among the masses of the poor amidst the sheer flux of life. Individualism and the facts of speed together deaden the modern body; it does not connect.[229]

According to Sennett, *Howards End* is a novel that reveals not only how modern metropolitan life has deadened people's sensations but also that such feelings, or lack thereof, are shared by inhabitants from different classes. Sennett's proposal that the apathy that characterises the modern metropolitan body and affects human relationships is one that was preceded by a similar debate in Georg Simmel's 'The Metropolis and

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[226] Richard Sennett observes that when *Howards End* was written in 1910, 'three quarters of the English population lived in cities […] leaving a swathe of desolate fields and distressed villages in its wake', in *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), p. 320.
[227] John Carey, *The Intellectual and The Masses*, p. 46.
[228] Sennett, p. 320.
[229] Ibid, p. 323.

Mental Life' (1903). Simmel argues that the modern city creates different external sensory stimuli that the metropolitan body adjusts to. Such adjustments and alterations in the human character makes people more apathetic because:

> [i]nstead of reacting emotionally, the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner, thus creating a mental predominance through the intensification of consciousness, which in turn is caused by it. Thus the reaction of the metropolitan person to those events is moved to a sphere of mental activity that is least sensitive and which is furthest removed from the depths of personality.[230]

Simmel proposes that the individualistic personality of the city dweller is reduced to indifferent, rational and objective responses that are free from personal emotions. The excessive sensuous stimuli in the city, as Simmel argues, deaden bodily reactions and accordingly makes people develop intellectual rather than interpersonal relationships, an attitude that privileges the mind over the body. However, although I tend to agree that the link between apathy and modernity is one of the many concerns of this novel and other works by Forster, I propose that the text presents apathy as a luxury rather than a collective experience.[231] Through analysing Leonard's embodied experiences, I show how, despite presenting similar views to the city to those proposed by Simmel and Sennett, the novel reveals that Leonard is interacts sensorially and emotionally with the city in a way in which affects him personally, and defines his relationship to the modern and exclusive space around him.

Leonard is an alienated and a displaced clerk whose difference from other characters in the novel is marked by the same technologies that superficially aim to

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[230] Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' [1903] in *The Blackwell City R*eader, ed. by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 103-110 (p. 104).
[231] Forster's 'The Machine Stops' is also interested in how future technology will breed apathetic individuals. More will be discussed in Chapter Five.

standardise people's experiences of the metropolis. Leonard's alienation is most visible in his walks in different scenes which are given considerable space in the novel.[232] It is during his solitary walks across London that we learn more about Leonard's thoughts. Walking in the city shows how the dynamic entities of modernity, society and culture interact and affect the walker's body. Nick Dunn explains how 'when we walk through cities we are expected to *conform*. This means we moderate the speed, direction and expression of our bodies in motion in response to both the built environment and the people around us'.[233] The walker's body is therefore the product of such responses, especially when they occur on a regular basis.

As discussed in the previous chapter, daily interactions between walkers and the environment are of interest in the works of Ingold and Vergunst who foreground walking as an activity that defines the body and its relationship to the world. For them, walking is not just an expression of thoughts and feelings but is rather 'a way of thinking and feeling'.[234] Approaching walking in this manner is persuasive in revealing that feelings cannot be separated from the world, but are embedded in it and experienced through movement. Ingold's perception of walking in this book and other works promotes Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology which emphasises that direct interaction between the body and the earth is an essential part of being and perception. Merriman also acknowledges the increasing scholarly attention paid 'to these affective, atmospheric, material and interpersonal qualities which coagulate and are assembled in places' in the study of perception and feeling.[235] In Forster's texts, these intertwined

[232] Almost two pages in chapter six describe Leonard's walk from the Schlegels to his house in Camilla Road.
[233] Nick Dunn, *Dark Matters: A Manifesto for the Nocturnal City* (Alresford: Zero Books 2016), p. 22. In a different manner, Simmel argues that the personality of modern individuals is forced to make adaptations in order to adjust to the new external of the modern metropolis, p. 103.
[234] Ingold and Vergunst, p. 2.
[235] Merriman, p. 60.

social and material relationships that are constantly created between bodies and various environments are manifested during the characters' walks. The affective material incentives that alter human perception and behaviour come hand in hand with social and economic factors that play a significant role in determining how bodies respond to places in the novel.

Leonard's city walks are significant to his identity, yet they have either been entirely overlooked in the criticism of *Howards End* or have been overshadowed by his long night walk in the suburban woods of Wimbledon. For instance, Anthony Lake's article about London and the flâneur in both *Howards End* and Forster's essay 'London is a Muddle' hardly mentions Leonard, but examines instead Forster's changed appreciation of London between 1910 and 1937 before suggesting that *Howards End*, in contrast to Forster's other novels, 'has much to say about London, and almost all of what it says is negative'.[236] Lake's comments on *Howards End*'s London are primarily shaped by the voice of the narrator and by Margaret's explicit comments on the city, and his analysis shows no interest in Leonard and his bodily responses to the city. However, I want to argue that Forster's elaborate depictions of Leonard's walks are revealing. Instead of showing Leonard's thoughts and feelings directly, Forster leaves his readers to extrapolate them through his movement and bodily responses to the world around him. It is through these walks that he contemplates Leonard's socioeconomic status in the novel, his quest of self-improvement, his assessment of his situation in relation to those who are higher than him on the social ladder, and the limitations imposed on him as a lower-middle class white-collar worker living in a modern metropolis in the early twentieth century.

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[236] Anthony Lake, '"London is a muddle": E.M. Forster and the Flâneur', *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of* London, 6.2 (2008), <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/september2008/lake.html> [accessed: 14/01/2016] (para. 4 of 27)

After retrieving his accidentally-stolen umbrella from the upper-middle class Schlegels, Leonard walks away with 'the lilting step of the clerk'.[237] The OED defines lilting as 'cheerful and merry singing', something that is associated with music and rhythm.[238] The phrase 'lilting step' is also used in several contexts to describe traditional types of dancing and movement.[239] Through associating this type of step with clerks, Forster creates a special way of walking and movement in the city that is particularly tied to their profession and their class. Leonard's steps which assert his professional identity only appear as soon as he is separated from the Schlegels whom he shared a walk with from a Beethoven concert to their house. Leonard's self-consciousness increases when he is surrounded by the Schlegels who are socially, financially and culturally superior to him, and once his body is freed from the obligations of social civility, his feet become disentangled and start conversing in a rhythmical and lively manner with the ground. Ingold and Vergunst explain that besides being influenced by material factors, 'walking is a profoundly social activity: that in their timings, rhythms and inflections, the feet respond as much does the voice to the presence and activity of others'.[240] Following this logic, it makes sense that Leonard's steps resume their regular rhythm when alone.

However, when Leonard is thinking about the Schlegels and fruitlessly pretending he is as cultured and gentle, his gait changes:

> As he walked away from Wickham Place, his first care was to prove that he was as good as the Miss Schlegels. Obscurely wounded in his pride, he tried to

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[237] E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, p. 41.
[238] "lilting, n." *OED Online*.
[239] See Sally Ann Ness, *Body, Movement, and Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), p. 258 and Darren Royston, *Dramatic Dance: An Actor's Approach to Dance as a Dramatic Art* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014), p. 120.
[240] Ingold and Vergunst, p. 1.

> wound them in return. They were probably not ladies. Would real ladies have asked him to tea? They were certainly ill-natured and cold. At each step his feeling of superiority increased. […] He walked complacently as far as the Houses of Parliament. There an empty stomach asserted itself, and told him that he was a fool. (46-47)

What is significant about Leonard's walk is that it invites us inwards to his feelings and thoughts rather than describing the setting around him. Unlike the walks described in Chapter Two, Leonard's bodily movements are the product of internal rather than external factors. Simmel's discussion of apathy as a quality that characterises those who inhabit modern cities suggests that humans become 'indifferent to all things personal because, out of them, relationships and reactions develop which are not completely understood by purely rational methods'.[241] Yet, Leonard does not abide to this principle because the way he walks in this example is reflective of internal rather than external stimulus. His fabricated triumphant steps must have changed his bodily posture from the norm, and are the result of his previous interaction with the Schlegels. But Leonard's artificial way of walking does not last.

The satiric, or in Page's words, 'half-comic and half-pathetic', representation of Leonard, is not meant to hold him responsible for his attitude, but rather denounces the modernity that pushes him and the thousands 'whom civilization had sucked into the town' to feel this way.[242] Forster asserts, through the narrator's voice in the novel, that in such modern days democracy proclaimed equality between humans, and so 'he was obliged to assert gentility' (46). This uncalled-for conduct that Forster suggests modernity imposes on members of the lower-classes is not depicted as a privileging

[241] Simmel, p. 104.
[242] Malcolm Page, p. 23. Forster, *Howards End*, p. 120.

attitude that develops Leonard's character, but rather one that represses his freedom and further displaces him from his environment. Although Leonard tries to assert his superiority through changing the way he walks, his socio-economic background resists his cultural ambitions and, gives rise to new-found his feeling of superiority. The text's representation of Leonard's social and psychological state accordingly materialises as a bodily feeling that is a product of low socio-economic status.

Rose insistently claims that modernist writers 'convinced themselves that the typical clerk was subhuman, machine-like, dead inside' and that '[f]or all his gentle liberalism, Forster embraced the class prejudices of modernist literature'.[243] While Rose's account tackles significant issues concerned with the way in which culture was seen and perceived by the working classes in the Edwardian period, I want to argue that whereas this may be the case in other literary representations of clerks, Rose's study, which does not eschew obvious generalisations, is biased in its disregard of significant aspects of Leonard's character and the complex socioeconomic web that he is intertwined with in the novel. Like Forster's views, the half-sympathetic portrayal of Leonard is complicated for he is not only an emblem of class prejudice. Leonard's walk exposes his unconscious feeling of inferiority to the Schlegels. His everyday bodily encounters with his modern surroundings show how his body and personality cannot adapt, as Simmel suggests, to the modern inducements of the metropolis that are supposed to increase his indifference.[244] Leonard is not depicted as an apathetic machine as Rose claims, but is a sensitive character whose external material, cultural and social environment imposes certain values that his economic status cannot uphold.

[243] Rose, pp. 393, 402.
[244] Simmel, p. 103.

In her analysis of the treatment of class and capitalism in Forster's and Woolf's works, Sharon O'Dair suggests that inequality is commonly expressed

> not only a matter of class defined in terms of one's relationship to production but also a matter of status, of prestige, defined largely in terms of one's relationship to consumption, that is, in terms of one's lifestyle or culture. Further, the relationship between class and status, between economy and culture, is complicated. Status is not achieved solely by acquiring, say, scarce objects and is, therefore, neither merely a reflection nor a superstructural effect of class; nevertheless, status acquisition is linked closely to material conditions of life. Especially when established or maintained through consumption, status acquisition requires a certain freedom from economic necessity, as Forster and Bourdieu emphasize.[245]

Howards End's definition of class is thus linked to characters' everyday life and consumption. The association between class division and cultural acquisition is not determined by intellectual abilities as Rose suggests, but is rather related to economic factors that influence the way individuals treat time and leisure. Freedom from work and economic necessity removes the need to acquire culture as a destination or a chance for social improvement and betterment, and thus deems it as a practice that is performed for its own sake. Accordingly, cultural acquisition develops into a problem for a man like Leonard mainly due to other socio-economic factors that prevent those like him from indulging themselves in culture. This is mostly evident in everyday decisions such as the way one chooses to commute in London.

[245] Sharon O'Dair, 'Beyond Necessity: The Consumption of Class, the Production of Status, and the Persistence of Inequality', *New Literary History*, 31.2 (2000), 337-354 (p. 338).

During his walk, feeling tired, Leonard pauses and wonders 'whether he would take the tram as far as a penny would take him, or whether he would walk. He decided to walk – it is no good giving in, and he had spent money enough at Queen's Hall' (47). The choice between walking and taking the tram is a difficult one for Leonard and financially based. Leonard's walk, just like his pursuit of culture, is best understood as a necessity and not undertaken for leisure. Wallace observes that in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the existence of cheap and fast travel available for the masses meant that: '[t]hese changes made it possible to regard walking as a deliberately selected mode of travel'.[246] Nonetheless, this is not the case for Leonard whose city walk emphasises a geographical and an economic alienation that is implicated in his inability to afford both urban transport and indulgence in cultural activities. Leonard is sympathetically depicted as a victim of the changes such technologies brought to the material texture of the city:

> In the tunnel he paused and listened to the roar of trains. A sharp pain darted through his head, and he was conscious of the exact form of his eye socket. He pushed for another mile, and did not slacken speed until he stood at the entrance of a road called Camelia Road, which was at present his home. He stopped again, and glanced suspiciously to right and left, like a rabbit that is going to bolt into its hole. A block of flats constructed with extreme cheapness, towered on either hand. (47)

The materiality of the place has a strong influence on Leonard's movement. He first stops as a result of the powerful sound of the speeding trains in the background, and his body is jolted by the strong movement and sounds which increase his perception of his senses. Leonard's body is in pain, and the emphasis on his eye sockets shows the

[246] Wallace, p. 10.

weakness and vulnerability of the human body in comparison to the fast, thunderous trains. The 'roar of the trains' is not just exemplary of the sounds of the city that surround the walker's sensory field but also carries cultural meanings. The people who could afford this luxury arrive earlier to their houses, have dinner, and perhaps spend time reading the same books that Leonard wants to read, while he is still standing in the tunnel, hearing the sounds of unaffordable means of transportation fleeting by. Leonard's encounter with trains is not a pleasant one. Trains are depicted as a requirement of this modern city as Margaret remarks to her sister in Chapter Nineteen, but not one that necessarily meets Leonard's needs.[247] The walk is again rendered as an obligation, a means to an end. In Camelia Road, where his house stands, Leonard looks more like a stranger than an inhabitant. Leonard is described as a rabbit, suggesting not only that he is small in size in comparison to the big buildings and roaring trains, but also his scared and cautious nature. By using the image of the rabbit, Forster displaces Leonard materially and geographically from the city.

The blasé attitude which Simmel describes as the 'adaptive phenomenon' of the modern urban life of the early twentieth century 'in which the nerves reveal their final possibility of adjusting themselves to the content and the form of metropolitan life' does not then apply to Leonard in the novel.[248] The adaptability and conformity to the external world that Simmel, Sennett, and Dunn observe as being an inseparable part of life in cities shows the deterministic nature of the urban environment and its persistent presence in everyday human life. The blasé and apathetic attitude that is epitomised as the marker of modern life in the early twentieth century does not materialise in Leonard's life in the city. Failing to adapt to modern standards of urban being is what

[247] Forster, *Howards End*, p. 192.
[248] Simmel, p. 14.

marks Leonard as an outsider. Although *Howards End* was published only a few years after Simmel's essay, the novel's manifestation of Leonard's emotions reveals that, despite living in London all his life, Leonard is still alienated from the modern world's effect on his body. Leonard is self-conscious and the city characterised by modernity emphasises his alienation, displacement and feeling of difference.

The city's electric lights also assert Leonard's detachment and self-consciousness. At night, London is described as a city that 'was beginning to illuminate herself against the night. Electric lights sizzled and jagged in the main thoroughfares, gas lamps in the side-streets glimmered a canary gold or green' (127). The light of the city adds a material significance to the night-walkers not only by illuminating the way, but also by allowing them all to be seen and observed in a way similar to the way they would in daylight. Ingold notes that vision is an essential element of walking in urban environments 'which, while preserving the independence and autonomy of the individual, maintains a constant visual vigilance – not of the ground surface but of *other people*'.[249] The vision provided by electric lights gives walkers access to places at night, but at the same time it deprives them from the sense of seclusion that darkness offers. Leonard's walk reveals his constant watchfulness and wariness of other walkers. There is no mention of the urban structure, buildings and textures of the city in his walk. Instead, we are made aware of his self-consciousness through the way his body responds to the gazes of others. After he talks with the Schlegels about his long night walk, Leonard feels that he has created a connection with the Schlegels, and hence their class:

> That the Schlegels had not thought him foolish became a permanent joy. He was at his best when he thought of them. It buoyed him as he journeyed home

[249] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p.42.

> beneath fading heavens. Somehow the barriers of wealth had fallen, […] He took off his top-hat and smoothed it thoughtfully. He had hitherto supposed the unknown to be books, literature, clever conversation, culture. One raised oneself by study, and got upsides with the world. But in that quick interchange a new light dawned. Was that "something" walking in the dark among the suburban hills? He discovered that he was going bareheaded down Regent Street. London came back with a rush. Few were about at this hour, but all whom he passed looked at him with a hostility that was the more impressive because it was unconscious. […] Thus equipped, he escaped criticism. No one felt uneasy as he titupped along the pavements, the heart of a man ticking fast in his chest. (129-130)

Leonard's actions are determined by the Schlegels' opinion and approval of him. His social and intellectual improvement becomes tied to them, and the thought of it entertains him as he walks through Regent Street. He mistakenly believes that, because he shared an interesting conversation with the Schlegels, wealth becomes irrelevant, and he develops an awareness that it is his admired long nocturnal walk, not intellectual conversation, that brought him closer to them. As he contemplates, Leonard becomes self-conscious again for not acting like a gentleman by walking the street bare-headed. It is the well-lit streets that allow other walkers to observe how he is inappropriately dressed and force Leonard to see and respond intuitively to their unfriendly looks. It is clear that Leonard works hard to prove his social equivalence to the Schlegels and the other walkers in Regent Street. He seeks social acceptance and insists on belonging to the place while being clearly alienated from it. Again, his steps imitate his feelings, for while he is now dressed appropriately, his walking still reflects a socially-produced type of movement. The *OED* defines 'tittup' as 'to walk in an affected manner' and to

'prance in one's gait'.[250] Because he is being observed by others, Leonard does not walk the way he would normally do with a 'lilting step' (41). It seems that his movement becomes a physical manifestation of an uncomfortable social attitude that results from social differences augmented by the well-lit streets of modern early twentieth-century London.

Leonard's city walks in *Howards End* are suggestive of Forster's views of modernity and the life of clerks. The different interactions that he has with modern transport technologies and the material environment reveal the extent to which he and, by inference other clerks are alienated and estranged from the city. The text proposes that the reason for such alienation is that modernity asserts certain ideals that promote punctuality and indifference on people. Instead of bringing them together, such values highlight the differences between them. Destination-oriented walks highlight the social dimension of this activity which both reduces Leonard's attentiveness to his material surroundings and makes him subject to social criticism. This contributes to the insecurity and timidity that are part of his identity and character.

Destination Oriented

Forster's sceptical problematisation of modernity's democratic values that aim to bridge the gap between classes through offering equal experiences of the world are best understood through the qualities that Simmel argues characterise the modern world: '[p]unctuality, calculability and exactness'.[251] These modern values seek to exclude arbitrary and impulsive interactions as an approach to life and personal relationships.

[250] The *OED* also uses a quotation from Forster's *Howards End* with several others as an example of the word 'tittup'.
[251] Simmel, p. 105.

The novel deems suburbs not only practical in their artificiality but also for facilitating objective experience due to their lack of physical distinctions. Sawston, a fictional suburb in which Rickie Elliot spends his childhood, is highlighted as central to the formation of his character and adulthood. Forster orients the reader with the effect of such a place by explaining how

> [s]ome people spend their lives in a suburb, and not for any urgent reason. This had been the fate of Rickie. He had opened his eyes to filmy heavens, and taken his first walk on asphalt. He had seen civilization as a row of semi-detached villas, and a society as a state in which men do not know the men next door. He had himself become part of the grey monotony that surrounds all cities.[252]

Forster is ambivalent towards the reasons behind people wanting to live in suburbs, and his reservation stems from a prejudice he holds against both the material and sociocultural values that characterise built environments. The material structure of suburbs is described with a tedium and rigidness that not only define urban development but are also implicated in the apathetic and detached lifestyle which Forster claims suburbans lead in this example.

The detachment suburbs represent is largely reflected in the sociocultural milieu of fictional Sawston in this novel and also in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.[253] Ingold observes that one of the markers of modernity is

> the engineering of the ground surface by coating it with a layer of hard and resistant material such as concrete or asphalt, as in road building or laying the foundations for urban development. The objective of such engineering is to

[252] Forster, *The Longest Journey*, pp. 21-22.
[253] Asphalt marks the streets of Sawston for Mrs Herriton 'looked up and down the asphalt paths of her daughter' (13). Suburban values are also linked to appearances and distance. Miss Abbott tells Philip that 'Sawston was different: we had to keep up appearances. But here we must speak out' (79).

> convert the ground into the kind of surface that theorists of modernity always thought it was – level, homogeneous, pre-existent and inert.[254]

The thrilling experience of modernity that promises to pave the way for social equality and shared standardised experiences is reflected in the newly built material structure that is defined by its hard, smooth and equally-levelled surface. The utopian vision of a modern world that is regular and identical is one that characterises the suburbs in Forster's fiction, and is cynically portrayed as the marker of modern civilisation. Forster's uneasiness about suburbs is demonstrated in his depiction of its modern material surfaces as textures that promote rigidity and intolerance. The artificiality of their design is also evident in the text through the 'filmy' vision that suburban space conveys and the blurriness that restricts the ability to distinguish between reality and appearance.

Ingold explains how 'while designed to ease the transport of occupants across it, the hard surfacing of the earth actually blocks the very intermingling of substances with the medium that is essential to life, growth and habitation'.[255] Ingold is critical of an environment where the different mediums (earth and air) are forced to be separated and their liveliness is threatened by being no longer determined by natural forces. The intermingling of the different mediums is important to the living world and development, according to Ingold. However, I would like to add that the hard artificial materialities that surface the modern environment do not only play a role in dulling the senses and disconnecting humans from the natural environment as Ingold suggests. Because of their monotony, similarity, and lack of distinctiveness, the text implies that suburbs fail to leave an aesthetic or sensory mark on human perception. Their

[254] Ingold, 'Footprints through the Weather-World', p. 126.
[255] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 124.

featureless appearance devalues the place and thus alienate people even further from the environment.

Roads function in a similar manner to suburbs in Forster's texts. In 'The Other Side of the Hedge', the narrator describes how when he stops walking, 'it was only the monotony of the highway that oppressed me – dust under foot and brown crackling hedges on either side, ever since I could remember' (34). The highway is also described later in the story as 'monotonous, dusty, with brown crackling hedges on either side, as far as the eye could reach' (40). The colourless landscape and the repetitive scenery are markers of a regulated environment, the lack of variation of which is portrayed as repressive and limiting. 'The Other Side of the Hedge' does not have a noticeable share in Forster criticism. It is either mentioned in passing alongside his other short stories, or read allegorically as a tale which expresses 'History as a Journey', as in Peter Crisp's essay on metaphor.[256] Although it is true that Forster's fiction is packed with various symbols and metaphors which serve ideological purposes, it is possible to produce an alternative reading of this story which shows the influence that roads and modern urban designs have on human bodies, their movement, and their social relations.

The road in 'The Other Side of the Hedge' is not only a kind of metaphor but also a substantial textured surface that has direct effects on the narrator's feelings. Nonetheless, the road fails to have any aesthetic value for the narrator, and the road's significance lies instead in its practical purpose which is primarily defined by its ability to regulate people's walks to specific destinations. Ingold and Vergunst write in their editorial that 'the road itself is a desert: nothing can live and grow there. Uncovered by ground or vegetation and unprotected by bushes or trees, the road can be a bleak, open

[256] Peter Crisp, 'Allegory, Maps, and Modernity: Cognitive Change from Bunyan to Forster', *Mosaic*, 36.4 (2003), 49-64 (p. 49).

space. Tiring to walk on'.[257] Their disapproving tone is associated with a clear emphasis on the negative effects the built environment has on its inhabitants, especially on their walks. The hardness of its surface and its monotony, Ingold proposes, is the reason for the production of mechanised walks that he claims not only dull the human body but also separate the sociocultural dimension of human life from movement. Therefore, the predictability of suburbs and roads means that modern movement becomes a destination-oriented practice which devalues the material and aesthetic significance of the journey itself.

