

Hellenism, Hebraism, and the Eugenics of Culture in E.M. Forster's *Howards End*

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**Abstract:** Seth Jacobowitz, in his paper "Hellenism, Hebraism, and the Eugenics of Culture in E.M. Forster's *Howards End*," explores how the culturalist principles of Hellenism and Hebraism theorized by Matthew Arnold as the basis of Englishness in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) were incorporated into the text of E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910) to show the close institutional and conceptual linkages Forster shared with Arnold. Further, Jacobowitz seeks to bring *Howards End* into dialog with Forster's only major work of science fiction, *The Machine Stops* (1928), to address their mutual themes of eugenics, the racialization of class difference, and concerns over the burgeoning advances in industrial technology that threatened to reshape both English identity and landscape. If *Howards End* is already deeply preoccupied with the encroachment of modernity upon the blood and soil rooted in the English countryside, *The Machine Stops* present an apocalyptic vision where these ties have been all but eradicated. Working back from this cautionary tale written between the wars, and supported by our knowledge of their genocidal outcome, the implications of the rural retreat and Arnoldian cultural schema in *Howards End* become all the more historically incisive.

## Seth JACOBOWITZ

### Hellenism, Hebraism, and the Eugenics of Culture in E.M. Forster's *Howards End*

"Only connect..." implores the epigraph of E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), and one may as well begin by considering two texts which represent the critical template and apocalyptic realization of its vision of the crisis in modern civilization. The epigraph itself, echoed repeatedly throughout the novel, gestures toward Matthew Arnold's theories of unifying the dichotomous elements of English identity, and his belief in culture as the perfection of humanity before machinery. Although Arnold's influence has long been recognized by critics, it has for the most part been considered in a selective register of liberalism which takes no account of either his or Forster's interpolation of the class struggle in national culture through the fraught categories of race and gender. As I argue hereafter, the spiritual principles and racial makeup of the English emphasized by Arnold directly inform the narratological structure of *Howards End*. We must also be attuned to the role of Englishness so defined in relation to the burgeoning advances in technologies of communication, transportation and mass destruction which were radically reshaping the political, as well as physical, landscape. If *Howards End* is already deeply preoccupied with the encroachment of modernity upon the blood and soil of the English countryside, Forster expresses his pessimism to its furthest limits in the dystopian future of *The Machine Stops* (1928), his only foray into the then-incipient genre of science fiction. Working back from this cautionary tale written between the wars, and supported by our knowledge of the genocidal outcome of those wars, the implications of the rural retreat in *Howards End* become all the more historically incisive. I cannot help but mention parenthetically one of the earliest and best known studies of Forster's liberalism, Lionel Trilling's 1943 monograph *E.M. Forster*, goes so far as to suggest the illegitimate child born at the close of the novel represents the future of a "classless" society. An apologist for the racial components in Arnold's views of culture and nation in his earlier work *Matthew Arnold* (1939), Trilling omits any reference to Arnold's racial thought in his study of Forster. Instead, he likens Forster to Arnold in his willingness to challenge the one-sidedness of liberalism, disclosing the frequent tendency of liberals to reduce exigent conditions to idealist formulas, then to feel betrayed when reality does not live up to their expectations. We might keep in mind this valuable insight of Trilling's as we proceed to re-evaluate Arnold and Forster's own involvement in racial discourse: "Surely if liberalism has a single desperate weakness, it is an inadequacy of imagination: liberalism is always being surprised ... Liberalism likes to suggest its affinity with science, pragmatism and the method of hypothesis, but in actual conduct it requires "ideals" and absolutes; it prefers to make its alliances only when it thinks it catches the scent of Utopia in parties and governments, the odor of sanctity in men; and if neither is actually present, liberalism makes sure to supply it" (*E.M. Forster* 12-13).

A respected establishment figure and outspoken cultural critic, Matthew Arnold was the most prominent member of an illustrious family of educators entrusted with the supervision of public schools and formulation of state policy in England from the mid- to late 19th century. He served as Inspector of Schools for thirty-five years, lecturing on culture and poetry at Oxford for ten of those years. Of greater immediacy for Forster, I believe, was that as a practicing poet, Arnold paid tribute to Romanticism in such a way that glorified humanity and landscape, but diminished neither the national sublime nor its classical/extranational roots. Forster's first two novels and a handful of short stories are set in the Mediterranean, where, as M.H. Abrams observes, "he tended to set Greek and Italian peasant life in symbolic contrast to the stuffy and repressed life of middle-class England. Both Greek mythology and Italian Renaissance art opened up to him a world of what Matthew Arnold called 'spontaneity of consciousness'" (*Norton Anthology of English Literature* 1976). As we shall see, however, that distinction lay at the heart of Arnold's theorization of race and culture, indeed, leaned toward the determinism of race as culture. Equally compelling for Forster was Arnold's willingness to criticize the narrowness of Victorian life, contrasting it to the heights of classical learning, which earned him surely Forster's admiration. Likewise, in his writings on liberal education and culture, if Arnold preferred to err on the side of developing human spirit,