Focusing on destination or walking for a defined purpose affects people's bodies, autonomy, and sense of direction. The homogenous materiality of the road and its built structure removes the unpredictable element of walking that increases people's alertness and transforms walking into a social activity or a cultural performance. In *The Longest Journey*, the suburban materiality that the novel depicts as shaping Rickie's perception of life is one that continues to constitute part of his identity in his adulthood. The separation between Rickie's body and nature is characterised even in his walks in Cambridge where he walks on the grass away from his friend Ansell who '[w]ith his ear on the ground […] listened to Rickie's departing steps' (65). Although Rickie walks on grass, Ansell could still hear Rickie's steps on the earth as if it was a hard surface. Rickie does not seem to have a strong connection with the earth that would allow him to walk 'noiselessly' as does Ruth in *Howards End*.[258] His feet rather create a sound of friction, suggesting both distance and rigidity acquired from growing up in the suburbs.

[257] Ingold and Vergunst, p. 13.
[258] See Chapter Two in Forster, *Howards End*, p. 21.

Beside their monotonous and static materiality, suburbs also represent material imitation and the aspiration for perfection and the ideal.[259] This is rendered in *The Longest Journey* in the way Rickie approaches his life. His search for the ideal is associated with his feelings towards his disability. Rickie suffers from a lame foot that affects different aspects of his identity, and his rejection of his bodily impairment stems from his pursuit of the ideal: 'I like people who are well-made and beautiful. They are of some use in the world. I understand why they are there. I cannot understand why the ugly and crippled are there, however healthy they may feel inside' (69). His quest for perfection, which primarily stems from his physical disability, is manifested in the novel through the way he interacts with the world both through walking and his creative endeavour as a writer.

Rickie's lameness has been addressed by different critics who predominantly interpret it as a disability that is an indication of Forster's homosexuality.[260] Rickie's deformed body is also considered as a key to understanding the plot of *The Longest Journey*, especially by Elizabeth Heine whose analysis in the afterword of the novel, similarly overlooks analysing Rickie's lameness beyond a reference to Forster's homosexuality.[261] While Forster's common tendency to use symbols in his fiction does indeed bring the parallel lives of Rickie and Forster together, especially in shared feelings of alienation, difference and marginalisation, the novel's pondering on the way Rickie moves is revealing of other significances. The way Rickie develops his sense of

[259] See Dion Georgiou, 'Leisure in London's Suburbs 1880-1939', *The London Journal*, 39.3, (2014), 175-186, where he observes that 'suburbs were related to particular types of cultural formations, which some have positively interpreted as a utopian ideal "middle landscape" and private romantic paradise, while others have more negatively characterized suburbia as a dystopian, sprawling, vacuous aesthetic wasteland, anti-intellectual and intolerant' (p. 175).
[260] See Nicholas Royle, *E. M. Forster* (United Kingdom: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 1999), Gillie, *A Preface to Forster*, and Crews, *The Perils of Humanism*, pp. 50-70.
[261] Elizabeth Heine, 'Afterword' in Forster, *The Longest Journey* (England: Penguin Group, 2006), pp. 291-349.

alienation is analogous to the way he perceives himself in relation to the world. I want to argue that placing less emphasis on the biographical reading to analyse Rickie's lameness and pursuit of the ideal in relation to other characters in Forster's fiction reveal the text's negative views towards a mediated experience of the world and the vitality of having subjective embodied experiences that are not socially pre-determined.

Rickie's striving for the ideal is what alienates him from both his material and social surroundings. His rejection of his own condition is mostly evident in his walking, which becomes a social activity that determines his position in relation to others. He is portrayed as an alienated child because other children would 'walk too fast for him (24), and even as an adult, his walk is marked as different to other people's. Gerald for example 'walks like a maniac', and Agnes worries if she walks too fast for him (48, 69). Walking for Rickie not only becomes a matter of keeping up with others, but is marked as a disturbed movement with uneven rhythm and steps. In one of his walks, Rickie quickly 'hurried […] slackened and stopped, and hurried again' (65). He struggles in finding his own pace in his pursuit of becoming like others. Accordingly, his eagerness to prove himself means that both his walk and his writings are means toward the end of social acceptability.

Rickie's distance from the world is explained in his failing attempts throughout the novel to write great fiction. We learn from the beginning of the novel that he has 'a great idea of getting into touch with Nature, just as the Greeks were in touch' (71). The way he perceives life and reproduces it in his writings lacks clarity. Rickie's encounters with nature and practice of writing about it are activities that are mediated by classical culture. The idealistic vision of suburbs that physically intervenes between Rickie's body and nature is also shown in the separation he experiences through cultural mediation. Rickie's marginalised social identity that initially stems from his bodily

impairment later develops in the novel when he becomes physically and intellectually disconnected from nature. This is emphasised in the different critiques of his works by the editor and other characters. The editor explains how the stories are not convincing, they are not 'obvious' enough and that Rickie needs to express his ideas 'more clearly' (141). The problem with his writing is not his imagination, but that the stories are distant from life. The editor asks Rickie to 'get inside life' and to 'see Life' before sending another story (144).

The novels suggest that Forster's problem with modernity is that it distances civilisation and culture from the natural world by promoting an objective, predictable, and neutral image and experience of it. He critiques the idea that the best experience of the world is one that is distanced, mediated and translated into a set of predetermined ideas. In Forster's texts, this is projected as a limitation to human autonomy and subjectivity which forces people to see life in categorised and calculated ways instead of seeing it afresh and unpredictably. The distance between culture and nature is also problematised in Forster's depiction of Mrs Failing in *The Longest Journey* where her mediated and aesthetic attitude to nature is satirised. Mrs Failing owns a farm house in Wiltshire, and her attitude towards her natural surroundings is described as

> severely aesthetic – an attitude more sterile than the severely practical. She applied the test of beauty to shadow and odour and sound; they never filled her with reverence or excitement; she never knew them as a resistless trinity that may intoxicate the worshipper with joy. If she liked a ploughed field, it was only as a spot of colour – not also as a hint of the endless strength of the earth. (102)

Mrs Failing's view of nature is unproductive and fruitless. Instead of sensing nature through her body and perceiving the earth's liveliness, she views the landscape from

afar and is separated from nature and from its physical qualities. Approaching the landscape visually not only removes her from the immediacy of the embodied encounter but also privileges her status as a distant observer by giving more prominence to her premediated ideal views and judgements. In this scene, Mrs Failing's experience is culturally mediated. In this way, she is depicted like Leonard Bast and her nephew, Rickie, who both attempt to connect with nature through the classics and books. Nature, therefore, is not appreciated for its effect on humans and their subjective perception of it, but is rather understood and conveyed by the idealistic and mediated objective views that humans have bestowed on it. Imposing human and cultural standards on nature is shown as reductive because it overlooks the landscape's dynamic agency and ignores the immediate effect of the material textures of the world on the human body that experiences it. The distance between the natural landscape and Mrs Failing is conveyed in her cultured view when she addresses Stephen complainingly:

> "My farm is a mystery to me," said the lady, stroking her fingers. "Some day you must really take me to see it. It must be like a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, with a chorus of agitated employers. How is that I have escaped? Why have I never been summoned to milk the cows, or flay the pigs, or drive the young bullocks to the pasture?" (87)

The landscape surrounding Mrs Failing's house is perceived as a painting and the work being done in her farm is also romanticised as kind of. Stephen's practical responses 'rob the Pastoral of its lingering romance' according to Mrs Failing (88). Mediating the experience of nature through culture renders the effect of the material textures on humans insignificant and even non-existent. In his essay 'Art for Art's Sake' (1949), Forster writes that 'Man lives, and ought to live, in a complex world, full of conflicting

claims, and if we simplified them down to the aesthetic he would be sterilized'.[262] Mrs Failing's sterility is the same as that Forster writes about in his essay almost four decades later. Understanding the natural elements of the world from a cultured perspective undermines the role of the everyday dimension of human life and the significance of the complex relations between the human and the nonhuman. It also lessens the attention to the material environment's effect on people, which Forster considers to have a substantial value. Rickie's mother, Emily, who has an affair with Robert the farmer, does not perceive the world the way the Elliots do. Instead of searching for the ideal like Mrs Failing, she rather finds charm in nature itself:

> People talk of hungering for the ideal, but there is another hunger, quite as divine, for facts. She had asked for facts and had been given "views", "emotional standpoints", "attitudes towards life". To a woman who believed that facts are beautiful, that the living world is beautiful beyond the laws of beauty, that manure is neither gross nor ludicrous, that a fire, not eternal, glows at the heart of the earth, it was intolerable to be put off with what the Elliots called "philosophy," and, if she refused, to be told that she had no sense of humour. (234-235)

The narrator's attitude is one that is sympathetic to Emily's rejection of the objective view of the world that has lost touch with reality. Mrs Failing's aesthetic perception of everyday life practices is not encouraged as the only way to improve imagination. The previous passage shows how nature and its material reality possess independent meanings of beauty that do not necessarily fall within the normative accounts of the beautiful. Everyday and mundane things such as manure and fire do not need to be idealised and romanticised for them to be considered beautiful or affective. The text

[262] Forster, 'Art for Art's Sake', in *Two Cheers for Democracy*, pp. 87-93 (p. 87)

suggests that the modern world's celebration of human progress and civilisation is simplified because it overlooks the role of the nonhuman and distances people from the unstudied and unpredicted effects of the material world.

Calculating human experiences and presenting them as liberating and anticipated encounters that should meet certain expectations are topics that Forster's texts explore, especially through questioning the boundaries that modernity imposes on the human body and how it interacts with the world. Like the roads in 'The Other Side of the Hedge', modern technology that calculates and predicts human performance is also presented as limiting. The story begins with the lines:

> My pedometer told me that I was twenty-five; and, though it is a shocking thing to stop walking, I was so tired that I sat down on a milestone to rest. People outstripped me, jeering as they did so, but I was too apathetic to feel resentful.[263]

Opening the story with a personified and active pedometer that informs the narrator about the distance he walked positions the gadget as an authoritative object that, to a certain extent, controls the movement of the narrator's body, his sense of fulfilment and belonging, and perception of his surroundings. To stop walking is seen as an unpredictable disturbance to a plan that is formulated by that pedometer. It is also a surprising turn for the narrator who suddenly becomes an outsider from the group he walks with. Due to his weariness, the narrator is forced to stop and to obey his fatigued bodily state. The extreme tiredness which numbs his sensations and social responsibilities is an expression of his humanity rebelling against the laws formulated by the pedometer.

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[263] Forster, 'The Other Side of the Hedge' [1911] in E. *M. Forster: Collected Short Stories* (London: Penguin Group, 1954), pp.34-40 (p. 34).

As we have seen in the writings of Simmel and Ingold, modernity has produced people who are more interested in destination and achievements rather than process itself. Running or fast walking prevents people from attending to their surroundings and devalues place, which makes people less affected by the world around them. Gros similarly explains that walking is

> the best way to go more slowly than any other method that has ever been found. To walk, you need to start with two legs. The rest is optional. If you want to go faster then don't walk, do something else: drive, slide or fly. Don't walk.[264]

For Gros, fast walking denies walkers the essential qualities of the activity itself. Those who walk quickly do not pay attention to the detailed particularities of the places that surround them. He proposes that time and distance do not shape the experience of walking. What matters, instead, is that when we walk, 'things out there become more and more insistent in our body. The landscape is a set of tastes, colours, scents which the body absorbs'.[265] According to Gros, slow walking allows walkers to experience a strong sense of place that is initiated by physical and visual engagement between the body and the surrounding environment. Gros also emphasises that '[t]he stretching of time deepens space. It is one of the secrets of walking: a slow approach to landscapes that gradually renders them familiar'.[266] In order for walkers to familiarise themselves with a place, they have to come close to the environments they move in and physically engage with their textures. Walking slowly and at one's own pace is what allows people to attend to the environment and respond to it.[267]

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[264] Gros, p. 2.
[265] Ibid, p. 38.
[266] Ibid, p. 37.
[267] Rebecca Solnit writes 'I like walking because it is slow, and I suspect that the mind, like the feet, works at about three miles an hour. If this is so, then modern life is moving faster than the speed of thought, or thoughtfulness', in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 10.

The modern world, however, produces a set of expectations about how people should act, move, and walk, which determine the pace of human bodies and thus the value of the activities they do. Forster's texts suggest that measuring people's movements and their achievements according to standardised criteria limits the human body irreversibly. In its pushing for the ideal utopian vision, modernity forces people to lose their autonomy. Forster's humanist and liberal values that promote subjectivity, agency and freedom are then threatened by the modernisation of the world which not only limits these values, but also changes them. Forster's scepticism towards the effects of modernity is mostly visible in the way characters in the texts respond to unmodernised natural environments in ways that are unexpected.

Without Destination

In 'The Other Side of the Hedge', the narrator's intimacy with his environment increases as soon as he stops end-directed walking and becomes more aware of his surroundings. His sense of curiosity also deepens before he decides to see what lies behind the hedge. The narrator forces his body into the hedge, a decision that is encouraged by the fact that there was no one in sight, 'or I should not have dared to try' (34). His movements that are at first influenced and controlled by the pedometer and bodily existence of others become spontaneous once he is no longer part of the race. As soon as he starts exploring his surroundings, the narrator explains:

> The thorns scratched my face, and I had to use my arms as a shield, depending on my feet alone to push me forward. Half-way through I would have gone back, for in the passage all the things I was carrying were scraped off me, and my clothes were torn. (35)

The narrator interacts with the place here without his pedometer. His interaction is tactile to the extent that it hurts his body. What shocks him is that he does not go back, but actually enjoys being in touch with nature despite his pain. His own body is also his only guard against his surroundings for even his clothes are being torn. This passage reveals Forster's view that nature should be engaged with subjectively, and even free from clothes.[268] More importantly, it highlights how the unmediated experience appears to be enjoyable to him. Behind the hedge, the vastness of the place that is not defined by buildings appears as shocking, especially that the place leads '[n]owhere' to which he exclaims '[b]ut it must lead somewhere!' (35). The story later depicts the difficulty of walking in an open space and without a destination: 'I was trying to out-distance my companion, and there was no advantage in doing this if the place led nowhere' (36). The fact that the place, unlike the road, does not lead to any specific destination gives the narrator more agency and free will to choose his direction and pace. However, his body, which is used to destination-oriented and quick pace walking, prevents him from enjoying this leisurely walk. He is thus depicted as one who enjoys fast walking for self-development and improvement rather than an activity for its own end, or for nature's, sake.

The place beyond the hedge exists too for its own sake, unlike the roads the narrator is used to, and while he tries to slow his pace as he walks with the man, he still finds the need to check the progress of his pedometer after his walk which, to his surprise, has stopped working along with his watch. Modern society's obsession with time and distance prove to be vain in the fictional countryside Forster portrays for his

[268] The image here is similar to the one in 'The Machine Stops' (1909). 'I felt that humanity existed, and that it existed without clothes. How can I possibly explain this? It was naked, humanity seemed naked, and all these tubes and buttons and machineries neither came into the world with us, nor will they follow us out, nor do they matter supremely while we are here' (127). This will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Five.

readers. The distance and the speed of the walk are not as significant as the freeing quality of walking that gives the body its determination to move without the unnecessary modern equipment and without a specific destination.

The story also portrays a bewildering reaction not only to walking without destination, but also to doing things for their own sake. In the beginning of the story, the narrator marks his difference from his brother when he explains that the latter 'had wasted his breath on singing and his strength on helping others' (34). This suggests that enjoyment and altruism are of no value in the modern world that celebrates calculating and evaluating walking distances instead. The story also depicts a man who 'plunged into a lake, across which he began to swim. Here was true energy, and I exclaimed: '"A cross-country race! Where are the others?" "There are no others," my companion replied' (37). The man later explains that all this 'means nothing but itself' (37).[269] Being used to a modern life whose physical and social values are relational and destination oriented, makes it impossible to enjoy activities for their own sake and unaccompanied. This place, where its open and destination-free character should give autonomy, 'was a barrier, and in a moment I lost all pleasure in the grass, the sky, the trees, the happy men and women, and realized that the place was but a prison for all its beauty and extent' (36). Here, the human body that is used to being directed by speed and distance finds itself confined in an open space. Yet, when he returns to the road, the narrator seems to have gained awareness: 'I was strangely disquieted at the sight, which seemed to deprive me of all self-control' (40). The road, therefore, in comparison to the open free space that exists without destination, becomes something that is controlling. The narrator, however, develops a repressed feeling in both spaces. This

[269] Doing activities for their own sake could be linked to Forster's attitude to art. In his essay 'Art for Art's Sake', Forster explores the idea further by linking art to life and showing how culture cannot be separated from the everyday life.

feeling of in-betweenness, where he is situated, suggests the state of humans in the modern world who have lost the feeling of rootedness and freedom without having the ability to retrieve it.

In *Howards End*, the search for the ideal remains a relentless endeavour for Leonard who goes for a long night walk to connect with nature. The idea of the walking clerk who wants to get back to the organic world is not an unfamiliar one. Besides Wild's study of clerks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Frank Trentmann writes about the 'ramblers' movement taking tens of thousands of urban workers and office clerks into the countryside'.[270] The goal of such movements, Trentmann observes, is 'to counter the unhealthy physical and mental conditions of urban life by bringing its "victims" into contact with the natural world'.[271] Bucolic walking came to be considered an essential activity that fulfilled the need for physical interaction with nature in the early twentieth century. It is observed by Trentmann as a response to the increasing 'routine work structure' of that time, and an attempt to 'infuse the English people with the wholesome spirit of their pre-industrial ancestors'.[272] Trentmann's article demonstrates how rambling in the woods developed into an anti-modern approach for urban dwellers, a 'new romanticism' that became a significant part of English culture and which, like the Romantic view of nature, defined itself against the corruption of the city.[273] *Howards End* reveals Forster's awareness of such movements in Leonard's remarks to the Schlegels, especially when he explains that he and his colleagues were 'talking it over at the office. There's been a lot of talk at the office lately about these things' (123). However, Leonard does not think that this talk in the office was his inspiration, but rather believes that his walk is a result of 'reading

[270] Trentmann, p. 584.
[271] Ibid, p. 585.
[272] Ibid, pp. 590, 604.
[273] Ibid, p. 584.

something of Richard Jefferies', an idea that Margaret disagrees with as she believes '[i]t came from something far greater' (125). Margaret implies that Leonard takes a long nocturnal walk in the woods to connect spiritually with his ancestral roots. This spiritual connection that is also explored by Wild's and Trentmann's study of clerks could not be easily resolved through walking, Forster reveals. While Trentmann observes how such walks were seen as 'an antidote to the quickening speed of the modern machine age' and 'a process of mental and moral rejuvenation', Forster demonstrates that although a physical interaction occurs between Leonard and the woods, it does not necessarily mean that he 'connects' with nature.[274] Despite the change in the setting and the materiality of the environment, Leonard's obsession with bettering himself with books and culture and his destination-oriented modern bodily habits prevent him from finding the ultimate satisfaction and fulfillment of getting back to earth.

We learn about Leonard's night walk from his conversation with the Schlegels. This conversation directly situates his walk within a wider sociocultural context that is framed by his unstable relationship with the sisters. We already know that Leonard is self-conscious about his economic, social and cultural inferiority to Margaret and Helen, and this walk serves as an interesting topic that bridges the two classes. Leonard believes that his walk – and by extension his talk about his walk – are induced by an inspiration from culture and books. As he attempts to respond to the Schlegels' questions about his whereabouts on the weekend he went missing, he explains:

> "Yes, but I want – I wanted – have you ever read *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel?*"
>
> Margaret nodded.

[274] Ibid, p. 587.

> "It's a beautiful book. I wanted to get back to the Earth, don't you see, like Richard does in the end. Or have you ever read Stevenson's *Prince Otto?*"
>
> Helen and Tibby groaned gently.
>
> "That's another beautiful book. You get back to the Earth in that. I wanted –" He mouthed affectedly. Then through the mists of his culture came a hard fact, hard as a pebble. "I walked all the Saturday night," said Leonard. "I walked." A thrill of approval ran through the sisters. But culture closed in again. He asked whether they had ever read E. V. Lucas's *Open Road*.
>
> Said Helen, "No doubt it's another beautiful book, but I'd rather hear about your road." (122-123)

Leonard models his long night walk according to literary figures and imaginary experiences. Before mentioning the pure tangible fact of his walk, he stumbles across different books that he hopes will communicate his sensational adventure, as well as impress the Schlegels. Nonetheless, such attempts are met by sighs and indifference. It is not until he starts speaking about his own quest that the Schlegels are captivated by his story again. Instead of being manifested as a way of sharing understanding, culture is illustrated in this scene as a boundary between Leonard and the Schlegels. Rose protests in his book that 'Forster could not believe that a clerk might be genuinely thrilled by literature'.[275] He also questions the characterisation of Leonard:

> why not try his hand as a writer? Margaret Schlegel does detect something of the poet in him, but she is certain that if he put his thoughts on paper – if he ever presumed to compete with E. M. Forster – "it would be loathesome stuff." [276]

[275] Rose, p. 404.
[276] Ibid, pp. 417-418.

While Rose claims that Forster's problem with Leonard lies in his class and cultural inferiority, I want to argue that Forster's prejudices do not revolve around Leonard's lack of imagination, but the fact that he builds his knowledge and perceives his own experiences of the world in the light of culture and books. This does not mean that Leonard does not have the capacity to have an intellectual conversation or to understand books, but the problem is his insistence on using them to explain his walk. Wild and Nicola Bishop acknowledge that many critics think that Forster is prejudiced against clerks and their limited intellectual abilities.[277] However, both also recognise Forster's sympathies towards Leonard and his feeling of obligation to connect with nature. Forster does indeed believe that nature is physically and metaphorically a rich source for the values he esteems, but Leonard's night walk, I want to argue, does not only stem from what Trentmann refers to as 'the moral duty' to connect with nature, but also shows Forster's prejudice against culture and modernity and the striving for an ideal experience. In this dialogue, the authorial voice that comes through the Schlegels' words approve of Leonard's walk and the road he journeyed at night. However, when he describes his experience of night walking, we see how Leonard is as disconnected from nature as he is from London.

When she writes about solitary walking in English literature and culture, Wallace proposes that 'the walker may expect an enhanced sense of self, clever thinking, more acute moral apprehension and higher powers of expression'.[278] Nonetheless, this is not the case with Leonard. This walk reveals a lot about the long-lasting effect of modernity on the human body which, as in 'The Other Side of the Hedge', ends with disappointment. Breaking away from modernity in order to get in

[277] See Wild, pp. 101-122, and Bishop, p. 661.
[278] Wallace, p. 13.

touch with nature emphasises the limitations of the modern body. One of the significances about Leonard's walk is that it takes place at night.[279] When Margaret asks Leonard about the distance he crossed during his walk, he answers 'I don't know, nor for how long. It got too dark to see my watch' (123). Like the narrator in 'The Other Side of the Hedge', time and distance lose significance when walking outside the modernised areas, especially at night. Leonard explains how he thought the walk would not be too difficult: 'The fellows there [in the office] said one steers by the Pole Star, and I looked it up in the celestial atlas, but once out of doors, everything gets so mixed – […] Well, I lost it entirely. First of all the street lamps, then the trees, and towards morning it got cloudy' (123). Leonard's experience is not what he expected. Imagining it would be like the ones found in books by George Meredith, Robert Louis Stevenson, and E. V. Lucas, the immediacy of the experience appears less enjoyable. Moreover, thinking that reading about the Pole Star in books will give him the knowledge he needs to find his own way, when walking alone, and experiencing movement according to its signs, make Leonard lose confidence in the knowledge he thought he had.