he did not take lightly the role of the state; it should be remembered that *Culture and Anarchy* was not only a theoretical tract, but also a practical critique of party and church politics. In his own way, Forster, too, was as much an insider to the workings of the state as a critic of them; the two roles being far from mutually exclusive. I will have more to say about the Arnold family and Forster's institutional relation to them later on, further reminders that knowledge is always bound up with ideological alignment and complicity with regimes of power, not least of all in spheres of cultural production.

Older and more outwardly reserved than many of his flamboyant and modernist Bloomsbury colleagues, Forster remained committed to the ideal of representing social totality in a grand narrative. *Howards End* follows the trajectory of the temperamental Victorian novel, opening with an epistolary volley and proceeding through the rounds of births, deaths, marriages and dinner parties around which bourgeois life revolves. Yet Forster understood culture to be not only the underlying basis of society, but also its transformative possibility -- it was at the crossing of these two levels that he sought to effect change. Hence our tour guide: an omniscient, if fussy, narrator who steers through the pomp and circumstance of daily life, struggling to transcend the prosaic and express a replete, poetic unity of England: "the whole island, all at once, lying as a jewel in a silver sea, sailing as ship of souls, with the world's brave fleet accompanying her towards eternity" (127). But a reading of *Howards End* which excessively focuses upon its bourgeois realism -- poetic interludes aside -- will overlook its allegorical dimensions, the pure literalness waiting to be recovered from the surface of its writing. In this respect, Forster's appropriation of *Culture and Anarchy* is that of a cultural schema, a framework upon which to arrange signposts of his own choosing. I must emphasize here that it is not my intention to suggest a mechanistic reading of *Howards End* according to the terms of *Culture and Anarchy*, but simply to extrapolate the latter's principles of culturalism. There are in fact any number of divergences between the two texts which can be cited, most glaringly, Forster's condemnation of urban life and sanctification of the Home Counties as the "Holy of Holies" which are nowhere found in Arnold.

Published in 1869 and revised in 1875, *Culture and Anarchy* was thoroughly versed in the latest currents in nationalism and racial theory, continental as well as English. In keeping with the diversity of his own models, Arnold defined culture according to several loosely overlapping binary oppositions, their proper combination believed to reveal the "natural truth" of English identity. At the peak of this dialectical system are the overarching cultural principles of Hellenism and Hebraism, which he defines respectively as "the spontaneity of conscious" and "strictness of conscience" (132). To this he couples the linguistic divisions of Indo-European from Semitic sources, and elsewhere the physiognomic non-sequitur of Teuton and Celt races (Jews not having merited significant contribution to the national gene pool). As Frederic Faverty observes dryly in his *Matthew Arnold the Ethnologist*: "No word, perhaps, appears more frequently and loosely in his writings than race. The term is employed to denote now physiological differences among peoples, again spiritual and cultural ones" (10). This may in part be explained by the lack of a concept of the West, or Western civilization, for Arnold, which may leave contemporary readers at pains to locate a single underlying basis for Englishness. Although the presumed stability of the West is often insufficiently theorized, in its absence Englishness vacillates all the more explicitly from spiritual essences to linguistic trees, and again to anthropological taxonomies. It is worth quoting Arnold at length to get a sense of the referential fluidity -- or less charitably, the sloppy thinking -- by which one set of binaries elides into the next: "Science has now made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people. Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism. But nothing more strongly marks the essential unity of man than the affinities ... between members of one family of peoples and members of another, and no affinity is more strongly marked than that likeness in the strength and prominence of the moral fibre, which, notwithstanding immense elements of difference, knits in some special sort the genius and history of us English, and our American descendants across the Atlantic, to the genius and history of the Hebrew people" (141-42).