Darkness also contributes to Leonard's sense of displacement from nature. When it is dark he loses spatial and temporal sense of his surroundings. The significance of time is lost in the dark and his movements are neither bound to his working hours nor the speeding trains around him. Edensor comments on the recurring theme of the recovery of sensual experience in the literature of walking, and highlights that, '[t]he temporal discipline of the city, according to Robert Louis Stevenson, constraints the urban inhabitant'.[280] Leonard wants to free himself from such constrains as he explains to the Schlegels how he wanted to walk in the dark woods for '[i]t was gas lamps for

[279] In *Modernism, Technology and the Body*, Armstrong writes that '[m]odernist texts have a particular fascination with the limits of the body, either in terms of its mechanical functioning, its energy levels, or its abilities as a perceptual system', pp. 4-5.
[280] Edensor, 'Walking in the British Countryside', p. 88.

hours. Still, I had all the night' (124). His purpose was to walk in the woods away from the modern manifestations of the city to escape the lightened streets into the darkness. Mathew Beaumont explains that, '[i]n the strict etymological sense, night walking is 'extravagant', meaning that it involves wandering beyond bounds, both geographical and social'.[281] For Leonard, night walking in the woods means walking in an environment that is materially and socially different from London. The darkness allows Leonard to aspire to move beyond his social status in society as his walks and movements are no longer produced under the scrutiny of other walkers. Accordingly, this removes the social external influence on his walk and allows us to interpret it merely on a material basis. Nonetheless, while Leonard's walks in the well-lit streets of London show his social difference, the unpredictability of the dark landscape further alienates him from his geographical surroundings.

Night walking is not easy as '[y]ou've no idea how difficult uneven ground is when it's dark' (124), Leonard explains to the Schlegels. It is not just the unevenness of the ground that troubles him, but the fact that it is dark, as if darkness gives a different shape to the ground. Beaumont suggests that in the darkness, 'everything acquires a subtly different form of volume. Even the ground beneath one's feet feels slightly different'.[282] Darkness has a significant effect on the walker's vision which consequently influences how one walks and perceives the environment. Darkness forces Leonard to be detached both temporally and visually from his environment, obliging him to rely on his other senses to navigate his way around the woods.

Leonard explains to the sisters that his main goal was to 'go off the roads' (124). However, 'the worst of it is that it's more difficult to find one's way' (124). When

[281] Mathew Beaumont, *Night Walking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London, New York: Verso, 2015), p. 8.
[282] Ibid, p. 2.

Leonard walks further away from the lights and goes deeper into the dark woods, he gets lost. Vergunst observes that '[w]hen lost, the ground feels less firm; the route is less confidently "made" by each footstep for fear that it is leading one astray. To lose the way is to experience a disconnection or a disjunction from one's surroundings'.[283] Accordingly, because of the complete darkness and the unevenness of the ground, Leonard becomes materially detached from the earth. Ironically, what has started as a walk to 'get back to earth', ended up unpleasantly,

> for the road went off into grass, and I got into another wood. That was awful, with gorse bushes. I did wish I'd never come, but suddenly it got light – just while I seemed going under one tree. Then I found a road down to a station, and took the first train I could back to London. (124)

The bushes hurt Leonard, he starts regretting taking the trip, and as soon as he finds a road he is relieved and goes straight to a train station. Although it seems that this walk is taken out of interest rather than necessity, the activity is still seen (although ironically not to Helen and Margaret) as an unsuccessful quest for the ideal, an obligation and another challenge that he needs to accomplish.

Instead of talking about the things he notices in the place he walked in, Leonard is fascinated about the idea of the walk itself: 'it wasn't what you may call enjoyment. It was more a case of sticking to it. I did stick. I – I was determined' (125). This walk, like the open space in 'The Other Side of the Hedge', appears more like a duty that he feels compelled to fulfil. Leonard is more excited about the results of this walk than the walk itself. Leonard was not only very tired, but also hungry: 'That dinner at Wimbledon – I meant it to last me all night like other dinners. I never thought that walking would make such a difference' (125). These bodily feelings of hunger and

[283] Vergunst, 'Taking a Trip and Taking Care in Everyday Life', p. 119.

exhaustion that distracted Leonard's complacent walk in London after meeting the Schlegels are the same needs that distract him from noticing things during his night walk. Instead of being a slow meditated activity taken for its own sake, the material textures of the dark suburban wood turns Leonard's walk into an activity that shows what limits his body rather than what facilitates his mental and intellectual freedom. When Helen asks Leonard about the dawn, he simply answers that

> The dawn was only gray, it was nothing to mention […] and I was too tired to lift up my head to look at it, and so cold too. I'm glad I did it, and yet at the same time it bored me more than I can say. (124)

It is not that Leonard considers the dawn as a meaningless aspect of his walking trip, but both his body and mind are constrained from enjoying it. He is tired, cold and hungry, and what is supposed to be the best part of the trip – the dawn – loses its meaning when other bodily sensations come into action. The way his body moves is a product of the environment he habitually experiences. J. D. Dewsbury explains how our habits 'rewire our bodies not to think in certain ways', and thus the destination-oriented way in which Leonard's body moves prevents him from being attentive to his surroundings.[284] Leonard does not enjoy his walk in the country because it is produced out of necessity.

Leonard's trip is an endeavour to immerse himself in culture, and to be part of that world he reads about. It is also an attempt, albeit a naïve one, to go back to nature and connect with the earth. Therefore, he decides to go for a walk after work: 'I took the underground to Wimbledon. As I came out of the office I said to myself: "I must have a walk once in a way. If I don't take this walk now, I shall never take it"' (123).

[284] J. D. Dewsbury, 'Non-representational Landscapes and the Performative Forces of Habit: from 'Live' to 'Blank', *Cultural Geographies*, 22.1 (2015), 29-47 (p. 34).

This time, Leonard does not walk to commute, but commutes via the underground to walk. Although the nature of the place he travels to is a significant aspect of his walk, it is not the geographical destination as much as the activity of walking in nature that matters to him.

Walking to connect with nature becomes the destination that Leonard does not reach. Therefore, his walk cannot be considered evidence of Forster's belief that walking, as Wallace suggests, brings people closer to the morality found in nature. This walk is a critique of modernity that makes things, such as this activity of walking, a destination rather than a process. The narrator explains how once Leonard started talking about culture, Margaret

> could not stop him. Borrow was imminent after Jefferies – Borrow, Thoreau and sorrow. R. L. S. brought up the rear, and the outburst ended in a swamp of books. No disrespect to these great names. The fault is ours, not theirs. They mean us to use them for signposts, and are not to blame if, in our weakness, we mistake the signpost for the destination. And Leonard had reached the destination. […] Within his cramped little mind dwelt something that was greater than Jefferies's books – the spirit that led Jefferies to write them; and his dawn, though revealing nothing but monotones, was part of the eternal sunrise that shows George Borrow Stonehenge. (125)

Forster reflects in Leonard's walk relevant issues he considers vital in influencing the meaning of humanity in the modernity of the early twentieth century. The problem with Leonard, like many others, is that instead of seeing culture – and nature too – as part of everyday life and an activity that is done for its own sake, connecting with nature and acquiring culture become an ideal destination. Medalie writes that in *Howards End*, '[i]nstead of bringing the disparate parts of society together, culture has come to

represent a cruel enticement, a type of mirage, which bestows on people the ambition, but not the means of social mobility'.[285] The pressure of social mobility, therefore, makes culture a destination rather than allowing cultural activities to be done for their own sake. This idealised version of culture that Leonard aspires to, like his walk, cannot be realised also because his socioeconomic situation does not allow him to indulge in culture for its own sake. The characterisation of Leonard, accordingly, is one that is implicated within Forster's views of art and culture, making the alleged prejudiced portrayal of Leonard not linked to his class *per se*, but rather to the idealised image that his class are forced to aspire to.

The different scenes from the three texts that this chapter has examined show the way in which Forster's depiction of the everyday life of his characters is implicated within his wider views of modernity and culture. The materiality of the modern world that he depicts in his works is one that is literally and metaphorically a construction of the ideal. This utopian vision of modernity as the facilitator of democracy, liberal views and freedom is undermined. The way people move in the different spaces in the texts shows the extent to which the human body is limited by the modern environment. While it may be assumed that Forster's portrayal of rurality in his texts is a break from the manifestations of modernity and a romantic escapism from the inevitable, my analysis has shown through the characters' everyday encounters with the world not only how the effects of modernity are inescapable but also how the attempts to break free from such limitations can be physically intolerable. Moreover, as the texts suggest, the way modernity turns everyday meditative activities, such as walking, into destination and achievement oriented performances contributes not only to distancing people from their material surroundings, but also from each other.

[285] Medalie, *E. M. Forster's Modernism*, p. 46.

Another issue that this chapter has discussed is the problem of mediation. Modern technology's mediation of human experience promotes an objective view in an attempt to democratise the world by presenting experiences collectively as knowledges that can be measured and recorded. The text's disapproval of the objectification of the human experience is manifested in the criticism of culture as means of improving or developing human perception and understanding of the world. This issue rises again in the next chapter where I show how Forster criticises secondary experiences of places and art in travelling and tourism as limitations of human perception.

Chapter Four

Foreign Materialities: Vulnerability and Intimacy in Forster's Travel Fiction

In *A Room with a View*, Forster portrays an image of the mundane life in Florence in which the place is swamped with people, vehicles and even bullocks coming out of archways. He observes how

> Over such trivialities as these many a valuable hour may slip away, and the traveller who has gone to Italy to study the tactile values of Giotto, or the corruption of the Papacy, may return remembering nothing but the blue sky and the men and women who live under it. (15, 16)

In a novel where tourism is predominantly by the experience of a young female traveller who is caught between the conventions of her class and her intuition, Forster sheds light on the quotidian practices of travellers, an aspect that is generally overlooked in both Forster criticism and nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries' conceptions of tourism. In his travel fiction, Forster constantly manifests how tourists' everyday interactions with the social and material textures of unfamiliar places overshadow other more conventional touristic practices, and brings them more intimacy with the environments they visit.

At first glance, *A Room with a View* and Forster's first published novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, appear as social critiques of English tourists abroad. His satirical representations have generated wide-spread discussions on the cultural aspect of

tourism, especially through tackling the themes of Englishness and national identity.[286] Where some critics have taken interest in Forster's diaries and his travel book *Alexandria: A History and Guide* (1922), the novels are still widely referenced for their depiction of English tourists' social practices, guidebooks, accommodation, and encounters with the locals. Forster's portrayal of English travellers abroad has also generated a variety of discussions in cultural criticism about the value of travelling in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. James Buzard's study, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Way to Culture, 1800-1918*, uses a wide range of literary texts, travel diaries and guidebooks to map the evolution of anti-tourism and define what is meant by authentic or 'real' cultural experiences of travelling. Buzard investigates the development of the various ways travellers defined their experience of travelling across that period and demonstrates the role of mass tourism in changing and redefining certain experiences as 'cliché and confirmed expectations'.[287] Buzard's approach to the texts he explores in his study highlights the social aspect of travelling. The value of tourists' experiences, according to him, depends on their ability to transcend the social conventions imposed on them. Buzard suggests that traditions and customs are obstacles that prevent travellers from reaching 'the understanding they seek, both of themselves and of the places they visit'.[288] Yet, despite his influential and foundational study, Buzard does not touch upon the physical and corporeal experiences of tourists. Likewise, the subsequent studied of tourism in literary and cultural criticism

[286] See David M. Bruce, 'The Nineteenth-Century "Golden Age" of Cultural Tourism: How the Beaten Track of the Intellectuals Became the Modern Tourist Trail' in *The Routledge Handbook of Cultural Tourism*, ed. by Melanie Smith and Grey Richards (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 11-18, Burden, *Travel, Modernism and Modernity*, James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the ways to Culture, 1800-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Ardis, 'Hellenism and the Lure of Italy', and Roszak, 'Social Non-Conformists in Forster's Italy: Otherness and the Enlightened English Tourist'.
[287] Buzard, 'The Beaten Track', p. 11.
[288] Buzard, 'Forster's Trespasses: Tourism and Cultural Politics', *E. M. Forster: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p.15.

have hardly trespassed beyond the social, cultural and economic aspects of the experience of travelling.

In his study *Travel, Modernism and Modernity*, Burden builds on Buzard's work and his understanding of tourism by adding more emphasis to the spatial dimension of travellers' experiences. As I have discussed in the beginning of Chapter Two, Burden's understanding of places as culturally mediated entities entails a detached approach to encountering landscape during travel.[289] The way Burden studies tourism, which is dominant in literary criticism and especially that on Forster, privileges the cultural and traditional aspects of travel by allowing the latter to define the meanings of places and landscapes rather than approaching the setting as a physical entity that has an active role in contributing to the meanings that result from human encounters with them.[290] In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View* and *A Passage to India*, the physical qualities of the different environments people experience in their tours are strongly foregrounded and described meticulously, as already seen in the previous chapters.[291] Attending to tourists' immediate physical encounters with new topographies, I argue, prompts an alternative approach to the study of travel in Forster's literary texts and, consequently, allows us to examine, from a fresh angle, the role that foreign material environments have in the development of human character. The material texture that is interwoven in Forster's travel fiction is mostly manifested in the travellers' everyday embodied encounters with their surroundings. In the three novels,

[289] Burden, p. 64.
[290] Some of which are by Martin, *E. M. Forster*: *The Endless Journey*, and Parry, 'The Politics of Representation in A Passage to India'.
[291] Although *A Passage to India* is not conventionally included in studies of tourism in Forster's fiction, this chapter will treat Adela's and Mrs Moore's trip as such. Adela and Mrs Moor are visiting India for familial and personal purposes. Nonetheless, they express their interest in sightseeing and their trip includes various visits to unfamiliar places, one of the main constituents of tourism according to Edensor. See 'Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism: (Re)producing Tourist Space and Practice', *Tourist Studies*, 1.1 (2001), pp. 59-81 and John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011).

travelling is a highly-embodied practice that is shaped by the ways characters physically interact with the places they visit. This chapter demonstrates how observing the effect of the material environment on tourists has plenty to reveal about Forster's attitude towards the traditional conventions of tourism and the role of art and culture in the development of his characters.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, attention to everyday embodiment has increased in tourism research which, in its own right, has recently witnessed an increasing interest in what is often referred to as the 'performance turn'.[292] There are various ways to understand this term in relation to tourism research, but I am interested in the approach that looks closely at human bodily encounters with their material surroundings, and how tourists respond to the new landscapes around them within the bounds of their habits, sociocultural restrictions and conventions.[293] Through its three editions, John Urry's and Jonas Larsen's influential book *The Tourist Gaze* traces the change in tourism scholarship that took place in late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. *The Tourist Gaze*, first published in 1990, primarily argued that a substantial part of tourists' experience is 'to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary'.[294] The study's emphasis on a visual experience of difference and unfamiliarity was also framed by the idea that 'people gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas', which sets tourism as a practice chiefly determined by sociocultural factors that influence the way places are perceived.[295]

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[292] John Urry and Jonas Larsen *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), p. 14.
[293] Stephen A. Harwood, Dahlia, El-Manstrly, "The Performativity Turn in Tourism" *University of Edinburgh Business School Working Paper Series*, 12.5 (2012), pp. 1-18.
[294] Urry and Larsen, p. 1.
[295] Ibid, p. 2.

Since its publication, the book's extensive privileging of vision as essential to tourists' experiences was criticised due to the rise in the performative approach. As a result, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (2011), aimed to stretch the meaning of the gaze to include the embodied and multisensory performances that could explain tourist encounters. Much of the current debate, however, is concerned with studies of contemporary tourism, as '[i]t is said that tourists have become bored of being mere spectators and that many tourism activities – adventure tourism – explicitly provide active, multi-sensuous bodily sensations, affect and actions' (190). The association of bodily experiences with contemporary interest in physical exertion and the potential for risk in touristic activities shows how the performative aspect of travelling is understood as acting within the frame of culture rather than side by side with it. In other words, embodied practices are understood and analysed in the light of fashionable cultural practices, rather than as actions and responses that are inherent within the tourists themselves.

Tourists' everyday embodied experiences have remained unnoticed to a large extent within the literary field. With the exception of Charlotte Mathieson's study of the experiences of British travellers in Europe in the Victorian novel from the Grand Tour to nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, travelling is still mostly considered in its sociocultural and economic dimensions.[296] *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View*, and *A Passage to India*, are indeed implicated within the sociocultural and economic aspects of tourism, and are equally embedded in complex material encounters that shape tourists' experiences in their travels. Mathieson notes how in European tourism in Victorian novels, 'travel becomes an experience of bodily unease: sickness,

[296] Melanie Smith, Greg Richards, *The Routledge Handbook of Cultural Tourism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), also see Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 13.

discomfort' as 'travellers encounter rough seas and ruinous landscapes that threaten the body, and that situate Europe as a dangerous and hostile space'.[297] It is through these images of bodily discomfort, Mathieson suggests, that such 'novels attempt to make sense of Britain's relationship with Europe'.[298] Mathieson links the bodily discomforts that characters in Victorian novels experience with a metaphorical macro-image of how the body is representative of greater national encounters and demonstrates the ways the Victorian novel presents the spaces of the continent as physically hostile. Accordingly, the characters' bodily discomforts are not marked as rewarding, but rather represent inconvenience and illness. This is also observable in Roszak's study of Forster's Italian novels, in which she considers the difficulties that characters face in Italy as analogous to the fraught relationship between Britain and Europe.[299] However, where the metaphorical meanings of these relations are significant to perceive the underlying themes of such trips on a larger scale, attending to characters' bodily responses to unfamiliar, and sometimes harsh, material environments in Forster's novels invites a reassessment of tourism in his works and also reveals the significance that these quotidian physical encounters have in relation to the shaping of touristic experiences and, by extension, the characters' development.

In the Fog

In *A Room with a View* we learn that in her trip to Italy, Lucy Honeychurch is accompanied by her strict and fidgety cousin Charlotte Bartlett who not only dictates how Lucy should behave, but also controls Lucy's multisensory quotidian experiences.

[297] Charlotte Mathieson, *Mobility in the Victorian Novel: Placing the Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.87.
[298] Ibid, p. 88.
[299] Roszak, p. 183.

For instance, she complains about 'Lucy's leaving the door unlocked, and […] leaning out of the window before she was fully dressed' (16). Yet, where this satirical representation undermines the role of tradition in the face of new experiences, Miss Bartlett's presence is not only an obstacle to Lucy's social encounters and development, but also a tangible barrier that prevents Lucy from perceiving her immediate surroundings. This is suggested when Charlotte 'enveloped her [Lucy] in a protecting embrace as she wished her good night. It gave Lucy the sensation of a fog, and when she reached her room she opened the window and breathed the clean night air' (13). On the one hand, by holding her closely in her arms, Charlotte's embrace turns into an interference that inhibits Lucy from both being intimate with her surroundings and from having an independent and a subjective experience. Because it is protective, the embrace supports Lucy and thus increases her feeling of security and reliance on others. On the other hand, the feeling of fog that Lucy gets from Charlotte's protective nature is one that blurs Lucy's perception of Italy. The image of fog here is tangible for it gives Lucy a suffocating feeling that she can only avoid by opening the window and breathing the air in seclusion.

Philip Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is similarly depicted as 'choking in the fog' in the train station as he showers his sister-in-law, Lilia, with advice about how to have the best experience in Italy (4). The fog in this scene, like in *A Room with a View*, is tangible and chokes. Yet, it is used this time to demonstrate Philip's vague sense of Italy that is mainly imitative of Baedeker and fed by idealistic views – Italy is 'the school as well as the playground of the world' he states (6).[300] Philip has a romanticised and a predetermined vision of Italy that 'was ruined for him' when Lilia

[300] We know in the novel that Philip had a Baedeker in his room and that he had one before he lost it in in Bologna during his trip with Harriett. See the *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, pp. 12, 70.

marries Gino (52). As I have already shown in the second and third chapters of this thesis, people's encounters with new and unfamiliar places and landscapes are complex experiences that are not only determined by immediate social, cultural and material contexts, but also bound to people's habits, expectations and sociocultural conventions. In Forster's novels, human-world encounters during tourism materialise in guidebooks, guided tours and chaperons that both mediate people's experiences by influencing different aspects of their trips and, more importantly, function as protective shields by providing travellers with examples and ideals that may on the surface appear benign or pedagogical. Richard Mullen and James Munson, in their book on British travellers in Europe, explore the various reasons the British travelled abroad in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some thought it would 'improve the British moral character', whereas many others 'looked upon travel as a form of education, especially art education'.[301] Similarly, Forster's texts remark on the improvement that can result from travelling, especially in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, where Philip believes that 'Italy really purifies and ennobles all who visit her' (6). However, I want to argue that Forster's novels are critical of culturally oriented pedagogic practices, especially by demonstrating how education and improvement are not the results of mediated didactic approaches to knowledge, but rather occur through spontaneous and empirically shaped experiences that pave the path towards self-discovery.

Burden notes that travel for Forster, 'in his life and fiction, is heuristic – a chance to broaden horizons and to experience life-changing sense of being for himself'.[302] This is a valid point of view that is mainly framed by his citing of Forster's positive experiences of travel as freeing. The liberating qualities of tourism are

[301] See Richard Mullen, James Munson, *The Smell of the Continent: The British Discover Europe 1814-1914* (London: Pan Macmillan Ltd, 2009), pp. 9, 8.
[302] Burden, p. 65.

emphasised when Burden links tourism to Forster's homosexuality and argues that, in Forster's fiction,

> [t]ravel is given a greater metaphorical significance in the class and sexual identity problem of his protagonists, as they attempt to move out of the narrow boundaries of home into a freer expression of their erstwhile reprocessed or displaced desire. In his fiction Forster express[es] the difficulties of achieving happiness when restricted by the narrow moral and class imperatives of the day, and especially by the heterosexual norm that prevented him from writing in other than displaced ways about transgressive desire.[303]

While it may be true that the transgressive qualities of travel that the novels celebrate and promote stem from Forster's perception of his own sexuality that is demoted in the existence of a normalised or objectified view of traditional sexual identity, focusing merely on the metaphorical aspect of the characters' encounters stops us from attending to the strong presence of the corporeal aspect of human experience, especially in people's encounters with unfamiliar places. Like Buzard, Burden's emphasis on the symbolic recognises the appealing experimental aspect of travelling as one that allows the characters to transgress intangible cultural boundaries. Accordingly, the role of the setting becomes subordinate, merely a 'liberating place' and a background to personal experimentation and where new things happen.[304] However, I argue that places are fundamental for travellers' exploratory performances and can even be the inducers of such experiences. This is especially so because the texts present corporeal experiences of places as essential for creating intimacy and familiarity between people from different social and/or cultural backgrounds.

[303] Ibid, p. 76.
[304] Ibid, p. 64.

In the beginning of *A Room with a View*, Lucy asks her cousin: 'Charlotte, don't you feel, too, that we might be in London? I can hardly believe that all kinds of other things are just outside. I suppose it is one's being so tired.' (3) Lucy's first impression of Italy is that it is not much different from England, especially when she is surrounded by 'two rows of English people who were sitting at the table' and 'the portraits of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate that hung behind the English people' (3). Forster uses the Pension Bertolini as a space in which the national character of Britain is manifested. Similarly, in *A Passage to India*, the Chandrapore Club serves as an exclusive place that literally and metaphorically protects the English from interacting with the natives. While the two novels function differently, especially the fact that the spatial and social barriers that surround travellers in the latter are indeed reflective of the power relations between the coloniser and the colonised, the pension and the club still have a role in determining the relationship that individuals construct with different places and people.

For instance, Adela's and Mrs Moore's visit to India is not directed by guidebooks in the novel, but it is certainly controlled by the latter's son and Adela's future fiancé, Ronny, as well as by the exclusive Chandrapore Club and Anglo-Indian conventions. We see how Mrs Moore's secret solitary excursion in the second chapter of the novel disturbs Ronny and other Anglo-Indians, but it equally excites Adela who thinks meeting a native is 'perfectly magnificent!' (27). While *Cousin Kate* is being performed in the English club, Mrs Moore goes for a night stroll. The walk is unusual because she is alone and a stranger to the country and the place that, as we learn later, is even dangerous. Aziz explains to Mrs Moore that '[t]here are bad characters about and leopards may come across from the Marabar Hills. Snakes also' (18). Nonetheless, because Mrs Moore is alone and unfamiliar with the materiality of the place, its rules

and conventions, her connection with Aziz is made easier because, unlike the Chandrapore Club and the British atmosphere that characterises the pension in *A Room with a View*, there are no expectations of how people should behave or act in this encounter. Aziz realises that she is 'newly arrived in India' because of the way she addresses him (18). The absence of conventions and expectations allows Aziz and Mrs Moore to interact naturally, and even for the latter to show 'sympathy' to his story (20). After the intimate meeting, the chapter ends with Aziz feeling connected to the land, for we know, as explained in Chapter Two, that Aziz develops a sense of alienation from India during his walk in the Civil Lines. Here, Aziz 'strolled downhill beneath the lovely moon, and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as much as anyone owned it' (20). It is this spontaneous intimacy that Adela longs for in India and does not find in the experiences offered to her by the club and its members. In her writing on Forster's travel fiction, Ann Ardis concludes that:

> Forster's version of a Grand Tour functions not, as Samuel Johnson had argued, as an occasion for seeing "what is expected a man should see", but instead as an opportunity for exposure to entirely unanticipated dimensions and categories of experience.[305]

Forster's idea of travelling is experiencing the unexpected. Nonetheless, this does not just include undertaking unplanned social and cultural experiences, but also embracing unfamiliar sensory events. Encountering new materialities, the texts show, requires freeing oneself from conventional forms of travel that provide travellers with the security of anticipation and prediction that can control and regulate sociocultural experiences in travel.

[305] Ardis, p. 71.

Guidebooks, namely Baedekers, are criticised in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View*. By evaluating such conventional approaches to tourism, Forster problematises the objectification of tourists as entities whose experiences can be universalised and shared. In other words, the novels show how guidebooks distance tourists from their own subjective and inherent observations. Buzard notes that Forster has a 'long-standing respect for the products of Murray and Baedeker' something he claims is manifested in Forster's 'willingness to have his characters say favourable things about them'.[306] But at the same time, he highlights 'Forster's dislike of book-directed, studied responses to art and life' which prevent tourists from having spontaneous experiences, personal observations and perceptions of the places they encounter in their travels.[307] It is true that these books have often told people what to do and how to think, but I want to add that through instructing tourists on where to go and how long they should walk in a certain place, they not only influence the characters' perception of culture, but also manipulate people's movements and their bodily responses to place.

Miss Lavish, a traveller who stays in in the same pension in Florence with Lucy and Charlotte, has a strong attitude against clichéd tourists and guidebooks. On her first excursion with Lucy, as soon as the latter consults her Baedeker, Miss Lavish explains that the book 'does but touch the surface of things. As to the true Italy – he does not even dream of it. The true Italy is only to be found by patient observation' (17). Miss Lavish claims that there is more depth in Italy than the Baedeker's remarks, and thus positions herself as a unique observer. Privileging certain experiences as truer and more authentic than others directly puts Miss Lavish's statements and actions under scrutiny.

[306] Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 285.
[307] Ibid, p. 289.

Promising Lucy a 'true' experience through taking her 'by a dear dirty backway', she begins lecturing the young traveller on the different smells of places: '"A smell! A true Florentine smell! Every city, let me teach you, has its own smell!" "Is it a very nice smell?" said Lucy who has inherited from her mother a distaste to dirt' (16, 17). While Miss Lavish boasts about her authentic relation with Florence, Lucy trustingly seeks to participate in the experience. Laura U. Marks argues that 'smell often brings with it a freight of personal affect: it seems to be the least translatable and most personal of all senses'.[308] Smell is therefore subjectively valued, and its beauty is something that Lucy cannot relate to. Like Baedekers, Miss Lavish's pedagogical statements assume that tourists appreciate things in the same way. Nonetheless, Lucy's naïve response to the 'true' smell reveals that tourists' experiences or perceptions of beauty are subjective.

Miss Lavish proceeds with her directive tour even after announcing that they have lost the way: '"Bless us! Bless us and save us! We've lost the way" […] "Lost! Lost! My dear Miss Lucy"' (18-19). Miss Lavish, who claims to be an adventurer, becomes dramatic and upset by the fact that they are off track. Instead of asking people about the direction or consulting Lucy's Baedeker, she suggests that they 'will simply drift' (19). However, where the word 'drift' suggests that they will find their way spontaneously, Lucy is pulled against her will when Miss Lavish 'dragged her forward, declaring that they were out of their path now by at least a mile' (19). Being out of their path reveals Miss Lavish's dependence on an existing route. By definition, a path does not only have a destination but is well-trodden. Miss Lavish's promises about taking Lucy through an indirect 'backway' and 'drifting' are all in vain. This episode demonstrates Miss Lavish's unreliability as an experienced and adventurous traveller,

[308] Laura U. Marks, 'Thinking Multisensory Culture', *Paragraph*, 31.2 (2008), 123-137 (p.125).

and shows her role in controlling Lucy's mobility and perception of her surroundings. Miss Lavish takes the role of Miss Bartlett, the chaperon, and it is not until she leaves Lucy on her own that the latter starts observing the place around her: 'the beggars worried her, the dust blew in her eyes' (20). Lucy's defencelessness arises when she loses the protection of her guidebook and chaperon, and her sensory apparatus becomes especially alert when she is no longer accompanied by others. The dust in her eye distorts her vision and forces her to rely on other bodily sensations.

Being on her own and not knowing what to do makes Lucy more exposed and consequently more sensitive to her material surroundings:

> Now she entered the church depressed and humiliated, not even able to remember whether it was built by the Franciscans or the Dominicans. Of course, it must be a wonderful building. But how like a barn! And how very cold! (20-21)

As she becomes almost obsessively concerned with the history of the building, Lucy's sense of insecurity and vulnerability increases. Gradually, she loses interest in the cultural history of the building and becomes more concerned with the function and the temperature of the place. Staying like this for a while, 'the pernicious charm of Italy worked on her, and, instead of acquiring information, she began to be happy' (21). Because she is on her own, Lucy is exposed to the unfamiliar sociocultural and material textures of Florence. Her defencelessness makes her more open to her surroundings, and as soon as she is released from social and bodily restrictions, Lucy starts interacting directly and instinctively with the place. Her embodied perceptions increase, and her interest in gaining cultural knowledge about her surroundings becomes less important. Martin writes that Lucy's experience is suggestive of Forster's views which propose that during travel, 'man is subject to external, and sometimes mysterious cosmic forces'

which, Martin observes, transpire in the novel through the images of light and darkness.[309] However, while Forster expresses Lucy's sensations in mysterious terms such as 'pernicious charm', what Lucy really experiences is an improved and heightened sensitivity that creates intimacy between her and the place. Ardis observes that in *A Room with a View*,

> Lucy is placed, time and again, in situations that are not mediated by guidebooks of any kind. Travelling distils and sharpens her sensory experiences only when she finds herself "off the map", so to speak, in situations for which she has no prior referent.[310]

Ardis' passing observation notes how when Lucy finds herself alone and not protected by Baedekers or chaperons, she gains more awareness of herself and her surroundings. Yet, the moments that improve Lucy's sense of perception and which develop her ability to judge these unfamiliar encounters without the mediation of other conventionally-approved guidance remain unnoticed. It is in these moments of immediate corporeal interaction, I suggest, that Lucy's character improves and develops. Forster links the sensory development and growth that result from intrinsic encounters with the world with maturity and resilience. More importantly, he undermines the role of collective practices and knowledge in constituting pleasurable experiences. Pleasure, the texts imply, can simply result from being attentive to embodied first-hand encounters with the environment.

[309] Martin, p. 105.
[310] Ardis, p. 69.

Disappointing Encounters

Before the recent performance turn in tourism research, travelling has been mainly understood through the visual perception of extraordinary places encountered in sightseeing practices. Urry and Larsen observe how sightseeing involves 'a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than normally found in everyday life'.[311] Sensitivity, conceptualised via vision, has been reconsidered through a 'sensuous analysis of tourism' which is now deemed important for examining 'the relationship between the normally dominant visualism and other senses, including other kinds of movement'.[312] Vision has often been particularly privileged as the sense that epitomises the tourist experience. It is considered the sense that features new sights which function as an interruption of the ordinary and the familiar, and the base for the exceptional experience that is different from the mundane.

The privileging of visual tourism in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is epitomised and problematised through Philip's approach to life and travelling. Philip distances himself spatially from the world around him as he asserts several times how 'life to me is just a spectacle' (133). Through his emphasis on vision, Philip imagines his body as separate from the rest of the material environment, and thus assumes that his autonomy is not defined by the sociocultural and material fabrics of the world. On his way to Monteriano, Philip's 'eyes had registered the beauty' on the road (19), suggesting that beauty is a precise and a fixed quality that, like data, could be documented and saved. Ironically, despite his attempts to distance himself, he and his sister Harriet find themselves trapped in the intense heat that turns Italy into a 'beastly' place (71).

[311] Urry and Larsen, p. 4.
[312] Ibid, p. 196.

Nonetheless, Philip is relentlessly desperate to recover the idealised vision of the amusing and glamorous Italy he has experienced in earlier trips. He attempts to rediscover that enchantment amid his mounting annoyance and inconvenience: 'He could see it [enchantment] in the terrific blue sky beneath which they have travelled' and 'in the ruins of brown castles. […] He could see it, though his head ached and his skin was twitching […] But nothing – not even the discomfort – was a commonplace' (71). The repetition of the word 'see' suggests Philip's emphasis on vision as a way of accessing Italy's enchanting qualities, yet all he can sense are his bodily discomforts.

Philip's perception of the environment around him reveals a conflict between the romanticised image of Italy he expects and the exhausting bodily discomforts that trouble him. His problem is that when he visits Italy again, he has certain expectations about the place, and these similar expectations are repeated in his advice to Lilia before taking off to Italy. When he visits Italy in the novel for the first time, it is for stopping Lilia's engagement to Gino, and he visits Italy again for retrieving Lilia's child. Yet, Philip is portrayed as troubled and unable to experience his expectations of the Italy he once visited with his friends. We learn in chapter five that '[a]t twenty-two, he went to Italy with some cousins, and there he absorbed into one aesthetic whole olive-trees, blue sky, frescoes, county inns, saints, peasants, mosaics, statures, beggars' (51). Philip's memory is one that celebrates his experience of Italy, but only visually. He has trouble experiencing in his later trips what he remembers as a complete immersion in the Italian environment. The immediate environment surrounding him contrasts with the idealistic and holistic vision he thinks he experienced and thus causes him a sense of disappointment.

Philip's idealistic approach to Italy is what hinders the appreciation of his instantaneous experiences, but the text equally shows that travellers' habitual ways of

thinking can also influence their immediate experiences. When he first arrives in Italy, the narrator explains that Philip 'was in the enemy's country, and everything – the hot sun, the cold air behind the heat, the endless rows of olives, regular yet mysterious, seemed hostile to the placid atmosphere of Sawston in which his thoughts took birth' (17). The example here draws a contrast not between the two countries, but the ways the two places are perceived. The novel emphasises how Philip's attitude towards his immediate surroundings in Italy is predominantly developed by taking into consideration his pre-meditated ideas in suburban England. His experience of Italy then is determined not only by his previous encounters, but also his mindset as a native of Sawston.

The visual aspect of appreciating landscape is noted in Arnold Berleant's study of the aesthetics of natural environments which is concerned with the 'philosophical issues concerning the aesthetic appreciation of the world at large'.[313] The idea that the environment should be appreciated holistically is challenged by philosophers such as Thomas Leddy who, despite acknowledging that Berleant's version of aesthetics is plausible, claims that 'his emphasis on total engagement of the senses with the total environment excludes engagement of individual senses with individual or isolated aspects of the environment'.[314] A total engagement with the different senses, as in the example of Philip, still privileges vision as the basis for holistic experiences. Leddy, however, emphasises the significance of the individual experience, distinguishing it as remarkable and not as exclusive as the holistic one.[315] Wylie observes that the experience of travellers, especially in the nineteenth century, was visually determined.

[313] Allen Carlson, and Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments* (Ontario: Broadview Press Ltd, 2004), p. 11.
[314] Thomas Leddy, *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2012), p. 94.
[315] This idea is also discussed further in Chapter Five, especially in relation to appreciating the world at large through modern modes of transport such as trains and motorcars.

Tourists' encounters with new sights, he notes, have often been done through a 'visual consumption of seeing'. Wylie draws on Derek Gregory's work which suggests that the visualisation of places in relation to the self 'produces the "world-as-exhibition", a particular way of apprehending and representing the world as a visual spectacle', and explains how this approach is a Western product of understanding how knowledge is represented and judged.[316] The enumerated constituents of Philip's experience of Italy suggest how he is deluded in thinking that he succeeds in captivating the 'true essence' and beauty of Italy because he appears more concerned with the general idea of Italy that is the product of his Baedeker and prior knowledge of it rather than his own empirical and immediate experience of it. Furthermore, it implies how such collective experiences can be superficial, distanced and objective. They are unremarkable, and even unyielding, especially in his expectation to be involved in a similar experience in his later visits.

Forster's characters are constantly pursuing in their travels the ideal and the 'true' experience of the places they visit. In *A Room with a View,* Miss Lavish teaches Lucy about the 'true Italy' and the 'true Florentine smell' (16). Similarly, in *A Passage to India*, Adela wants to see 'the real India' (21). However, Forster's portrayal of different types of travellers in these novels shows that there is no single experience of place and that the travellers' impressions of their surroundings cannot be unified, but are rather diverse and subject to constant change. Burden argues that in Forster's travel fiction, 'finding the real apart from perception of the object is a problem; the real is distorted by the traveller's desire, and is thus always already a form of misrecognition'.[317] Burden explains how building anticipation and expectation of trips

[316] Wylie, p. 134.
[317] Burden, p. 81.

prevents characters from having an encounter with the place that is free from personal and temporal constrains. He also suggests that the 'real' which the texts refer to exists apart from human perception. However, I propose that although the texts do not explicitly reveal what the real or authentic is, the novels do insistently celebrate first-hand embodied experiences that are subjectively formed. The characters are closest to an authentic experience when the material qualities of the environments they visit can influence their knowledge of the place and of others.

Forster's strong criticism of directed tourism in *A Room with a View* demonstrates how when tourists handle their own trips and have more power over their own experiences, their chances of being influenced by their surroundings increase, as can their enjoyment. David Crouch observes the 'revived comprehension of embodiment that is concerned with the body as the subject of practice rather than only as the object of practice or policy'.[318] Crouch's work takes a non-representational approach that is less concerned with abstract images and symbols as a way of communicating ideas, but rather sees embodiment, performance, subjects and places as key concepts in understanding events.[319] Crouch emphasises the role of the subject and human activity in understanding the experience of different and unfamiliar places, and argues that the performative aspect of travelling gives tourists more authority and control over their own experiences. The novel shows likewise how, when travellers engage actively in forming their own experiences without the intervention of other cultural mediators, their experiences have more chances of being influenced by the material textures of their immediate surroundings.

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[318] David Crouch, 'Places Around Us: Embodied Lay Geographies in Leisure and Tourism', *Leisure Studies* 19.2 (2000), 63-76 (p. 63).
[319] See Crouch, 'Afterword: From Affect to Landscape and Back' in *Affective Landscapes in Literature, Art and Everyday Life: Memory, Place and the Senses*, ed. by Christine Berberich, Neil Campbell, Robert Hudson (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), and Thrift, *Non-representational Theory*.

The representations of Mr Eager and Lucy during their trips to the heights of Fiesole show how the latter's interaction with the place is more impressive. Mr Eager relentlessly claims superiority over other travellers:

> we residents sometimes pity you poor tourists not a little – handed about like a parcel of goods from Venice to Florence, from Florence to Rome, living herded together in pensions or hotels, quite unconscious of anything that is outside Baedeker. (62)

Mr Eager views other tourists, especially Cook's tourists, as passive creatures, lacking a genuine experience and 'herded' together from one place to another. They are unobservant of the authenticity of the place that residents of Italy, like him, are able to access. Ironically, during Mr Eager's planned trip to visit the heights of Fiesole, Forster portrays how, despite his claims to individuality and originality, Mr Eager effectively subordinates his experience of the Fiesole to the way it is depicted in Alessio Baldovinetti's painting, by trying 'to know where the artist stood' (66). Instead of relying on his own perspective to enjoy the scene, Mr Eager wants to emulate the view, seeking knowledge from an outside authority. The painting mediates in precisely the same way as the Baedeker that he and Miss Lavish reject. Nonetheless, although Mr Eager and Miss Lavish are keen to have the exact view of the Fiesole, 'it is not easy to carry the pictures of Alessio Baldovinetti in your head, even if you have remembered to look at them before starting. And the haze in the valley increased the difficulty of the quest' (66). Once more, the text criticises the imposition of one's own views on a landscape rather than letting the qualities of the place contribute to one's aesthetic appreciation of it. The sense of vision is also destabilised in this example. Not only do the images that travellers have in their mind not match the actual places they visit, but

they are inherently unstable. The haze, just like the fog and the heat radiance, blurs the scene visually and haptically and creates a barrier between people and place.

Physical distance between people and the environments they encounter during their travels hinders material interaction. In *A Passage to India*, Adela expresses her desire of 'seeing the real India' (23), and explains: 'I'm tired of seeing picturesque figures pass before me as a frieze […] [i]t was wonderful when we landed, but that superficial glamour soon goes' (24). Adela's complaints are responses to the distance that denies her physical interaction with the environment. She is exposed to India as a detached observer who is only permitted to see places and people from a safe distance, but what she sees lacks vitality and appears as a static ornament that she passes over in haste without having the chance to observe more closely. Mere gazing at the distant landscape may be pleasing, yet the text reveals that the impressions that the visual consumption of a place leave are shallow, artificial and do not last.

Adela's speech and yearning to learn more about her surroundings reveal the limitations imposed on her as an English traveller in India. Adela's concerns about her life in this country after her marriage to Ronny are shown through the use of free indirect discourse which explains how her experience will simply revolve around the English Club,

> while the true India slid by unnoticed. Colour would remain […] But the force that lies behind colour and movement would escape her even more effectually than it did now. She would see India always as a frieze, never as a spirit, and she assumed that it was a spirit of which Mrs Moore had had a glimpse. (42-43)

Adela realises that if she marries Ronny and lives in this place, her chances of moving beyond the conventions of Anglo-Indian society are low. Adela strives for the experience she believes Mrs Moore had when she met Aziz during her night stroll.

What characterises the encounter between the old Lady and the Indian doctor is not its facts, but rather the spontaneity that induced an intimate relationship and allowed it to develop throughout the course of the novel. The encounter between Aziz and Mrs Moore is described as spiritual, and Forster uses the word 'spirit' in this example as an antonym to the static decorations whose effects are only visually established. Spirit, then, lies in the dynamic interactions between people and place, especially in unpredictable and unplanned intimacy.[320]

It is the unpredictability of the Indian landscape that either allows travellers to build familiarity and closeness to its qualities or alienates them from it. Riding the train on the way to the Marabar Caves, Mrs Moore and Adela wait for the sunrise. However, disappointedly, 'at the supreme moment, when night should have died and day lived, nothing occurred' (128). In comparison to the 'dearest Grasmere' that is '[r]omantic yet manageable', the Indian landscape spreads like 'an untidy plain stretched to the knees of the Marabar' (128-129). The two ladies cannot comprehend the Indian landscape because, unlike the sunrise in Grasmere, the daybreak they observe from the windows of the train does not meet their schematic expectations that are shaped by their personal experiences of their accustomed landscapes. Martin explains how the '[l]ife-sustaining and life-denying, blending tropical luxuriance with mud, cactus, flies, snakes, leopards, hyenas, and dust, the landscape of Forster's India defies man's instinct for order and clarity. The very mud that cakes Chandrapore seems redolent of muddle' (146). What Martin suggests is that in its randomness, the Indian landscape expresses mess and disorder. This disorderliness has been repeatedly read as Forster's inability to express

[320] Heather McNaugher argues that the intimate and spiritual relationship between Margaret and Ruth in *Howards End* is one that can be seen as analogous to their relationship to place: '[i]t is my view that the spiritual in *Howards End* is connected to intimacy, in particular to intimacy with place' in her chapter 'She Sought a Spiritual Heir', in *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation and Narrative*, ed. by Robert Tally (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 75-88 (p. 75).

the uncomprehendable spaces of the empire.[321] In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said observes how, '[l]ike Conrad's Africa, Forster's India is a locale frequently described as unapprehendable and too large'.[322] He also explains:

> I have always felt that the most interesting thing about *A Passage to India* is Forster's using India to represent material that according to the canons of the novel form cannot in fact be represented – vastness, incomprehensible creeds, secret motions, histories, and social forms.[323]

Said emphasises that the difficulty of both understanding and describing India lies in the complex immensity of the Indian topography and its sociocultural milieu. However, I propose that by immersing the characters in extreme material conditions, especially in their trip to the Marabar caves, their confusion is both stimulated and intensified by the material environment. The novel suggests that India exceeds the characters' ability to comprehend its different physical and non-physical elements, and this is mainly because it exceeds their sociocultural and sensory reckonings. In the novel, it is not just the English who are bewildered by India, but also its own inhabitants, as explored in Chapter Two when Aziz finds walking tiring because of the earth's unexpected moods.[324]

Human expectations are always bound to fail because, due to their irregularity and inconsistency, human and nonhuman entities that constitute the living natural world will break away from the expected conventions of the modern world. As Ingold argues, 'in modern western societies, the environment has been engineered, or "built", to conform to expectations of closure, but […] life always, and inevitably, breaks through

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[321] Parry writes that in *A Passage to India* the ambiguities and limitations that surround Forster's texts 'reveal the constraints on the text's system of representation', p. 148. See Peter Childs, 'A Passage to India', p. 191, Suleri Goodyear, 'Forster's Imperial Erotic'.
[322] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 243.
[323] Said, p. 241
[324] Above, p. 89.

the bounds of the objective forms in which we have sought to contain it'.[325] Therefore, places like Italy and India serve the novels not just in their cultural or national significance, but also through their material dimensions that are continuously depicted as in the process of defying human expectations. In Forster's novels, Italy still possesses the atmosphere of 'the Middle Ages' and India is 'ancient'.[326] The intimation is that they signal antiquity through their difference and changeableness, which means they cannot be managed or controlled. Therefore, what Forster's characters encounter in places like India or Italy is more than just new cultures, creeds, art and history. The travellers in the novels discover places that exist outside their judgements socially, morally, and more importantly, materially. Their trips thus revolve around a tangible break from the modern norm, an interruption that changes the nature of their everyday physical encounters with their immediate environments. Because the materiality of the Indian and the Italian landscapes are not predictable, they have more impact on the travellers. It is in these moments of unpredictable haptic and kinaesthetic happenings that the landscape and the material environment readily impact sensually-stimulated travellers and shape their experiences.

After arriving to the Marabar caves, the two women mount an elephant that is 'gray and isolated, like another hill' (130). In this plain landscape near the Marabar caves, everything seems distant and untouchable. Sitting on the elephant, the two ladies observe the landscape around them where 'nothing was to be seen on either side but the granite, very dead and quiet' (131). The environment that surrounds the group led by Aziz makes neither significant nor pleasurable visual impressions on the two ladies, yet

[325] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 115.
[326] Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, p. 8, and *A Passage to India*, p. 69.

the materiality of the place still impacts Adela and Mrs Moore. As the elephant moves in the bare landscape,

> a new quality occurred, a spiritual silence which invaded more senses than the ear. Life went on as usual, but had no consequences, that is to say, sounds did not echo or thoughts develop. Everything seemed cut off at its root, and therefore infected with illusion. (131)

From the perspective of being on the top of a moving elephant, the place develops a new quality. The silence is described as intangible, but it is not metaphysical or unfelt. Silence touches the characters' bodies beyond their sense of hearing and envelops their bodies, detaching them from their surroundings. The experience is more strange than enjoyable as everything seems inert and lifeless. Sara Suleri argues that the geographic representation in *A Passage to India*

> does not suggest a "natural" landscape that lies beyond the parameters of a colonial economy: it no more represents a "real" India than do either its inhabitants or its religious and cultural mythologies. Instead, Forster turns to visualising landscape as though to an act of cultural description that is relentlessly anti-exotic in its intent. If the narratives of English India can roughly be said to have veered between sublime and picturesque representations of the colonial encounter, then *A Passage to India* collapses both modes into a reconfiguration of what disappointment may signify to divergent apprehensions of colonialism. In such a revision, geography assumes the characteristics of a hollow symbolic space upon which the limits of imperial intimacy can both be identified and articulated.[327]

[327] Suleri Goodyear, 'Forster's Imperial Erotic', pp. 163-164.

Suleri's reading of the Indian landscape shows that the place is far from the authentic India the two ladies, especially Adela, are keen to explore. Yet, Suleri's interpretation of landscape is one that emphasises its symbolic and cultural qualities. She recognises the landscape as an empty space upon which Forster imposes his views that refute any proximity or intimacy between the English and the Indians. Unattainable intimacy is articulated through visual disappointment. However, despite its visual bareness, the place is not physically empty but filled with a silence that is almost felt by their bodies. The silence assaults the two ladies and makes them feel uncomfortable. The intolerable feeling that Mrs Moore and Adela experience is not stimulated because of hollowness or a void, but because of the existence of different palpable sensations that their bodies are not used to. The two female travellers who would have mostly depended on their vision for building their knowledge and judgements find themselves lost and alienated when they fail to comprehend the quality of the unfamiliar landscape whose only presence is marked by its felt silence.[328]

The height distances the two ladies from the terrestrial substances of the ground, making Adela's and Mrs Moore's views even more detached. For instance,

> there were some mounds by the edge of the track, low, serrated and touched with whitewash. What were these mounds – graves, breasts of the goddess Parvati? The villagers beneath gave both replies. Again, there was a confusion about a snake, which was never cleared up. (131)

There is a lack of intimacy and closeness between the travellers and the place as they appear disconnected from the entities they observe. Like Lucy in *A Room with a View*, the two ladies have no prior knowledge of the place, and so the landscape does not

[328] In 'The Machine Stops' Kuno also experiences a similar type of 'felt' silence when he first leaves the machine: 'silence which pierced my ears like a sword' (p. 127). See Chapter Five, p. 215.

generate any aesthetic, cultural, or religious significance for them. The place is reduced to its material qualities which they struggle to comprehend. Because of their position, the only way they can define the different shapes and entities they see around them is through the sense of vision, which, to their own disappointment, is deceiving and misleading, and even produces illusions. Adela and Mrs Moore do not appear to enjoy the trip and 'did not feel that it was an attractive place or quite worth visiting, and wished it could have turned into some Mohammedan object, such as a mosque, which their host would have appreciated and explained' (132). The place's significance, therefore, is determined by the sense of knowledge that they can build from it and the immaterial – mental – values it holds.

What the Indian landscape offers its visitors is a maelstrom of strange sensations and effects that they are, not unwillingly, unable to appreciate. This is mainly because, as the novel suggests:

> Nothing was explained, and yet there was no romance. Films of heat, radiated from the Kawa Dol precipices, increased the confusion. They came at irregular intervals and moved capriciously. A patch of field would jump as if it was being fried, and then lie quiet. As they drew closer the radiation stopped. (131)

The place lacks the feeling of the exotic despite its mysteriousness, and instead, enacts an interplay between the different elements of the landscape. Even the heat is materialised in this passage as it blurs and confuses the travellers. The ground is animated and vivid. But proximity to the place decreases the deceptive powers of the heat. Although Adela and Mrs Moore cannot comprehend the landscape because of their lack of knowledge of the place's cultural and historical significance, it still has an impressionable effect on them through their bodies. Having pre-determined assumptions about certain places might make people feel that they know it, but it is not

until the characters are under the influence of their material surroundings that they develop an intimacy with the place, albeit an uncomfortable one. Immediate experiences undermine prescribed knowledge about the place and contributes to the development of their lived and everyday knowledges which Forster deem more memorable. First-hand, or what Forster calls 'direct' experiences, are the ones that are celebrated in the novels as the encounters that improve the characters and develop their attentiveness to other people and the world around them.

Habit Bound

Whilst Mr Eager and Miss Lavish are searching for the right spot to view Fiesole in Chapter Six, Lucy, away from external direction and influence, becomes more occupied with the landscape surrounding her. She first talks to the Italian carriage driver who offers to help her find Mr Beebe:

> In the company of this common man the world was beautiful and direct. For the first time she felt the influence of spring […] They proceeded briskly through the undergrowth which became thicker and thicker. They were nearing the edge of the promontory, and the view was stealing around them, but the brown network of bushes shattered it into countless pieces. He was occupied in his cigar, and in holding back the pliant boughs. She was rejoicing in her escape from dullness. Not a step, not a twig was unimportant to her. (69)

When Lucy is released from other social boundaries that dictate her movement and behaviour, she has an immediate and spontaneous experience of her surroundings. The directness of the relationship between her and the world makes it a beautiful and a pleasurable experience. It is only through having this open relationship with the place

that she feels the influence of the season and its beauty, one that is directly connected to her and her body. This does not mean that Forster denies Lucy the experience of spectacular views of the landscape, but it seems that she pays more attention to the things that are closer to her body. The brown bushes are more emphasised than the view itself and have more power to change how the view looks and affects the way Lucy perceives it. The things that are close to the human body, the passage demonstrates, can have more power on our perception of the environment and on constructing its sense of beauty.

It is in this scene that Lucy transcends social obstacles and kisses George. When the Italian driver shows her where she thought Mr Beebe would be,

> The view was forming at last; she could discern the river, the golden plain, other hills. […] At the same moment the ground gave way, and with a cry she fell out of the wood. Light and beauty enveloped her. She had fallen onto a little open terrace, which was covered with violets from end to end. […] From her feet the ground sloped sharply into the view. (70)

The view is not there ready for Lucy to gaze at, but is rather made up of small separated and individuated pieces that are assembled together to give a complete scene or picture. Instead of having to look at it collectively, the view is something similar to a mosaic, where the full picture is only formed from smaller details that are significant on their own. Having the ability and the authority to abstract individual elements from the entire vista allows Lucy to reanimate the view with a fresh and personal perspective. Because of her lack of knowledge of the place, Lucy is vulnerable and more sensitive to her surroundings. It is the earth that propels Lucy's fall, and instead of being wrapped up with the fog as she is with Miss Bartlett, she is now encompassed with an illuminated grace that is reflective of the landscape around her.

Later in the chapter, we are told that Lucy 'thought not so much of what had happened as of how she should describe it. All her sensations, her spasms of courage, her moments of unreasonable joy, her mysterious discontent, should be carefully laid before her cousin' (75). Lucy appears to find herself in a new position where she struggles to find words that describe a state that she has not experienced before. It is not the events themselves that are significant, but rather the unfamiliar feelings and the immediate sensory experiences that are associated with them. Forster demonstrates through Lucy that pleasurable experiences of travellers are predominantly built on the feelings that result from their immediate embodied interactions with places rather than on their vision alone. More importantly, it is not until the tourists have a certain level of control over their bodies and perceptions that they start constructing an individual and a subjective view of their experiences.

In Forster's novels, materialities contribute to the development of the characters and their understanding of themselves, the place and the people around them. The failure of friendship and intimacy between the English and the Indians in *A Passage to India* can be seen in Mrs Moore's and Adela's relationship with the Indian landscape. The way the two respond to their surroundings has plenty to reveal about the effect of the Indian landscape. While the change in everyday practices is what makes touristic experiences significant, it is not merely the visual but also the material that deem the travellers' experiences agreeable or not.

The tangibility of the spiritual or the invisible is reinforced in both *A Passage to India* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Mrs Moore murmurs to herself as soon as they arrive at the Marabar caves, '[a] horrid, stuffy place really' (132). Despite its emptiness, Mrs Moore can sense an invisible tightness and constriction in her body, and her bodily discomfort influences her sense of judgement throughout the rest of her trip:

> A Marabar cave had been horrid as far as Mrs Moore was concerned, for she had nearly fainted in it, and had some difficulty in preventing herself from saying so as soon as she got into the air again. It was natural enough: she had always suffered from faintness, and the cave had become too full, because all their retinue followed them. Crammed with villagers and servants, the circular chamber began to smell. She lost Aziz and Adela in the dark, didn't know who touched her, couldn't breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her mouth like a pad. She tried to regain the entrance tunnel, but an influx of villagers swept her back. She hit her head. For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not only did the crush and stench alarm her; there was also a terrifying echo. (136-137)

Mrs Moore's fainting is rendered as familiar to her, but her bodily experience in the Marabar caves is overwhelming and unsettling. Not knowing what to expect, particularly when the place gets dark, Mrs Moore's body is assaulted by a maelstrom of intense unfamiliar sensations that not only invade and meddle with her perceptions, but also make her lose control over her own body and awareness. The cramped place suffocates her for she cannot breathe or endure the smell or the touch of her surroundings. This passage also emphasises that her experience is more exaggerated because she loses sight of Adela and Aziz, who both function as comforting companions and guides in this scene, and also because the darkness of the place forces her to depend on her other senses to comprehend her surroundings. However, not knowing what she is smelling and feeling, Mrs Moore is further disturbed. It is her

unfamiliarity with and the unpredictability of the place's material qualities and textures that make her experience more intense and extreme.[329]

In the caves, Mrs Moore's body becomes quite intolerant to the surroundings and when she finally gets out and sees Aziz and Adela, she tries to hide her troubled feelings:

> After Mrs Moore all the others poured out. She had given the signal for the reflux. Aziz and Adela both emerged smiling and she did not want him to think his treat was a failure, so smiled too. As each person emerged she looked for a villain, but none was there, and she realized that she had been among the mildest individuals, whose only desire was to honour her, and that the naked pad was a poor little baby, astride its mother's hip. Nothing evil had been in the cave, but she had not enjoyed herself; no, she had not enjoyed herself, and she decided not to visit a second one. (137)

The idea that Mrs Moore forms about India in this scene throughout the rest of the novel is primarily the product of her bodily reaction towards the receptive field surrounding her body. Mrs Moore's mixed feelings demonstrate her inability first to comprehend the different unfamiliar sensations she feels during her visit to the cave, and later to interpret these invisible feelings and sensations to something that is incarnated in a figure of 'evil'. The darkness of the place disrupts Mrs Moore's sense of vision which she uses to define and understand her experience. Flint's understanding of the power of the visible and the invisible that relies on Peggy Phelan's work poses a 'challenge to the adequacy of representation, to the sufficiency of the visible' that were expressed by

[329] In Forster's 'The Machine Stops' a similar experience happens to Vashti when the Machine malfunctions. This experience of loss of control is due to the exposure to new and unfamiliar materialities that the body is not used to experiencing. 'People at any time repelled her, and these were nightmares from her worst dreams. People were crawling about, people were screaming, whimpering, gasping for breath, touching each other, vanishing in the dark, and ever and anon being pushed off the platform on to the live rail' (143-144).

Victorian writers and commentators. Her work argues that the power of the invisible lies in denying the spectator the colonial privilege of surveillance. The invisible shows the impossibility of the absolute and that the sense of totality that vision shows is always in danger of being revoked.[330] By attending to the effect of the invisible on his English travellers, Forster emphasises the limits of relying only on one sense to explain human experience. Yet, although Mrs Moore finds a way to justify her experiences after seeing the friendly villagers come out of the cave, she still cannot tolerate a repetition of her experience and does not disclose the uncomfortable feelings and the new sensations she acquired whilst being in a dark cave to Aziz and Adela.

One way of understanding the failure of intimacy that is suggested at the end of the novel between Mrs Moore, Adela, and Fielding with India and the Indians is through attending to the travellers' everyday embodied experiences that are primarily visible in the caves scene. Critics of *A Passage to India* have studied this failure from spiritual, religious, and political perspectives. Philip Gardner argues that the cave scene

> displays the worst attitudes of the British Raj and sets them against the open mistrust and dislike of the Indian governed, represents the enigmatic and frightening side of spiritual experience, the sense of chaos and nothingness whose effect spill over and make the conclusion of the novel equivocal.[331]

The failure of the friendship and understanding between the English, Anglo-Indians, and the Indians is therefore understood as encountering an uncomprehendable spirituality which sets characters such as Mrs Moore and Adela apart from the place. Childs similarly blames the failure of Adela's and Fielding's connection on their

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[330] Flint, p. 25. See also Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Oxon: Routledge, 1993).
[331] Philip Gardner, *E. M. Forster* (Essex: Longman, 1977), pp. 31-32.

inability to live up to the liberal principles they show at the beginning of the novel. The failure is 'of the personal values' and 'politics' which induce the inability of the English and the Indians to comprehend or understand each other at the end of the novel.[332] While politics and religion are fundamental to the novel and for explaining the characters' inability to maintain proximity and acceptance, I argue that the strong sensory references in the caves scene prompt understanding this failure in an alternative way. Taking the embodied everyday activities into consideration when studying the themes of proximity and distance and the inability to reconciliate the relationship between the British and the Indians shows how certain political, social, and cultural differences are determined by habit and the mundane.

Mrs Moore's refusal to repeat the same sensory experiences she felt in her visit to the first cave demonstrates her failure to manage her feelings and to categorise them under familiar sensations. Mrs Moore's intolerance is more physical than political or religious. Her bodily reactions show not a spiritual disappointment, but an incompetence when her body fails to maintain a certain intimacy with the unfamiliar sensations produced by the place.

The novel demonstrates that for the relationship between the two cultures to persist, Mrs Moore needs to acknowledge that certain feelings and sensations, which she appears inclined to understand only as materially visible, can exist outside her knowledge. The uncomfortable encounter between her body and the materiality of the caves demonstrates how interacting with unanticipated and unfamiliar materialities emphasises immediate human reactions over premeditated judgement. The characters' sensitivity to unacquainted substances and their sensory responses in *A Passage to India*

[332] Childs, p. 203.

raise questions about the relationship between first-hand material interactions and cultural prejudice.

Embodied experiences are heightened and emphasised in Adela's experience of the caves, for although we do not know for sure what happens in that scene, we are left with the strong material presence of the Indian landscape on her body. Deciding that she is not going to climb any further, Mrs Moore decides to stop instead of joining Aziz and Adela to visit the other caves. Adela and Aziz advance to visit a big group of other caves where '[t]he air felt like a warm bath into which hotter water is trickling constantly, the temperature rose and rose, the boulders said, 'I am alive,' the small stones answered, 'I am almost alive' (141). The invisible tangibility of the air is felt by the two young travellers, and the material texture of the hard earth becomes even more vibrant and dynamic. The agency of the rocks and pebbles is not mysterious or spiritual, but is rather produced by the excessive heat that makes their presence obvious to the characters, especially Adela.[333] The tangible physicality of her surroundings makes her more attentive and closer to the landscape to the extent that it is depicted as part of her thoughts and decision-making. As they advance further, Aziz and Adela discuss love and marriage. The hard surface of the ground makes the latter contemplate her relationship with Ronny, for

> as she toiled over a rock that resembled an inverted saucer she thought, "What about love?" The rock was nicked by a double of row of footholds, and somehow the question was suggested by them. Where had she seen the footholds before? Oh yes, they were the pattern traced in the dust by the wheels

[333] In the *A Passage to India* manuscripts, the section where Forster personifies the boulders and small stones is described with immense heat: 'Blocks of carbon seemed to have entered the lower atmosphere and to be raising its temperature. The <larger stones> boulders \ of the Kauwa Dol/ radiated like searchlights as if announcing' in *The Manuscripts of A Passage to India* v. 6a, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), p. 237. This suggests a connection between heat and vitality. The liveliness of the rocks is not spiritual but a material one that makes them visible to Adela's senses.

> of the Nawab Bahdur's car. She and Ronny – no, they did not love each other. (142)

When she attends to the earth's surface, Adela's thoughts and ideas are not separate from the landscape around her. The rocks, which are also described as 'sparkling' (142), have a presence in her thoughts that haunts her thinking and perception. Their presence reminds her of her relationship with Ronny and the conversation they had in the Nawab Bhadur's car about their future. As soon as she realises that she does not love Ronny, 'she felt like a mountaineer whose rope was broken' (142). Rather than mingling with the earth and the landscape, Adela is merely depicted as a mountaineer who needs professional apparatus to provide safety and stability, unlike the guide that she and Aziz follow who 'adhered to the surface like a lizard and scampered about as if governed by a personal centre of gravity' (142). The two contrasting images that the text draws between Adela's and the guide's relationships to their surroundings emphasise her own lack of agility and her inability to convey a sense of closeness and familiarity between her body and the 'real' India. Adela's alienation from the place is further emphasised in chapter twenty-two after the cave incident where she is depicted lying in the McBryde's bungalow:

> [Adela] had been touched by the sun, also hundreds of cactus spines had to be picked out of her flesh. Hour after hour Miss Derek and Mrs McBryde examined her through magnifying glasses, always coming on fresh colonies, tiny hairs that might snap off and be drawn into the blood if they were neglected. (182)

Although Adela narrates her memory of what happened in the caves, it is the material aspect of the Indian environment – the heat and cactus spines – that leave a physical trace on her body. The intolerable physical intimacy between Adela's body and the Indian landscape is similar to what Mrs Moore experiences in the dark cave. The cactus

spines not only touch Adela's body, but are literally implanted in her flesh, and there is also the fear of the hairs going too deep into her body to contaminate her blood. This scene in the novel is suggestive of important symbolic significances, but the environment's physical assault on Adela's body and her senses persuades the reader to think about the unattainable proximity between the two ladies and the Indian landscape through their bodies' intolerance of unfamiliar sensations and materialities.

The colonial context of *A Passage to India* differs from the touristic context of Forster's Italian novels, but both share undesired and intense first-hand embodied encounters and attentiveness to everyday extremities that characterise most of his travel fiction. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, a similar feeling of intolerance of unfamiliar materialities can be observed in Philip's second trip to Italy with his sister Harriett. The Herritons experience a series of unsfortunate events that are primarily the result of vexing weather conditions but more specifically because such conditions were not expected. In their second day in Verona, 'the heat struck them, like a hand laid over the mouth, just as they were walking to see the tomb of Juliet' (70). The anthropomorphic depiction of the weather shows how the heat is not a mere nuisance to their schedule, nor a background to the events that follow. The high temperature is suffocating and assaulting.

Harriet and Philip are victims of a vigorous sensory attack. For instance, a 'smut flew in her [Harriet] eye' in Bologna (70). In Florence, things do not get any better for '[e]ating, walking, even a cross word would bathe them in boiling water' (70). The elaborate portrayal of extreme bodily discomforts is more than just a satirical scene that ridicules inexperienced English travellers, or a manifestation of Forster's careful attentiveness to the characters' bodily responses to the materiality of their surroundings. The reader is left to witness in their intolerable experiences the way in which bodily

pains and extreme weather impede the partaking of 'cultural' activities. We see how, 'between the hours of eight and eleven she [Harriet] crawled like a wounded creature through the streets, and swooned before various masterpieces of art' (71). Harriet loses her autonomy and is at the mercy of her material surroundings. Forster amplifies the shocking impact the weather has on her body, which not only forces it to lose power and consciousness, but thwarts Harriet's efforts to be attentive to her cultural surroundings. This episode confirms her vulnerability, as her perception becomes strongly dependent on a body that is involuntarily immersed in the materiality of the Italian environment, the hostility of which is not general, but specific to her sensory and mental receptivity. Such encounters that dominate the Herritons' trip demonstrate how the aesthetic impact of art and culture is reduced once bodies are invaded by intense reactions and feelings of discomfort. The inconveniences that the Herritons encounter in Italy suggest that mundane and everyday events are not just present for metaphorical purposes, but profoundly shape the travellers' attitudes to the practices they perform and the places they visit.

This extreme depiction of embodiment shows the reader the extent to which tourists are moulded by their bodily habits. Harriet is tormented by the loss of her sketch-book and an accidental spillage, when 'the bottle of ammonia in her trunk burst over her prayerbook, so that purple patches appeared on all her clothes' (70). Philip too is disturbed by leaving his 'walking-stick, his socks and the Baedeker at Bologna' (70). The loss of such insignificant objects is more of a disruption to habitual activity than an economic loss. Edensor argues that

> tourist practices abound with their own habitual enactments, and tourism is never entirely separate from the habits of everyday life, since they are unreflexively embodied in the tourist. The everyday is thus the realm of

> repetition, where cultural norms get played out, where common sense provides a bulwark against questioning convention.[334]

Edensor proposes that habitual practices, often a product of culture, accompany tourists during their travels. The depiction of Philip's and Harriet's misfortunes is primarily characterised by two acts: losing personal items, which form a significant aspect of the tourists' culture and routine, and sensual interference to their bodily habits. A disturbance to one's habits, therefore, is portrayed as an interruption that characterises a negative experience of tourism. By focusing on the figure of the tourist and its physical encounters with the world, Forster complicates the dominant understanding of tourism and cultural activities as improving or ennobling. Forster's emphasis on everyday activities not only alters the way we understand tourism, but also undermines the 'self-improving' role of cultural activities, especially when the body feels discomfort. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* demonstrates how, during their travels, tourists are framed by their bodily habits as much as their cultural ones.

Travelling can reveal characters' nature and willingness to improve and develop. Encountering familiarity or difference either reasserts or renounces people's conventions, attitudes, and habits. The portrayal of Harriet shows how she hangs on to her everyday practices: 'Harriet was here – acrid, indissoluble, large; the same in Italy as in England – changing her disposition never, and her atmosphere under protest. Yet even Harriet was human, and the better for a little tea' (84). The novel conveys the suburban rigidity in Harriet's enduring and solid manner which, the passage suggests, can become powerfully enforced when it encounters difference. Yet, the narrator shows how stiffness and hostile temperament can be disrupted when practicing the ordinary – here, 'a little tea'. Philip, who demonstrates throughout the novel a more lenient manner

[334] Tim Edensor, 'Performing Tourism', p. 61.

than his sister, develops an appreciation for unfamiliar sensations later in the chapter. The novel shows how Philip's bodily pains become acknowledged and even rewarding. In the theatre, and after their tiring trip, '[t]he heat, the fatigue and the enjoyment had mounted into his head' (89). What bothered him before, such as heat and physical uneasiness, are here aligned with enjoyment and intensify his experience of Italy, bringing him closer to it.

Addressing tourists' embodied encounters in Forster's texts demonstrates how cultural prejudice can be depicted not only in the big events but also in the small and everyday encounters with the ordinary and extraordinary. Interacting with unfamiliar materialities during travel can equally contribute to the travellers' sensory repertoire and simultaneously constitute an empirical epistemology that challenges the existence of pre-determined cultural ideas about tourism. *A Room with a View* contemplates this notion through Lucy's trip to Italy where

> It was pleasant to wake up in Florence, to open the eyes upon a bright bare room, with a floor of red tiles which look clean though they are not; […] It was pleasant, too, to fling wide the windows, pinching the fingers in unfamiliar fastenings, to lean out into sunshine with beautiful hills and trees and marble churches opposite. (15)

Vision is not the only sense through which pleasure is constituted. Urry and Larsen argue that although 'the visual sense is not the only sense, it is the organising sense. It organises the place, role and effect of the other senses' (195). Yet, Lucy's encounter is created via visual and kinaesthetic stimuli that produce a sense of pleasure. Gripping the window fastenings does not only have a functional value that is operated by tactile kinaesthetic performances. This ordinary, yet slightly different, activity stimulates agreeable sensations. To Lucy, perceiving a different sensation that is not hostile or

unfriendly is something that is enjoyable. Mundane physical interactions with objects in fact convey a similar sense of pleasure to looking at spectacular views, and thus add a significant dimension to travellers' experiences abroad.

In the last two decades, tourism research has started to appreciate the value of the everyday within touristic extraordinary practices. Edensor observes how '[t]ourism is represented as removed from the quotidian, as a common-sense understanding, but also as a theoretical way of marking tourism as a separate scholarly field of enquiry. These understandings imply that tourism is extraordinary rather than mundane'. Edensor also adds that there is no such thing as a break from the mundane in tourism as 'tourists carry quotidian habits and responses with them'.[335] His observations on tourism research explain the frequent critical attempts to consider the exceptional experiences in Forster's novels as marking the characters' trips. Nonetheless, it is the quotidian encounters that are pondered upon in the texts. Whether they are pleasurable or disturbing, travellers' experiences and activities are framed by the change that occurs in their everyday habitual activities. Moreover, although travellers may carry cultural and bodily habits with them in their trips, the novels demonstrate how the materiality of the different places that his characters encounter can produce new habitual engagement, especially when the travellers take a significant and active part in forming their own experiences.

Forster's travel fiction is characterised by the quotidian, which becomes especially evident in the travellers' embodied encounters with unfamiliar environments. The novels analysed in this chapter are renowned for their subtle critique of English traditional touristic practices, but they are equally effective in exhibiting the ways humans act within the bounds of their bodily habits in foreign settings. Forster's

[335] Edensor, pp. 60, 61.

detailed depiction of how such touristic conventions intervene in the characters' everyday lives and mediate their experiences reveals his attitude towards the role of art and culture in the improvement of human character. The satirical criticism of such idealistic perceptions of tourism shows the texts' encouragement of personal and first-hand experiences as essential to characters' development. The texts celebrate spontaneous and unanticipated bodily and social encounters as occurrences that can stimulate attentiveness and connection, but they equally show that not being able to comprehend certain feelings that result from such encounters can lead to a material misinterpretation and an interrelational confusion between the characters. *A Passage to India* demonstrates that prejudice is not just a preconceived opinion that is the product of unstudied or inexperienced views, but is an attitude that is encouraged by bad responses to unanticipated, and more specifically, unfamiliar, corporeal experiences.

Tolerance, sympathy and intimacy are ideas that the novels inspect beyond the religious, political, and cultural contexts of the characters' reactions. The way the travellers respond to the material textures of the unfamiliar landscapes they visit reveals the extent to which their responses and attitudes are determined by various factors that affect their embodied experiences, especially material ones. The different environments depicted in the three novels are also more than just cultural representations of Forster's ideologies, for they have a strong and active physical presence in the characters' everyday lives which mould their experience of travelling and their attitude towards other places and cultures.

Chapter Five

Losing Sense of Space: Mobility, Modernity, and Attentiveness

I have briefly discussed in Chapter Three how Forster's *Howards End* and 'The Other Side of the Hedge' portray the reduction of human experiences to quantitative measurements in the modern world. I demonstrated that while modernity celebrates individuality and autonomy, the characters are no longer restricted to only socio-economic bonds as their lives become equally determined by the same technology that promises self-determination. This chapter is substantially linked to the previous discussions in the second and third chapter in this thesis because it will elaborate on some of the ideas tackled earlier, especially the celebration of subjective experiences in the uneasy portrayal of a homogenised modern world. It will also discuss the overlapped and intricate links between embodied mobilities, human perception and aesthetics, and social relations. By exploring the futuristic technology of communication in 'The Machine Stops' and the motoring activities in *Howards End*, I aim to link these texts' alternative ways of seeing and sensing, produced and encouraged by modern transport and communication technologies, to Forster's rejection of long standing visual technological innovations. The privileging of vision in modern western culture is criticised in relation to technology in these two texts. Attending to the ways Forster's characters interact with these modern technologies reveals his attitude towards technological developments and the human values that modernity promotes.

The study of the cultural effects of modern transport and communication technologies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has mostly resorted to Modernist literature as a source that reflects the effects of the modern world, especially

the works of Henry James, James Joyce, H. G. Wells, and Virginia Woolf. Armstrong notes how critics in the late twentieth century 'have suggested that the turn of the century saw an alliance between naturalist writing and an emerging scientific, rationalizing world-view, with a shared concern for the nature of the human subject'.[336] He also observes that, although modernist writers have different attitudes to social and technological modernity, they mostly 'saw the body as the focus of anxiety, even crisis'.[337] Armstrong's study provides a cultural history of the modernist period by observing the sociological, psychological and medical effects of modernity on the human body. Seminal works by Steven Kern and Mark Seltzer take more notice of Marxist approaches to space and time, mass production and consumption than the spatial and aesthetic aspect of modernity.[338] However, critical attention to the experience of space through perception and performance has emerged since the turn of the twenty-first century. The essays in Morna O'Neill's and Michael Hatt's volume *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain 1901-1910*, and Danius's influential study, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics*, directly address the relationship that perception and aesthetics have with modernisation and technology in the early twentieth century, focusing on the visual and the spatial aspects of modernity.

Danius's work develops a novel theoretical and historical approach to understanding high modernism and argues that the modernist aesthetic cannot be seen separately from technology and the crisis of the senses in the modernist period. Danius perceives the literary works she studies in her monograph as art-works or aesthetic productions in their own right, and accordingly argues that the imagined separation

[336] Armstrong, p. 3.
[337] Ibid, p. 4.
[338] See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983) and Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (London: Routledge, 1992).

between high and low culture does not exist. For Danius, modernism is a myth and modernist works that have always identified themselves at a distance from modernity are indeed the products of that same modern world. Despite the study's engagement with many of the themes that I will discuss later in the chapter, especially the presence of technology in everyday perceptions of the world, the nature of my research does not treat Forster's texts as aesthetic productions of the modernist period and will not classify his works or his person as part of any particular group. This does not necessarily mean that I will not attempt to link Forster's attitudes towards certain ideas with other famous trends in the modernist period, but my research trajectories compel a different route that is interested in studying the way in which he depicts the change of perception and aesthetics on a day to day basis by looking at how his characters engage with the everyday world around them.

'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* are written only a year apart from each other and, although different in theme and genre, their depictions of the direct effects of technology on human perception can be discussed alongside each other, particularly in the way they demonstrate technologically mediated experiences. What is also notable about these two texts is the redundant sensation of what Forster calls losing or gaining 'sense of space'.[339] Losing or gaining sense of space is mainly experienced when characters lose or gain physical contact with the world around them. Losing sense of space also occurs when a space is emptied of subjective meanings, as seen in the act of motoring in *Howards End*, or by living in the homogenous environment of the Machine

[339] 'Sense of Space' is a phrase used by Forster to convey meanings of physical connection or disconnection with the environment. A similar phrase 'Sense of Place' is used as a title to the chapter written by Neal Alexander, 'Senses of Place' in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Place*, ed. by Robert Talley (Oxon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 61-80. Alexander observes that it is difficult to find one definition for the 'sense of place', and that his article which attempts to explore the different layers of meanings this phrase presents in poetry and fiction argues that 'senses of place […] emerge from the engagement of our five senses not only in apprehending but also in actively making places, and in making sense of the worlds in which they take place', p. 61.

in ‘The Machine Stops’. The expression, ‘sense of space’ is used five times in ‘The Machine Stops’ and four times in *Howards End*, and although it has been briefly addressed before in Forster criticism, as the chapter will soon reveal, the idea of having or losing ‘sense of space’ has not been examined through a comparative reading of the two texts. Read together, they not only complement each other through emphasising and explicating Forster’s views of modern technology, but also articulate topical issues in different disciplines regarding the role of mobilities and futuristic communication technologies in defining human experience of the world. The texts’ references to the idea of losing a ‘sense of space’ on different occasions raise important questions regarding Forster’s attitude to modernity and communication and transport technologies. The new ways of seeing and sensing that result from encountering the world differently are implicated in Forster’s view of aesthetics, and more importantly, personal relationships.

Striving for a physical experience to gain a ‘sense of space’ in ‘The Machine Stops’ and *Howards End* is a feeling that is familiar to modernist criticism. Danius witnesses a shift in classical modernism ‘from idealist theories of aesthetic experience to materialist ones, or, which ultimately amounts to the same thing, that the emergence of modernist aesthetics signifies the increasing internalization of technological matrices of perception’.[340] This reveals that the new technologies of the modernist period do not merely contextualise the modernist texts she studies in her volume, but rather take part in the making of modern aesthetics. Similarly, Garrington’s *Haptic Modernism* argues that there is a tendency in modernist literature to show urgency to touch, an inclination that can have different interpretations.[341] Because of Forster’s ambivalent position as a

[340] Danius, p. 2.
[341] Garrington, pp. 1-33.

modernist writer, it is not surprising that his fictional works are not present in similar studies of modernist literature. Yet, I want to argue that although characters in his novels and short stories show relentless eagerness to be physically in touch with the world, it is especially with the distinctive and unanticipated textures of nature that his characters feel authentically in touch.

By attending to the characters' encounters with the world through modern modes of communication and transport, I draw on phenomenological and aesthetic philosophies that will not only show Forster's attitude to the altered perceptions occurring at the time the texts were written, but also attempt to explain the place which physical connection or being in touch have in his understanding of what it is to be human. His assertion of the necessity to connect with the natural world also prompts the need to investigate its role in Forster's view of culture and aesthetics. The celebration of nature in his texts gives the implication of celebrating the past, the old ways and the conservative view of the natural. However, I propose that nature serves a different purpose for Forster. While it may be considered, as opposite to cosmopolitanism, as a deterministic environment that constrains human autonomy and freedom, Forster sees in nature spontaneity, changeability and dynamism that can provide people with distinctive and unique experiences which stimulate their humanity and benevolence.

Annihilating the Senses

Losing sense of space in 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* occurs when there is less reliance on the human body and more dependence on vision for perception. Both Margaret and Kuno are trapped inside artificial machines that not only limit their bodily

movements, but also dull their sensations by decreasing the amount of material stimuli that can affect their bodies. Their relationship with the world around them becomes overly dependent on vision, a sense that the texts consider ultimately unreliable in a world that is dominated by speeding vehicles and an increased reliance on virtual communication.

Over the last few decades, researchers from different disciplines have defined and redefined space, especially with the increasing interest in spatial theories. Space has frequently been understood as an intangible concept that could be experienced and perceived relationally through human practice.[342] Tim Cresswell explains that '[s]pace is a more abstract concept than place. When we speak of space, we tend to think of outer-space or the spaces of geometry. Spaces have areas and volumes. Places have spaces between them'.[343] Cresswell suggests that a space only becomes meaningful, or a place, once it has value and meaning added to it. Cresswell bases his definition on Yi-Fu Tuan's influential understanding of the term.[344] The relational understanding of space has been dominant in the last two decades, but has increasingly developed in recent years with the growing interest in understanding space through movement.[345] As I have shown in the introduction, spaces are now believed to constitute more than a context to humans' experiences and 'are actively produced by the act of moving'.[346] In his study of mobilities and space, Merriman emphasises the material aspect of spaces in human experience by suggesting that the experience of the world in movement is not only characterised by the ways humans encounter space and time, but also draws

[342] See David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), and Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976).
[343] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2015), p, 15.
[344] See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).
[345] See Adey, *Mobility*, Cresswell and Merriman, *Geographies of Mobilities*, Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture*, and Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*.
[346] Cresswell and Merriman, p. 7.

attention to the different sensations and feelings that result from interacting with the world.[347] Similarly, Ingold asserts the importance of understanding the world not via ideas of 'space' but through its material qualities. He argues that '[s]pace is nothing, and because it is nothing it cannot be inhabited at all'.[348] Ingold, following on Doreen Massey's work, proposes that contrasting the terms space and place strips the human experience from its grounded physical reality and elevates it to an abstract participation with the world. Instead of seeing spaces as meaningless and intangible gaps between places, he suggests that there is no emptiness between one place and another, but rather lines of movement in which action and physical encounters occur on various occasions, or what he calls 'knots'.[349] It is in these lines of movement that humans perceive the world and construct a strong sense of their surroundings. Tracing the interdisciplinary understanding of the relationship between space and movement is helpful in providing a theoretical context to understand how the characters in 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* reflect upon their mediated relationship with the environment not in points of stability, but during movement. Attending to the characters' perceptions of the places they move in also reveals how their experiences of the outside world influence personal relationships.

'The Machine Stops' portrays a world that is dominated by virtual communication technologies. People see and speak to each other via screens built inside their pods. The availability of such technology deems physical interactions not only unnecessary but also uncivilised. The loss of this physical dimension is what concerns Kuno and the narrator. Kuno explains to his mother, Vashti: 'You know that we have lost the sense of space. We say "space is annihilated", but we have annihilated not

[347] See Merriman, p. 63.
[348] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 145.
[349] Ibid, p. 149.

space, but the sense thereof' (125). Kuno clarifies that losing sense of space does not mean that the space itself is lost, but rather that its relationship to humans has been annihilated because physical interactions are now demeaned - people 'never touched one another. The custom had become obsolete' (120). Moreover, visiting the surface of the earth is discouraged and is considered 'vulgar and perhaps faintly improper: it was unproductive of ideas, and had no connection with the habits that really mattered' (135). In the Machine, civilisation is characterised by distance and aloofness, and the mind is given supremacy over the body. Human development is also seen through the improvement of, what is repeatedly called in the story, 'ideas'. The inhabitants of the Machine spend their time 'eating, or sleeping, or producing ideas' (118) and Vashti, like the others, 'exchanged ideas with her innumerable friends and believed she was growing more spiritual' (138).

Rebecca Solnit observes that modern technology seeks a world where disembodiment prevails. She explains how the annihilation of time and space 'is what most technologies aspire to do. Technology regards the very terms of our bodily existence as burdensome. Annihilating time and space most directly means accelerating communications and transportation.'[350] In a world where technology prevails, the annihilation of space dominates the lives of its inhabitants where the acceleration of speed decreases the reliance on the body, especially its movement. In Forster's short story, Kuno associates the annihilation of space with the loss of bodily sensation. Forster's tone in the story satirises Vashti and the world of the Machine where the spiritual is ostensibly found in the mind, and where progress and advancement are associated with the abstract and the disembodied.

[350] Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), p. 11.

Being distant from first-hand experience – what we saw in Leonard's night walk in the suburban woods and in Philip's and Lucy's guided view of Italy – is more directly present in the 'The Machine Stops'. In the story, 'one of the most advanced' lecturers suggests: '[l]et your ideas be second-hand, and if possible tenth-hand, for then they will be far removed from that disturbing element – direct observation' (135). Proximity and intimacy are conveyed as upsetting components of human experience by the progressive minds inhabiting the Machine. The Machine's culture shows a rejection of empirical science as Vashti explains to Kuno, 'I have lately been to a lecture on the sea; there is no objection to that; one simply summons a respirator and gets an Egression-permit. It is not the kind of thing that spiritually-minded people do' (123-124). Immediacy is unsettling, and the further people are from the real subjects of study, the more superior and valued their ideas become. 'The Machine Stops' shows how the rejection of materiality not only influences people's sensitivities, identities, and culture, but also disembodies science and knowledge by removing the material element from research that is believed to hinder humans' mental and spiritual development.

As Forster's only science fiction story, 'The Machine Stops' has mostly been studied on its own or read against other dystopian literature in the period.[351] Beatrice Battaglia allegorises the story as a 'radical rewriting of the old play between the mind and the body', and concludes that 'the story turns out to be not more a criticism of the mind than it is a glorification of the body'.[352] A similar reading that is more interested in the human experience is by Silvana Caporaletti who observes that it is a topical and

[351] Some of which are by Charles Elkins, 'E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops": Liberal Humanist Hostility to Technology', in *Clockwork Worlds: Mechanized Environments in SF*, ed. by Richard Erlich and Thomas Dunn (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), pp. 47-62 and Bryan L. Moore, '"Evidences of Decadent Humanity": Antianthropocentrism in Early Science Fiction', *Nature and Culture*, 9.1 (2014), 45-65.

[352] Beatrice Battaglia, 'Losing the Sense of Space: Forster's "The Machine Stops" and Jameson's "Third Machine Age"' in *Histories of the Future: Studies in Fact, Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. by Alan Sandison and Robert Dingley (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 51-71 (p.54).

a political story that is relevant to the contemporary world by depicting characters that are '[l]ittle more than simulacra themselves' and that are 'completely forgetful of their true human dimension'.[353] Caporaletti reads the characters in the story as disembodied creatures that have lost the human side of themselves, namely the body. Nonetheless, while Forster's satirical depiction of the way of life in the Machine amplifies the danger of relying less on bodily sensations and losing direct contact with the world, it does not reflect a total loss of bodily experience, suggesting the impossibility of removing the material element of human life.

Like Forster's other fiction, 'The Machine Stops' demonstrates a longing for corporeal interaction with the outside world. In his fine article on the role of technology in 'The Machine Stops', Alf Seegert problematises Forster's nostalgic tone by questioning the meaning of authenticity in the story. He argues that the anti-technological aspect of the story is emphasised because the Machine destroys the human relation with place and space. In order to discuss Forster's idea of technological mediation, Seegert uses the famous metaphor at the end of the story that likens technology to garments: 'beautiful naked man was dying, strangled in the garments that he had woven […] And heavenly it had been so long as it was a garment and no more, so long as man could shed it at will'.[354] The problem that Seegert finds in Forster's myth of pure body is that the latter views technology as something that mediates rather than something that contributes to what it means to be human. Forster's problem with technology then lies in his fear of its ability to become an extension of the human body and consciousness, discouraging authentic experience. In what follows, I want to argue

[353] Silvana Caporaletti, 'Science as Nightmare: "The Machine Stops" by E. M. Forster', *Utopian Studies*, 8.2 (1997), 32-47 (p. 33).
[354] Alf Seegert, 'Technology and the Fleshly Interface in E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops": An Ecocritical Appraisal of a One Hundred Year Old Future', *The Journal of Ecocriticism,* 2.1 (2010), pp. 33-53 (p. 45).

that this may be true if technology is only tackled according to its mediatory functions and its effects on people's perceptions without considering how it is implicated with certain human values that Forster believes vital to everyday communication and perception of the world. It is not merely the idea of authenticity that worries Forster because the Machine does more than just promoting artificiality and distancing people from the 'real' world. By changing how people experience moving in space, the modern technologies of communication and transport transform people's reactions to the world from being careful and observant to the strange and unfamiliar into protected and standardised responses. The modern world's anticipated and identical materiality develops humans' sense of superiority and makes them more apathetic and less attentive not only to their surroundings but also to each other.

The man-made Machine is not external to the characters but contributes to the formation of human bodies and personal relationships. Technology's impact on human relations is something that Paul March-Russell tackles in his essay on the impossibility of utopia in 'The Machine Stops' where he argues that Forster's problem with technology is not just its mediation but that it also lies in the Machine's 'failure to allow for the necessity of change and its abolition of personal and cultural difference'.[355] March-Russell argues that, through overlooking personal differences and homogenising people's experiences, the story reveals that technology is not free from ideological construction. The Machine weaves a determining ideological aspect into people's identities and relationships. Forster's sceptical attitude to technology is therefore representative of issues larger than anxiety or negativity towards modernity. His celebration of immediate first-hand experiences with the natural world

[355] Paul March-Russell, '"Imagine, If You Can": Love, Time and the Impossibility of Utopia in E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops"', *Critical Survey* 17. 1 (2005), 56-71 (p. 59).

demonstrates the significance of spontaneity in human-world and human-human relations. By distancing humans from the natural world, the artificial world of the Machine functions as a protective environment that shelters its inhabitants from the feeling of vulnerability that the exposure to the immediate and unexpected materialities of the world can create.

Motorcars in *Howards End* function in a similar manner to the Machine, for they prevent Margaret and others from being affected by the materiality of the world they move in. Just before arriving at Howards End, 'it was raining steadily. The car came round with the hood up, and again she lost all sense of space. In a few minutes she stopped, and Crane opened the door of the car' (207). Despite the heavy rain, being inside the motorcar disconnects Margaret from the weather and acts as a protective space that separates her from her surroundings. The description of the car is specific as it mentions that the hood of the car is up because of the rain. Merriman writes about driving sensations in the early twentieth century and observes from the accounts written at that period how: 'the visceral and haptic sensations associated with open motor-cars could be unpleasant, especially in high winds, rain, and during spells of cold weather'.[356] Therefore, the hood in the Wilcoxes' car serves as a protection from being influenced by the materialities of the landscape and the weather, and thus guards people from being directly affected by them. Sheltering people from the world's materiality increases the reliance on the sense of vision more than other human senses.

Merriman explains in his study how 'some scholars have focused on the sensory enclosure of drivers and passengers' where human experience and sensory perception are, quoting Urry, 'reduced to the two-dimensional view', whereas other accounts 'stress the multi-sensory and kinaesthetic apprehensions mobile subjects have with their

[356] Merriman, p. 78.

surroundings'.[357] Merriman explains the disparate approaches and studies surrounding the fast technologies of mobilities and asserts that speeding vehicles allow humans to inhabit the world in ways that still affect the human body, albeit differently. This means that motorcars do not deny the other bodily senses from perceiving, but that they perceive otherwise. The new ways of sensing and seeing are conveyed positively by the accounts that Merriman examines in his study which explains how

> motoring starts to become associated with an apprehension and openness to other sensuous and embodied registers, whether of movement, acceleration, force, rhythm, or the multitude of affects associated with these practices. Motor-car mobilities are witnessed and experienced as novel and sensational occurrences, reworking people's perceptions of movement, travel and the landscape, and these changes were not always welcomed or embraced as positive or progressive experiences.[358]

Motoring and the new unfamiliar embodied sensations that it brings to both motorists and passengers are thus associated with progress and flexibility. The correlation between modern, liberal ideas and the enjoyment and approval of new unfamiliar sensations problematises Forster's less-thrilled depiction of motoring in *Howards End*, especially when images of motoring in the novel are seen in relation to his attitude towards modernity and his liberal-humanist views.

I have briefly discussed in the introduction how critics consider the motorcar as a significant element that contributes to the traditional meaning of the novel. Tambling believes it is implicated with Forster's anti-modern views as '[his] attachments are nostalgic, dwelling on a Britain which is agricultural, non-industrial, pre-motor car'.[359]

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[357] Ibid, p. 12.
[358] Ibid, p. 135.
[359] Tambling, 'Introduction', p. 2.

Motoring is not seen in its mobility, but rather as a static image that negatively conveys modernity and disruption in the novel. This is mostly significant in Bradshaw's account of *Howards End* where he claims that

> Forster's acute unease with modernity is most evident in his treatment of the motorcar. Like many Edwardian intellectuals, he was appalled by the racket and "stench" […] of the automobile and he regarded its intrusive and newfangled power as symptomatic of the 'brutal', speeded-up and money-oriented culture which he loathed so intensively. […] Forster's anti-car position anticipates latter-day concerns about the environmental impact of exhaust emissions and the alienating effects of noise, and pollution, of course.[360]

Bradshaw's account demonstrates a common certainty regarding Forster's attitude towards motoring. Through linking motoring to Forster's view of modernity, Bradshaw perceives the negativity of motoring in its material effects on the environment, from sounds to smells. He also associates the depiction of motoring in the novel with the spatial boundlessness that is reflective of imperial ambitions. Thacker's study of *Howards End* is the only work that attempts to move beyond the image of the motor car as being 'a vehicle for symbolic meanings'.[361] In his elaborate exploration of motoring in the novel, Thacker develops an interest in it as a practice and mode through which one can explore the 'changes in the human experience of basic categories of time and space'.[362] He proposes that reading the novel spatially and in a 'literary geographical fashion' offers a better understanding of Forster's representations of the multiple social, historical, geographical, imperial, and national spaces in the novel.[363]

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[360] Bradshaw, p. 168.
[361] Thacker, *Moving through Modernity*, p. 62.
[362] Ibid, p. 63.
[363] Ibid, p. 74.

Thacker's reading complements prior criticisms of the novel and draws attention to the practice of motoring. Nonetheless, the material spaces in the novel that Thacker sheds light on highlight encounters with space and time rather than different materialities. This focus pays more attention to the socio-historic dimension in the novel than to human experiences. I explain in what follows how instead of seeing motoring as an abstract practice, an 'ambivalent symbol' that signifies modernity and modern values, or a practice that links national and cosmopolitan spaces, Forster's representation of motoring reveals his humanist views.[364] By dwelling on his characters' feelings whilst in a fast-moving vehicle and on how their personal relationships are linked to the way they interact with the nonhuman world around them, motoring becomes a manifestation of Forster's complex humanist attitudes which disrupt his relationship with technology and modernity.

Howards Ends does not convey the Wilcoxes' perceptions of motoring. It is only Margaret's confused feelings whilst being in the motorcar that are dwelled upon. Forster is not alone in not showing excitement over this modern practice. As I have mentioned earlier in the chapter, during the same period when 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* were written, Merriman observes that the modern and the altered sensations that motoring offered were not always welcomed or considered as positive improvement. He provides accounts, such as Marie Corelli's *The Devil's Motor* (1910) and Charles Masterman's *The Condition of England* (1909), that amplify the danger of motoring by implicating it with physical and health dangers not only affecting the motorists themselves, but also non-motorists on the road. Yet, the accounts by Corelli and Masterman are given from an external point of view that concerns people outside the swerving motors and who witness the material effects of motoring such as dust,

[364] Thacker, p. 73.

mud and stench rather than the sensations it gives to those inside the motorcar. Such accounts are not necessarily oppositional to the new sensations that motoring offers. For even 'the stench of motor-cars' that Bradshaw refers to in *Howards End* cannot be explained as uninvited because motorcars are behind the same dust and stench that Maurice and Clive turn into in *Maurice* (13).[365] Nonetheless, Forster is still uneasy about the alterations affecting human perception in a motorcar, but I argue that the extensive reference to losing any 'sense of space' is not because Forster's characters are intolerant to the new sensations that this practice offers. As I have shown in the previous chapters, particularly Chapter Four, Forster's texts encourage the exploration of new sensations through travel and encountering different material landscapes. Despite the new sensations that motoring and these technologies offer their users, when read together with the technology of communication in 'The Machine Stops', it becomes clearer that Forster's uneasiness is not due to the sensations themselves but rather to the qualities and meanings that result from second-hand experiences of encountering the world and their effect on human attentiveness.

Attentiveness and Compassion

In the novel, Forster demonstrates how motoring not only disconnects people physically from the ground but also disrupts the way they perceive it and accordingly causes them to lose all sense of space. We learn in the novel that Margaret's drives with the Wilcoxes are not pleasant precisely because 'she lost all sense of space' (207). Like Kuno, this feeling is intensified for Margaret when she feels physically out of touch with her surroundings and relies only on her vision to determine her presence in relation

[365] See *Maurice*, pp. 63-64 and Chapter One, p. 43.

to the world. In the drive, Margaret 'lost the sense of space; once more trees, houses, people, animals, hills merged and heaved into one dirtiness' (213). All the things that constitute the landscape, such as the houses and hills, are not identified individually but are all fused together unattractively like a whirlwind in a contaminated image that is blurred and obscure. Similar perceptions of motoring are observed in different studies on motoring in the early twentieth century.[366] Like *Howards End*, the embodied sensations that are experienced when being in a motor car are characterised by visual distortion:

> What is striking is the manner in which the senses merge and blur in such accounts of automotive perception, as motorists move-and-sense with vehicle, road, landscape, weather and other road users, and space and time are not positioned as the most important registers through which automotive subjects sense and experience the world.[367]

Being in a motor car forces one to see and perceive the world differently from being on the ground when walking, for instance. Merriman argues that motoring allows human perception to move beyond the body with the vehicle. The motorcar consequently becomes part of the human body that one can sense and feel through. Extending human sensation to include the vehicle changes the position of other entities that make up the road by making them less visible and significant to the driver. Drivers and passengers in motorcars, as shown in Merriman's description, cannot give enough attention to individual objects on the landscape during the drive, but rather view them together at the same time. This lack of attentiveness is troubling for instead of seeing things clearly by interacting with them physically and with due attention, they pass in front of her

[366] See also more different accounts from the early twentieth century in Pearce's, *Drivetime* and Danius, *The Senses of Modernism*.
[367] Merriman. p. 81.

swiftly and turn into unfamiliar, generic and indistinct objects. The same idea is demonstrated in the beginning of the novel when Mrs Munt takes the train to Howards End:

> The train sped northward, under innumerable tunnels. […] She passed through the South Welwyn Tunnel, saw light for a moment, and entered the North Welwyn Tunnel, of tragic fame. She traversed the immense viaduct whose arches span untroubled meadows and the dreamy flow of Tewin Water. She skirted the parks of politicians. […] Mrs Munt remained equally indifferent; hers but to concentrate on the end of her journey. (13)

Contrasting the verbs that connote rapidity with long unnecessary descriptions of the landscape shows the extent to which Mrs Munt is disengaged from the places that the train is passing through. She is inattentive partly because the way she encounters space does not allow her to engage actively with her surroundings, and because she is more focused on the destination than the journey. David Bissell studies the visual practices of passengers in contemporary railway travel in Britain and the reconfigured relationship between humans and the landscape through vision. He explains how, although 'the body can sense speed through the movement of passing objects' and other kinaesthetic sensations, the 'more passive, disengaged visual experiences obscure a range of other, more attentive ways of seeing that are required in order to travel successfully'.[368] Therefore, sensing speed means losing the sense of being attentive to the landscape, which contributes to Mrs Munt's disengagement from her surroundings. But the purpose of her train trip is not sightseeing, but merely transport, and this makes

[368] David Bissell, 'Visualising Everyday Geographies: Practices of Vision Through Travel Time', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 34.1 (2009), pp.42-60 (p. 46).

her disengagement less problematic than Margaret's, for we know that she joins the Wilcoxes on sightseeing excursions.

The lack of distinctiveness that is shown in Margaret's trip in the motorcar and Mrs Munt's train journey is satirically explored in the futuristic world of the Machine where the built environment, objects and even atmosphere are the same. The modern world, Forster shows, aims to democratise humans' experiences through cultural homogenisation that targets not only vision but also other bodily sensations.[369] 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* demonstrate how this homogenisation contributes to unifying the human experience by overlooking subjective interactions and attentiveness and by relying more instead on practicality and what Forster calls the 'good enough' which 'had long since been accepted by our race' (111). These two texts emphasise how, by paying more attention to the body and the different senses, subjective experiences can be restored.

The previous chapters of this thesis, namely Chapter Two and Chapter Four, have shown how spontaneous and unanticipated bodily responses that occur outside characters' habits increase their alertness and attentiveness. Being attentive, however, is not just an act that is related to observing human and nonhuman entities surrounding one's body. Paying attention to someone or something means being perceptive of their presence and informed about their characteristics, thus creating a better understanding and knowledge about them. With the development of new modes of transportation and communication, it becomes apparent that stronger emphasis has been put not only on

[369] For more about homogenisation in the modern globalised world and its effects on the senses, see Chapter Four 'Senses' in John Urry, *Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 77-104.

vision but also on observation.[370] The relationship between technology and attentiveness is an issue that both 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* examine when depicting human-world and human-human relations. Blurriness is introduced as a state that is associated with lack of attentiveness and losing sense of space. Depriving the body of the abilities to observe clearly and distinctively and to be in touch with the world is what causes characters such as Margaret and Kuno to feel confused. Motoring blurs Margaret's vision whilst dulling her bodily sensations, and to Kuno, the Machine has robbed its inhabitants 'of the sense of space and of the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relation' (131). The focus on technology in relation to vision and blurriness raises certain questions about the significance of attentiveness in Forster's texts, especially in relation to interpersonal relationships.

Observing Forster's depiction of human-world and human-human relations in the modern world sheds light on the relationship between attentiveness and being in touch. Jonathan Crary's *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture,* a major work in the study of attention and perception in the modern world, concludes that: '[i]t is possible to see one crucial aspect of modernity as an ongoing crisis of attentiveness'.[371] Crary explains the reasons behind choosing attention as a framework for his study of modernity by proposing that:

> attention, as a constellation of texts and practices, is much more than a question of the gaze, of looking, of the subject only as a spectator. It allows the problem

[370] Merriman, observes in *Mobility, Space, Culture*, how 'a commentator remarked in *The Graphic* newspaper that same year, 'the art of driving a car has created another "sense", that of observation', where one 'unconsciously' and 'automatically' watches and absorbs the events unfolding in 'the road and surroundings', 'quite naturally and without any effort' making decisions 'in a moment'' and how 'observation and attention emerge as specifically modern aspects of seeing which are vital for motor-car driving, while medical practitioners and eye specialists remarked upon the new physiological demands placed upon a driver's vision, which were perceived to be quite different from the demands placed upon the cyclist or carriage-driver', pp. 82-83.

[371] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Massachusetts: MIT, 1999), pp. 13-14.

> of perception to be extracted from an easy equation with questions of visuality.[372]

He argues that attention cannot be limited to the sense of vision that has long been conceived to be the main mode of perception.[373] In his study of different paintings from the period 1880-1905, Crary observes that the art work of that period reveals that the changes affecting human perception were not restricted to the visual but also demonstrate an alteration in physical human encounters with the changed material textures of modernity. The immanence of the human body in Crary's understanding of modernity's effect on human attention suggests that attentiveness is not just visual but also corporeal. In 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End*, attention is predominantly a bodily performance through which humans can engage in multi-sensory interactions with their surroundings. This does not mean that being in a motorcar or a train disrupts attentiveness in general. On the contrary, humans can be observant to certain bodily and material sensations inside built environments or vehicles. Nonetheless, once in a vehicle, one cannot fully concentrate on the landscape, for when the body is exposed to the effects of different objects, it gives less attention to each. The influence that the environment has on the body becomes less effective as does, by extension, the impression that the landscape leaves on the human body. This means the connectivity between humans and the entities they perceive via this technology becomes frail. The texts' problem with motoring and technology does not lie in their functions but in using them for connecting with others or for excursions and sightseeing. The novel shows that encountering the world through such technologies creates a lack of an interest with the outside, because human attention becomes more inclined towards the internal rather

[372] Crary, p. 2.
[373] See Wylie, pp. 144-147 and Crary pp. 1-10.

than the external, thus making the characters more concerned with themselves than with others. This is especially noticeable when the characters leave the protection of technology and experience direct contact with their surroundings.

Indirect experiences encourage a comfortable inattentiveness that is contrasted to heightened sensitivity and extreme sensory immersion when humans in the Machine are exposed to the natural world. First-hand experiences are even expressed as almost life-threatening. The effect of immediate experiences is articulated in the carefully portrayed long journey that Vashti takes to visit her son Kuno. Vashti not only describes the trip as 'terrible' but also considers that it 'greatly retarded the development of [her] soul' (123). As soon as Vashti reluctantly leaves her pod for her visit, she 'was seized with the terrors of direct experience. She shrank back into the room and the wall closed up again' (115). Vashti struggles to leave the room that disengages her body from moving freely and protects her from being exposed to the outside world. It is the direct experience of the world outside her pod that overwhelms her by bombarding her body with unfamiliar stimuli.

Vashti's alertness that would have been normally focused on 'ideas' in the Machine is now directed towards the mundane physical experiences of travel. For example, when she finally succeeds in overcoming her terrors and getting out of her pod to visit Kuno, in the ship, 'the sun crept higher, its radiance entered direct' and '[u]nless she was careful, it would strike her face. A spasm of horror shook her and she rang for the attendant. The attendant too was horrified' (120). The sun and its touch frighten Vashti because she is used to the 'soft radiance' implemented by the Machine to illuminate her pod (109).[374] She complains to Kuno later about her horrifying trip,

[374] The sun touches Adela's body *in A Passage to India* and the heat also strikes Philip and Harriett in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. See Chapter Four, pp. 183, 184.

'[t]he sunlight almost touched me', as though the sun beam is a weapon that could wound her civilised body (123). Vashti's terrors do not stop at that. As she travels in the airship she

> saw the vast flank of the ship, stained with exposure to the outer air, her horror of direct experience returned. […] It was not quite like the air-ship in the cinematophote. For one thing it smelt – not strongly or unpleasantly, but it did smell, and with her eyes shut she should have known that a new thing was close to her. (117)

To Vashti, the ship is contaminated due to being in direct contact with the atmosphere surrounding the earth. Forster here explains Vashti's horrible experience of both being close to the natural world and relying on her other senses to experience her surroundings. She is only used to seeing the air-ship on her table-sized handheld screen, but within it she experiences different unsettling sensations. Now, she cannot depend on her eyes alone to identify her surroundings, for the ship has a smell that is not described as either agreeable or displeasing, just that it has a character that Vashti can experience through her body. The smell is also described as 'a relic from the former age' (117), suggesting primitivity and unsophistication.

Urry writes about what he refers to as the 'separation of the senses' that develops in nineteenth-century Western societies, especially the separation of 'the visual sense from those of touch, smell and hearing'.[375] He explains how '[i]n modern societies there is an apparent dislike of strong odours and the emergence of various technologies, objects and manuals which seek to purify smells out of everyday life'.[376] Zygmunt Bauman also explains how in the modern world,

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[375] Urry, John. *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century* (Abington: Routledge, 2000), p. 83.
[376] Ibid, p. 98.

> [s]mells were to be disciplined. That means, not allowed to appear on their own initiative, in places of their choice, in their native, raw form. […] *Naturalness* in smells, like in everything else, was another name of barbarity, since *artificiality* – the designer reality – had become the trade mark for civilisation.[377]

Smells are yet another part of nature that need to be controlled and refined in the modern world. Urry and Bauman explain how civilisation is equated with the artificial where everything, including smells, must be controlled according to humans' expectations. In the Machine, things are not distinctive from one place to another: 'The buttons, the knobs, the reading-desk with the Book, the temperature, the atmosphere, the illumination - all were exactly the same' (123). The Machine's artificiality is expressed in the uniformity and neutrality of its identical material textures where things look, feel and smell the same.

The sense of space that Kuno complains of is lost in the world of the Machine is one that he believes does not exist because the artificial environment denies the human body the pleasure of perceiving distinctiveness and uniqueness. By homogenising their surroundings and limiting their interactions to virtual technology, the artificial world of the Machine decreases its effect on most of the inhabitants' senses and makes them overly reliant on and aware of the sense of vision to perceive and communicate with each other and the world. The effect of the Machine on personal relationships is also visible in Vashti's trip. Not only is the environment of the Machine itself homogenous, but also:

> [p]eople were almost exactly alike all over the world, but the attendant of the air-ship, perhaps owing to her exceptional duties, had grown a little out of the

[377] Zygmunt Bauman, 'The Sweet Smell of Decomposition', in *Forget Baudrillard?*, ed. by Chris Rojek and Bryan Turner (London: Routledge, 1993), p.25.

> common. She had often to address passengers with direct speech, and this had given her a certain roughness and originality of manner. When Vashti swerved away from the sunbeams with a cry, she behaved barbarically – she put out her hand to steady her. (120)

People in the Machine are almost identical in looks and manners, and their culture rejects what is considered normal to previous and contemporary readers. The difference in manner that the attendant shows is deemed unique and irregular, implying that the common behaviour in the Machine is one that is mannered and unnatural. Touching another human being is conceived as savage and primitive, especially that the attendant's reaction to Vashti's misfortune is unexpected and surprising.

The standardisation of people's manners and behaviours means Kuno also stands out, for we know that he is different from the other Machine's inhabitants because he 'was possessed of a certain physical strength', and in the Machine, 'it was a demerit to be muscular. Each infant was examined at birth, and all who promised undue strength were destroyed' (124). People who look and think the same become inattentive to each other because of their similarities. Kuno, through his looks, and the air-ship attendant, through her manner, are marked by difference. However, the sympathetic depiction of the attendant and the normality of her actions to the reader not only reveals the narrator's approval of her behaviour, but also emphasises her humane side. The attendant has sympathy and compassion for Vashti and the other passengers, something that Vashti severely lacks in her relationship with others and with her son.

Vashti's experience of travel shows how the world of the Machine strives for an experience as disembodied as possible for the people living in it. Virtual communication and exchange of ideas, which predominantly rely on the sense of vision, are seen as more progressive than the multi-sensory bodily communication and

perception of the world. The annihilation of the senses devalues the meaning of the different. The identical places in the Machine which, in their homogeneity, appear as insignificant to the human eye leave no discernible mark on the human body and mind. More importantly, homogeneity makes it difficult to accept something that is unforeseen, different, or that does not belong to the same category and does not meet the expectations of people in the Machine.

When Kuno revolts against the Machine by leaving his pod and attempting to get in contact with the natural world, he realises how, despite its attempts to create a disembodied environment for its inhabitants, the Machine still affects their bodies and controls their perception. When Kuno speaks to his mother about his adventure, he describes his experience of different sounds: 'silence which pierced my ears like a sword. The Machine hums! Did you know that? Its hum penetrates our blood, and may even guide our thoughts. Who knows! I was getting beyond its power' (127-128). Kuno's trip allows him to discover the Machine's humming sound that, he speculates, is incorporated into their bodies and unknowingly controls their thinking.

Seegert claims that despite Kuno's striving to have an authentic experience, it is 'not the body *per se* that feels unmediated, but rather, any habitual set of interactions that does'.[378] This claim reveals a contradiction in Seegert's account which claims at the beginning that Forster sees technology as external to the human body, but later argues that he depicts the technologically mediated human body in the machine as habitually developed. Seegert's suggestion that Kuno's experiences are not unmediated is partially true because habit marks Kuno's bodily encounters and as soon as he moves away from the Machine, his body senses difference, and not originality, in the material environment. Nonetheless, Seegert's claim is framed by his argument that what the text

[378] Seegert, p. 44.

is trying to do is seek an original and authentic experience: 'Forster's view is not simply anti-technological. For Forster, the test of a technology's value would seem to be bound up in its ability to either foster or undermine "connection"'.[379] However, I would like to argue that although 'The Machine Stops' problematises technological mediations between the human body and the natural world, it is more concerned with revealing as problematic the modern dependence on vision as a mode of perception. The world of the Machine not only mediates its inhabitants' perception of nature but also controls the other, equally important, senses. By reducing the variations of sensory stimuli and focusing on vision, the Machine makes it even impossible to recognise or accept the existence of other sensations. The focus on vision, I will show later in the chapter, is also problematised in the texts in which Forster depicts it as unreliable in the modern world.[380]

The inhabitants' everyday lives in the Machine are incorporated within the material fabric of its environment, albeit unknowingly. This understanding of the body is the basis of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body as the very basis of our experience. Despite the prominence of the mind over the body in the Machine, the story shows that humans cannot escape their bodies' fundamental shaping of their perceptions and being in the world. Losing sense of space for Kuno and the narrator means the loss of a subjective experience. Everyday independent experiences involve the use of unobserved human sensations and attend to them. Losing the ability to experience autonomously threatens human attentiveness not only to the presence of other human and nonhuman entities, but also to their values.

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[379] Seegert, p. 49.

[380] I am not trying to argue here that the instability of vision is unique to the modernist period and by extension Forster's work. In *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, Kate Flint recognises the phenomenon in the Victorians who 'had an increasing awareness of the instability of the visual, and their problematisation of what they saw', p. 37.

Aesthetics and Attentiveness

The relationship between technology and aesthetics in the modern world results from the new ways of seeing and sensing that accompanied technology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Crary's and Danius's study of the effect of technology and attentiveness on people in the modernist period shows a direct link between new modes of seeing, sensing and attentiveness, and new modes of production. Because communication and transport technologies in 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* interfere with the ways people perceive others and the external world, they immediately become implicated in personal relationships and aesthetics. I have already discussed in the previous sections how Forster's texts reveal the negative effects of technology on personal relationships. In what follows, I demonstrate how when characters in *Howards End* and 'The Machine Stops' are distanced from the physical effects of the natural and heterogenous world, their changed perceptions cause a change in the way they appreciate and value their surrounding environment, and hence in their ethics and moralities.

In her exploration of modernist texts, Danius observes that 'as a consequence of the insistence on aesthetic autonomy, the emergence of modernism has commonly been studied in isolation from modernity, even in those cases where modernity is posited as a "context" or "background"'.[381] To her, modernist texts are not separate from the modernity and technology they construct themselves against. By doing that, modernism cannot be merely understood as a reaction to modernity, as modernist literature and art is itself part of and produced through modernity.

[381] Danius, p. 7.

Danius's study links the new ways of seeing and perceiving the world with modernist aesthetics that are generally known for experimenting with literary and artistic forms and expressions. Medalie explains how the Bloomsbury group's understanding of form in aesthetics considers it to be the focaliser of the artist's ideas and concepts. Medalie also refers to Said's observation that the narrative form in modernist literature offers 'an imperious assertion of the virtues of form and occidental aesthetics – something which is both sorrowful and culturally defensive'.[382] Form signifies bringing order to life, and the hesitant structure of Forster's *A Passage to India*, Medalie observes, shows a self-consciousness of Bloomsbury modernist aesthetics.[383] It is true that my study is not interested in the form of Forster's novels, but I want to link Forster's depiction of the new ways of seeing that technology offers with his view of the modernist obsession with form as a marker of modernist aesthetics. I argue that Forster detects in modernity's reliance on vision a push towards objectification and control. I have already discussed in Chapter Four how in human geography the act of seeing or viewing the landscape is understood as a culturally mediated practice that demonstrates a sense of fascination, control and possession. By emphasising the significance of relying less on the sense of vision and encouraging more material and multisensory interaction with the natural world, Forster's novels not only object to technology for celebrating vision, a solitary mode of perception that simplifies the relationship between the seer and the seen, but also encourage an alternative qualitative approach to aesthetics that does not separate beauty from the real and the mundane, and that appreciates attentiveness to differences and unfixed, unanticipated, and even unrestrained, sensations.

[382] Medalie, p. 117.

Charles Elkins explains how 'Forster's antagonism towards science and technology is registered in the works of practically all the leading writers of the period', and that 'his work goes beyond the usual antitechnological themes by dramatizing the role of science and technology in the demystification of nature'.[384] Elkins suggests that the separation between humans and nature is caused by technology which makes the latter lose its charm and its influence on human imagination. However, I want to argue that for Forster, technology simplifies the relationship between people and the nature that is rich not because of its 'charms', as Elkins suggests, but because of the copious relational and unanticipated multisensory experiences that it can offer through embodied interactions. Through their depiction of technology, I argue that Forster's texts attend to the idea of human autonomy in what he portrays as a deterministic world. As I have shown in the previous discussions, both *Howards End* and 'The Machine Stops' depict a world where the characters cannot escape the effects of modernity and technology. However, the experiences they construct away from technology's effects are not merely depicted as authentic experiences just because they take place in nature, as Seegert suggests. The characters gain a positive sense of space when they can discern and identify the quality of the world around them. *Howards End* shows that aesthetic experiences are determined independently and not through taught and directed practices. The emphasis on human subjectivity is similar to that found in the Italian novels where Lucy and other travellers are only able to appreciate the beauty of Italy when they are separated from guidebooks and chaperons and are more exposed to the unanticipated effects of the places they visit. *Howards End,* therefore, associates aesthetics and people's appreciation of the beautiful and the natural with their attentiveness and ability to distinguish differences.

[384] Elkins, p. 48.

The novel shows how sightseeing from the motorcar is not successful. Margaret's trip is not pleasant, partly because of the weather, but also because, for the most, she could not adequately engage with the sights during her trip. Margaret's disturbance, however, is justified by the narrator: 'Did not a gentleman once motor so quickly through Westmorland that he missed it? And if Westmorland can be missed, it will fare ill with a county whose delicate structure particularly needs the attentive eye' (206). The example draws a link between attentiveness and the appreciation of certain local landscapes. Speed changes the way the landscape is perceived because it homogenises it to the extent that its specific details are no longer noticed. Speed also deprives people of the joys of close examination and embodied sensations. However, Margaret's view is only one-sided. It is true that attentiveness is a quality that is celebrated by Forster at different occasions in his works as a practice that allows one to perceive beauty, develop an attachment and sometimes increase a strong sense of stability.[385] But in *Howards End*, Mr Wilcox suggests that motoring requires better skills of attention when he points out the 'pretty church' that Margaret misses because she is not 'sharp enough' (206). This then puts Margaret in the category of the Other for her inability to perceive things the way motorists and those used to this practice do. However, summarising the scene using a generic word such as 'pretty' hardly gives the church any distinctiveness and Mr Wilcox's counterargument only reveals his lack of care for the details of the local landscape. Mr Wilcox only notices the form that makes the church, but cannot possibly see what the church is like nor feel and attend to the details of its structure.

Because of how they perceive the landscape, it becomes clearer why Margaret and Mr Wilcox are depicted throughout the novel as two people who hold not only

[385] See chapters two, three and four.

different aesthetic views but also different values. Despite being more inclined towards Margaret's attitude, the texts pay attention to both perspectives in exploring how Margaret's and Mr Wilcox's disparate senses of pleasure are developed. Where Mr Wilcox can enjoy viewing things from a distance, Margaret struggles to make sense of her surroundings, and to her eye, the scenery 'heaved and merged like porridge' before it 'congealed' when the car stopped (206). The view that Margaret sees is confusing. It has no character or distinction, just like the porridge that Forster was served during his trip to London in 1930: a 'grey' substance that 'eschew[s] pleasure', its role is restricted to filling the stomach.[386] The scene here, similarly, overwhelms Margaret's vision without giving her a distinctive idea of the place or its significance. Simmel explains that

> the essence of the blasé attitude is an indifference toward the distinction between things. Not in the sense they are not perceived, as is the case of mental dullness, but rather that the meaning and the value of the distinctions between things, and therewith of the things themselves, are experienced as meaningless. They appear to the blasé person in a homogenous, flat, and gray colour with no one of them worthy of being preferred to another. [387]

Although Simmel refers in this passage to the modern mental attitude to life in the city, I link his view of the blasé attitude to that of beauty and aesthetics. The scenery that Margaret and Mr Wilcox view from the motorcar loses its sensual value when perceived from a distance, and thus loses its meaning to the observer as it eventually becomes one of the many scenes that people view in their everyday commute.

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[386] John Burnett, *England Eats Out: A Social History of Eating Out in England from 1830 to the Present* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. 207.
[387] Simmel, p 14.

Margaret's train trip to view Mr Wilcox's house in Ducie Street can give a better example that demonstrates how modern transport technology devalues place and human communication:

> [Margaret's] eyes had been troubling her lately, so that she could not read in the train, and it bored her to look at the landscape, which she had seen but yesterday. At Southampton, she "waved" to Frieda; Frieda was on her way to join them at Swanage, and Mrs Munt had calculated that their trains would cross. But Frieda was looking the other way. (167)

Being in a train or a motorcar and passing through regular routes and sceneries, one feels compelled to attend to activities inside the vehicle rather than outside. The landscape is constantly changing, but it appears the same to the human eye. Margaret tries to connect with her cousin through a wave which the narrator, by his use of quotation marks, suggests the encounter to be not a proper connection even if it is deemed an appropriate interaction. Despite her attempt to greet Frieda at the 'calculated' time, the encounter, to Margaret's disappointment, does not happen. Forster's attitude to technology does not fear its dangers of getting out of control, as Elkins suggests in his essay.[388] His concerns rather lie in the methods of perception and attentiveness that technology promotes. Distancing people from their surroundings physically and making them rely more on their already-unreliable sense of vision feed into Simmel's blasé attitude, which not only makes the constituents of everyday life appear homogenous and similar but also affects human relationships and detaches human appreciation of the beautiful from the everyday.

Kuno tries to justify to his mother why he feels the need to see her in person: 'I see something like you in this plate, but I do not see you. I hear something like you

[388] Elkins, p. 51.

through this telephone, but I do not hear you. That is why I want you to come' (110-111). Kuno sees and hears only something 'like' his mother on the round plate and to truly 'see' and 'hear' her, he needs physical proximity. While the huge physical space between Kuno and his mother may be lessened by technology, Forster demonstrates how human expressions cannot be fully transmitted via a machine. When Kuno leaves his mother by hanging up, his mother 'fancied that he looked sad. She could not be sure, for the Machine did not transmit nuances of expression. It only gave a general idea of people' (111). The plate, although different in function from the motorcar, is similar in the way it affects humans' perception. Just as Vashti's inability to see Kuno's detailed expressions means she cannot empathise with him so Margaret cannot distinguish nor connect with her environment. The church is pretty, but that is the only thing that could be said to describe it.

Motoring forces the human body to lose touch with the landscape, monuments, or things that one may want to be attentive to during sightseeing or excursions. For instance, when motoring blurs Margaret's vision, it does not mean that she loses her sight or cannot comprehend her surroundings, but because speed changes the appearance of things outside the human body, it becomes difficult to distinguish differences or appreciate them. Forster emphasises that seeing is not only associated with vision and the abstract but that it is an activity that involves using the body as a whole. Similarly, in 'The Machine Stops', the futuristic and developed environment reduces people's dependence on their bodies, especially touch, and privileges the role of vision for communication with virtual technologies. Losing sense of space, therefore, becomes the result of losing touch with the outside world through the different senses, making human-human and human-world relationships unclear and blurred.

Attentiveness appears to be of great concern to the texts which show how when concentration is distorted the effect of the spatial and social surroundings is reduced. In one of the drives with the Wilcoxes,

> the motor carried them deep into the hills. Curious these were, rather than impressive, for their outlines lacked beauty, and the pink fields – on their summits suggested the handkerchiefs of a giant spread out to dry. An occasional outcrop of rock, an occasional wood, an occasional "forest", treeless and brown, all hinted at wildness to follow, but the main colour was an agricultural green. (220-221)

Hills and fields do not leave any impression on the sightseers. The landscape may be grand, but it lacks a lasting sense of beauty. Rocks, woods, and forests are scattered rather than harmonious. They have no distinction and are neither given names nor details. Even the fields are only summarised by one colour. The whole landscape suggests regularity, uniformity, and the dullness of a tedious domestic chore. This lack of connectedness and familiarity between the motorists and passengers with the landscape is due to the difficulty of being attentive to its details. Attentiveness, the passage implies, requires being physically in touch.

The deprivation of physical interaction, the novel reveals, also causes a loss of compassion. This is depicted most clearly when the motorcar hits an animal.[389] What is significant is not the accident itself, but rather the fact that motorists and passengers are unconcerned about what they have hit. They had no idea whether it was a cat or a dog, and after the accident:

> the landscape resumed its motion, the lonely cottage disappeared, the castle swelled on its cushion of turf, and they had arrived. […] But [Margaret] felt

[389] See Chapter Two p. 86.

> their whole journey from London had been unreal. They had no part with the earth and its emotions. (223)

The novel continues to convey a sense of monotony in the landscape perceived. The journey for Margaret is dreamlike, not because it is disembodied, but because the enforced distances between her body and the landscape distort her attentiveness to things she believes are important. The whole trip is defined by a lack of empathy between those in the motorcar and the entities that make up the landscape. Because of her blurred vision, Margaret cannot distinguish buildings, trees or animals whilst being in a motorcar. The conclusion the scene pushes its readers towards is that when things lack distinction, they become difficult to relate and connect with.

The relationship between apathy and motoring can also be observed in Forster's *Maurice.* Although the side-car does provide the two new lovers, Maurice and Clive, the freedom to express themselves despite the social disapproval of homosexuality, this freedom is only achieved because they become uninterested in such restrictions. In their drive,

> [t]hey swirled across the bridge and into the Ely road. Maurice said, "Now we'll go to Hell." The machine was powerful, he reckless naturally. […] They cared for no one, they were outside humanity, […] "Right turn," again, then "left," "right," until all sense of direction was gone. There was a rip, a grate. Maurice took no notice. (64)

The feelings that Maurice and Clive develop through motoring are those of indifference to the external world that, for them, is a positive filtering of societal prejudices. The power of the machine and its speed reinforce their feelings of superiority and disconnection from the world. The vehicle becomes an extension to their changed attention from the external towards the internal where their bodies lose all sense of

coordination with the landscape around them. In the same way, 'The Machine Stops' shows how the virtual representations of Kuno on the plate are like those perceived by Margaret, Maurice and Clive in their drives. The perceptions that the motorcar mediates and the pictures that modern communicative devices convey are indistinctive and only give a general idea of how things look.

Regaining self-determination, bodily sensations, and the ability to recognise differences is what makes both Kuno and Margaret recapture the sense of space. Kuno refers to his attempt to regain the sense of space in the Machine. At the beginning, he tells his mother that by losing sense of space, '[w]e have lost a part of ourselves. I determined to recover it, and I began by walking up and down the platform of the railway outside my room. Up and down, until I was tired' (125). Kuno attempts to restore a sense of space through walking and giving his body more agency. He keeps walking until he could feel tiredness and fatigue, developing muscles for further travels. Kuno is not satisfied in being inside the machine all the time. He explains how '[a]ll the platforms were exactly alike, and all that I gained by visiting them was to develop my sense of space and my muscles' (125). Through constant movement, Kuno develops his sense of space by relying more on his body to understand distances. He also becomes able to

> recapture the meaning of "Near" and "Far". "Near" is a place to which I can get quickly on my feet, not a place to which the train or the air-ship will take me quickly. "Far" is a place to which I cannot get quickly on my feet; the vomitory is "far", though I could be there in thirty-eight seconds by summoning the train. (125)

By using his body as a 'measure', Kuno can now sense the differences in proximity between places (125). By not depending on trains and airships, the whole space of the

Machine changes for him and he can now perceive it differently due to his increasing dependence on his body. Kuno, nonetheless, is only able to improve his sense of space, not regain it. It is not until he reaches the surface of the earth and experiences new sensations that he develops a strong intimate experience that is conveyed as a full sense of space.

Kuno's description of his experience on the surface of the earth is very bodily-oriented, for '[b]lood poured' from his nose and ears. Breathing the natural air also hurts him as he explains to his mother how it 'was still too bitter' for him (130). Despite the intensity of his sensory experience of the world outside the Machine, Kuno expresses a sense of joy and happiness. He explains: 'I cannot describe it. I was lying with my face to the sunshine. […] the peace, the nonchalance, the sense of space, and, brushing my cheek, the roaring fountain of our artificial air!' (129). His descriptions burst with disparate sensations and it becomes obvious what the sense of space means to him. Kuno strives not only to have bodily agency, but also to interact with the natural environment and to let his body be affected by its different and unanticipated elements which remind him of the presence of another important side of his humanity, that is his body.

Kuno's focus on air demonstrates his attention to his sensory apparatus, especially that of touch and sound, because air is a substance that cannot be seen but only felt. Ingold notes the neglect of the study of air in the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology and material culture studies. He explains that 'no-one has given a thought to the air. The reason for this omission, I believe, is simply that within the terms of accepted discourse, air is unthinkable. It cannot be thought because it is a contradiction in terms'. [390] Because of its qualities air becomes forced to escape 'the bounds of

[390] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p. 69.

materiality'.[391] Ingold highlights the role of air in human perception, but he suggests that: 'air, after all, is not a person or a thing, or indeed an entity of any kind' but rather 'a *medium* which, as Gibson pointed out, affords locomotion, respiration and perception'.[392] Ingold's understanding of air as a medium in which the living world grows and prospers gives it significance in human perception and sensory development. Forster's depiction of air in 'The Machine Stops', turns this entity that functions as a medium in Ingold's world into an active substance that has a strong sensory impact on the human body and perception, especially when that body has been deprived of its undiluted form for a long time. The air's depiction in this scene is exaggerated for it moves beyond its gaseous substance and appears instead as an entity that is liquefied and vigorous, which not only helps it force itself out of the ventilation shafts like a fountain, but also gives its release a thunderous sound. The new air that exists outside the Machine is also described as 'bitter', emphasising its distinctive feature with a sharp taste or smell that is different from the neutral air Kuno is used to (131). His experience of the unpleasant air which also 'hurts' reveals how intense sensory experiences can be vehicles of beauty and knowledge (131).

From the outset, the story shows Kuno's striving for human agency in the deterministic world of the Machine. However, the story later demonstrates how having a 'sense of space' means having a physical connection with a place which facilitates connection with other humans. An important part of being human is having the ability to experience distinctive and unique sensations, albeit unpleasant, that remind people of the beauty of embodied experiences and an important part of their identity and humanity.

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[391] Ibid, p. 69.
[392] Ibid, p. 70.

The same happens with Margaret who regains a sense of space as soon as she leaves the motorcar. This does not suggest that having a sense of space is a feeling that results from being static, for Margaret only regains her stability when she walks and is in contact with her material surroundings. Forster explicitly demonstrates that it is only when Margaret is '[p]enned in by the desolate weather, that she recaptured the sense of space which the motor had tried to rob from her' (210). A sense of space for Margaret is not only that of being immersed in the world but also being able to sense the outside world through her body. Being back on her feet and having self-determination over her bodily movement, she regains the sense of space after being driven in the motor by one of the Wilcoxes. Even at Wickham Place, she 'forgot the luggage and the motor-cars, and the hurrying men who know so much and connect so little. She recaptured the sense of space, which is the basis for all earthly beauty' (213). Having a sense of space is a source of stability to Margaret, but not necessarily spatial stability. Regaining autonomy and the ability to connect both physically and emotionally with people is what develops in her the sense of space she was forced to lose with the Wilcoxes.

The two texts show how, for Forster, attentiveness can be a key foundation of aesthetic appreciation and human connection. Having a sense of space in 'The Machine Stops' and *Howards End* partially means the ability to be observant of differences. The modern world in the two novels is depicted as one that wipes out differences in the favour of creating balance and practicality. The development of technology is not in itself portrayed as negative, but the novels show that such development comes hand in hand with a change in aesthetic standards.[393] Forster associates aesthetics and beauty with attentiveness and subjective experiences that cannot be restricted to certain people

[393] Medalie observes in *Howards End* a 'knotty relationship between politics, morality and aesthetics', p. 6.

more than others. The over-dependence on vision to make aesthetic judgements risks the chance of overlooking other important perceptions. Beauty, for Forster, is relational and is bound to context, for it cannot exist in isolation outside of human embodied experience.[394] The emphasis on autonomous and subjective experiences as the foundation of beauty and pleasure is what intertwines the instantaneousness of nature with the self-directedness of culture. By referring to the characters' sense of space and depicting their relationship with their surroundings, Forster questions the nature-culture division and explains how people's physical relationship with the natural world has significant impact on human perception of beauty.

The texts problematise the relationship between beauty and attentiveness to details. Through depicting the landscape as seen from the motorcar, Forster demonstrates the human ability to see, from a distance, vast areas in a short period of time. The eye may register different places through watching them from the window of a motor-car or a train. Nonetheless, as shown in the previous sections, not being able to attend to the details of the landscape renders them less impressive and affective, especially if that particular landscape needs attentiveness. Forster explains the reasons that might have made Margaret's motoring trip unsuccessful: 'it was not an impressive drive. Perhaps the weather was to blame, being grey and banked high with weary clouds. Perhaps Hertfordshire is scarcely intended for motorists' (206). Therefore, the weather would have obstructed Margaret from attending to the view, or it could have been the landscape itself that needed a special concentration to be enjoyed. The reason why some places are not seen as remarkable is because they are seen from a distance,

[394] See Medalie, *E. M. Forster's Modernism*, where he discusses Forster's ideas about form and aesthetics in fiction, p. 112. Medalie's discussion can also be read in the light of Danius's suggestion that modernist texts insist on aesthetic autonomy, p. 2.

where people cannot reassure their vision by feeling, touching or perceiving them through their bodies.

When Margaret regains her sense of space, she 'remembered again that ten square miles are not ten times as wonderful as one square mile, that a thousand square miles are not practically the same as heaven' (209). These lines that Margaret recollects were told to her father by a friend who explains that '[i]t is the vice of a vulgar mind to be thrilled by bigness, […] That is not imagination. No, it kills it.' (28). Bigness conveys the form of the landscape and emphasises the feeling of control and knowledge. However, it cannot increase the sense of beauty that Forster deems dependent on subjective experiences in which the nonhuman entities of the landscape can impress human bodies and imagination. When Margaret enjoys the materiality of the weather through her body, Mr Wilcox, who is often seen as a practical man, is more interested in the 'use and dimensions of the various rooms' in the house, and in the 'history of the little estate' (213). The size and history of the place are practical information that convey the form of the entity studied, but the novel suggests that beauty is not quantitative, but qualitative. It can only be noticed through a slowness which facilitates human attentiveness and when bodily touch can reassure the sense of vision through its physical interaction with the world.

Distancing people from the sensory quality of their experiences and restricting their engagement with the outside world only to the sense of vision emphasise form over content. The building Mr Wilcox sees from the motor car is merely a 'pretty' church, the entity their car hits is an unidentified animal, and the landscape they pass through is made up from 'occasional' woods and forests which lack distinction. Even though Kuno's image on the screen assures his mother of his presence, she fails at discerning his emotions. Despite it being 'good enough for all practical purposes' (111),

as Vashti suggests, the texts show how technology's encouragement of distanced relations changes the standards of aesthetic appreciation and human communication. The texts reveal that technology's danger lies in promoting self-centred individuals whose lack of physical connectedness with the world develops their apathy and carelessness.

As my discussion throughout this and the other chapters of this thesis have shown, Forster's depiction of aesthetics in his fiction may be considered as humanist for its emphasis on subjective and less deterministic interactions with objects of appreciation. Therefore, the question about the role of the senses in aesthetic appreciation or contemplation is vital because the dependence on the sense of vision allows objects to be placed at a distance from humans. The reliance on vision, the novels reveal, is inadequate not only because it undermines the role of other equally important senses but also because it is unreliable. The unreliability of vision is manifested in the failure of modern transport and communication technologies to convey distinct material textures and human emotions.

It would be a reductionist reading to think of the depiction of technology in Forster's texts simply as evidence of his negative attitude towards modernity. Forster's texts complicate the relationship between the human senses, perception and aesthetics. They also link aesthetics and human experiences of the world with interpersonal relationships. It is true that the human factor is important in the different encounters studied in this chapter and this thesis as a whole, but my belief is that it does not mean that the texts reduce the role of the nonhuman by attending to human values. The texts' criticism of technology, motoring, and culturally mediated experiences show how by decreasing the reliance on the human body, people are compelled to avoid the noticeable sensory effects of the nonhuman or material elements of the world. With this

in mind, the texts' extensive interest in the natural environment becomes revealing. The sensory experiences that nature offers demonstrate its role in shaping human bodies, identities, values and relationships. It becomes clear that the problems exhibited by Forster's texts are framed by his awareness of the deterministic values of natural and built environments, and how they relate to human autonomy and freedom. My discussion throughout the thesis has demonstrated how Forster's fears of the excessive dependence on the mind and disregarding the role of the body reveal his scepticism of human-centred approaches to life, social relations, politics and knowledge. Ignoring the body involves overlooking a profound part of humanity that fundamentally contributes to human experience and values.

Conclusion

The question of what it means to be human and the importance of interpersonal relationships in Forster's writings are entangled with the changed embodied human experiences that determine people's relationships to the world around them. The first chapter of this thesis has shown that Forster's texts do not just associate modernity with newness and breaking away from tradition. To Forster, modernity stirs and brings into light what has already existed but has been overlooked. Modernity is equally depicted as a condition that incorporates unknown aspects of the material environment and human behaviour to within everyday life, and as accountable for the changed relations between humans and nonhumans of which Forster appears critical. In his essay 'Notes on the English Character', Forster harshly criticises the English character:

> No national character is complete. We have to look for some qualities in one part of the world and others in another. But the English character is incomplete in a way that is particularly annoying to the foreign observer. It has a bad surface – self-complacent, unsympathetic, and reserved. There is plenty of emotion further down, but it never gets used.[395]

I propose that Forster's fiction provides excellent evidence that this quote has more to reveal than just his critical opinion of the English national character. Forster's concern is with ordinary human attributes that he attempts to reconcile by coalescing people who hold different values and beliefs from each other. These traits of indifference and coldness that Forster complains about in his essay are relentlessly associated with modernity in his fiction. His texts display a sustained relation between detached human

[395] Forster, 'Notes on the English Character', in *Abinger Harvest* (London: Penguin, 1974), pp. 13-25, (p. 25).

qualities and how the human bodies of their beholders respond to the environment. This relation, I propose, confirms the contribution of external factors to the formation of human identity in Forster's writings, especially their role in intellectual and emotional development.

I have sought to chart in this thesis a way through which Forster's liberal-humanist values can be revisited. Through attending to the meanings Forster derives from non-human matters, then exploring the material textures of rural English landscapes, suburbs, cities, and foreign environments, and eventually studying moving landscapes from the seat of trains and motorcars, I have demonstrated how interpersonal relationships, tolerance, prejudice and sympathy are values that are directly linked to Forster's attitude to modernity. The intricate links between mobility, perception and morality explain Forster's tentative relation to the modern world, which may liberate the human mind from conventions on the one hand, but which nonetheless limits the body from enjoying subjectivity and autonomy on the other.

In the study of landscape, idealist concepts arise, especially when they are understood through nostalgia, memory and historical change. Yet, such approaches dematerialise the meaning and effect of landscapes that Forster's texts deem essential. My thesis did not seek to revoke such readings but to demonstrate how, by analysing landscapes without ignoring their materialities, these meanings can be subverted. Places are active in everyday human encounters, and modernity, Forster's novels indicate, seeks to dematerialise these encounters. The nonhuman constituents of the characters' surrounding environments compose a large part of human identity in the texts studied in this thesis. This makes Forster's fiction generative and modern for its ability to anticipate itself, predicting his own ideas in his later non-fiction and foreseeing current debates about the nature of the human and non-human relations that this thesis has

sought to explore. Locating human identity and values in movement through landscape rather than static locales reveals a new way of studying Forster's texts. The portrayal of mobility calls for a revaluation of the significance of space his texts to the many ideas and criticisms that have been surrounding these texts for the past two decades, especially the study of Englishness that is intrinsically linked with place and rurality.

Through his meticulous depiction of people's interactions with the different geographical materialities, Forster's fictional works emphasise the significance of the quotidian dimension of human experience and identity. By narrating everydayness, the texts assert themselves as literary products that suit different times. They show the profoundness of the trivial, and thus offer alternative ways to understand change and improvement. Forster offers the possibility of improving human relations and understanding not by creating common experiences, but by embracing differences. *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View* and *A Passage to India* also exhibit cultural differences in the habitual and the material, suggesting that sympathy and tolerance do not just relate to the sociocultural and the religious aspects of life, but can be improved and developed through accepting new habits and sensations.

Perhaps it is important to note that *Howards End* is the text I use the most in my analysis in the different chapters. The reason why I privilege this novel is because it not only includes a wide array of different material landscapes but also highlights altered ways of encountering places and contemplates the significances of such interactions. Forster's attitude to modernity is also most visible in the characters' perceptions of their environments in *Howards End* and 'The Machine Stops'.

In the last decade, there has been a renewed attention to Forster, mainly through the fairly recent film adaptation of *A Room with a View* by Nicholas Renton (2007), the stage adaptation of 'The Machine Stops' by Neil Duffield (2016), and the new BBC

series adaptation of *Howards End* by Hettie Macdonald and Kenneth Lonergan (2017). Yet, despite being a source of inventive ideas that chime with current trends in critical theory, Forster's work remains critically understated to this day.[396] What Zadie Smith calls, the 'damning' accounts by Forster's critics has been a main reason for missing out the greatness in his works.[397] Perhaps the most famous accounts are by Trilling who claims that Forster 'is sometimes irritating in his refusal to be great', and Katherine Mansfield's private account which reveals how 'E. M. Forster never gets any further than warming the teapot. He's a rare fine hand at that. Feel this teapot. Is it not beautifully warm? Yes, but there ain't going to be no tea'.[398]

Writers and critics have mixed feelings about Forster's ponderings and speculations of different types of conflicts that determine the characters' everyday interactions during unsuccessful personal and cultural encounters. His dwellings in heated yet comic frictions that are left unresolved are why critics such as Trilling and Mansfield believe his work cannot achieve greatness. Attending to how human bodies sense, attend, reflect and react is what his texts dwell upon. Feeling the teapot, the texts show, can be as important as drinking the tea. It is being alert to the process that creates the dynamic threshold which his texts represent, and turns his works into a space of liminality and possibility. Forster's texts celebrate these moments of physical and emotional transition, and this is why his works can always offer new meanings. Because of their attention to the process of transition, Forster's texts represent human nature in

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[396] Zadie Smith and Julian Barns write about their appreciation of Forster's fiction. See Julian Barns, 'I Was Wrong about E. M. Forster' (2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/dec/02/julian-barnes-i-was-wrong-about-em-forster> [accessed: 17th June 2018], and Zadie Smith, 'Love, Actually' (2003) https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/nov/01/classics.zadiesmith [accessed: 17th June 2018].

[397] Smith, 'Love, Actually'.

[398] Trilling, p. 9. Katherine Mansfield, *The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks*. Complete Edition, ed. by Margaret Scott (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 2002), p. 93.

its everyday continuous change and flux, which like dust, ‘is never exactly the same, twice’.[399]

[399] Ysra Daley-Ward, *Bone* (London: Penguin, 2017), p. 49.

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