*Culture and Anarchy* was only one stage in what amounted for Arnold to a lifelong theory-in-progress. The reconciliation of Teutonic, Jewish and Celtic would not be adequately explained in print until *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (published in 1895), in which Arnold politely expresses his distaste for the anti-Semitic and anti-Celtic thought of his father, Thomas Arnold, the former headmaster of Rugby and Inspector of Schools before him. Still, he proceeds, like his father, from a mutual presupposition that the Teutonic forms the dominant element with which all other racial stock must be reconciled. The Celtic problem is nominally solved by its common Indo-European linguistic origins with the Teutons, offered in a close reformulation of the quote given above. Summarizing the still-recent development of racial science, Arnold explains: "The pregnant and striking ideas of the ethnologists about the true natural groupings of the human race... was slowly acquiring consistency and popularizing itself" (15). But on the other, he undermines his otherwise frequent expressions of Hebraic affinity with the Jews -- "the Jew of ancient times, at least" (15) -- by claiming, "The modern spirit tends more and more to establish a sense of native diversity between our European bent and the Semitic bent ... this tendency appeals to science, the science of origins; it appeals to this science as teaching us which way our natural affinities and repulsions lie" (16). As this rhetorical gesture demonstrates, the term anti-Semitism is already implicated in a racial model of origins, ceding to an anti-Jewish position the categorical truth that Jews are a Semitic, rather than European people. This definition of English identity is further complicated by Arnold's tongue-in-cheek caricature of the upper, middle and lower classes as Barbarians, Philistines, and Population. While each class has its own peculiar tastes and spokesmen, just as the Enlightenment universal of humanism brought a touch of Hebraism to Hellenic peoples, it also guarantees that the seeds of perfection are inherent to all. It would seem that this tripartite model was intended more as a pointed satire of the social machinery and ideological differences which kept contemporaneous class-consciousness alive than as a strictly serious view of race relationships. Nevertheless, it leads Robert Young, not without cause, to view the cumulative effect and assert in *Colonial Desire* that Arnold "neatly relocates and displaces the class conflict ... into the struggles of racial history" (60). But I believe Young is mistaken when he claims that Arnold dismisses the Population out of hand as having no culture. It is rather the reconciliation of all three in the humanity that is their Englishness which is Arnold's principal desire, a goal which he felt could be best accomplished through the intercession of the state.

For Arnold, an excess of Hebraism which entered English society through Puritanism was responsible for the harmful proliferation of a social machinery which may have made the nation strong, but neglected the spiritual growth of its people. In this respect, he anticipates the governing conceit, if not precisely the tenor, of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (published 1905). Weber repeatedly subsumes the interrelated categories of class and race into overarching religious, rather than cultural, principles. In Weber's Hebraism, however, the Jew is familiarly marked as a financial parasite preying upon honest, hardworking Christians, and can therefore be pared away from the world-historical advance of Protestant modernity: "The Jew stood on the side of the politically and speculatively oriented adventurous capitalism; their ethos was, in a word, that of pariah-capitalism. But Puritanism carried the ethos of the rational organization of capital and labour. It took over from the Jewish ethic only what was adapted to this purpose" (165-66). Yet, when he is finished praising *his* chosen people's diligence until present, Weber, too, expresses acute concern for the future. One need only substitute his catchphrase of the "iron cage" for Arnold or Forster's "machinery" for the comparison to be complete: "Material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history. To-day the spirit of religious asceticism -- whether finally, who knows? - has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer (181-82). In the final analysis, however, Arnold is not nearly so pessimistic as Weber or Forster. To use a suitably mixed metaphor, where Weber sees Protestant asceticism as the alpha and omega of modern civilization, Arnold leaves open the possibility for a Hellenic revival. Yet his appreciation for the "sweetness and light" of Greek antiquity is derived from a considerably more modern source: the satiric, anthropomorphized battle over classical and modern learning in Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1704). Against the backdrop of Ancient and Modern

authors fancifully rising from the pages of their books to disembowel one another on the floor of the King's Library, a bee and spider have a heated exchange in the upper rafters. The bee, who also represents "sweetness and light" of Classicism, gets the better of his arachnid adversary. But in the body of the text, Swift likens the use of ink, "the great missive weapon in all battles of the learned" (400), to the filthy webs and venom of the spider. Implicitly calling attention to his own critical stance, Swift therefore recognizes the circularity (or hypocrisy) of using modern techniques, as opposed to sweetness and light alone, to disavow the modern. If this paradox is lost on Arnold, we may at least qualify that it is a literary model -- of Irish-English background, no less -- which serves for Arnold, as for Forster, as the basis of social transformation. As Robert Young succinctly puts it, "Arnold, like so many others in the literary tradition since, shared their desire to move from literature and aesthetics per se to something beyond them, to a larger function in that world that is represented by literary texts" (55).

Returning to the matter of institutional connections, I cannot avoid particularizing my own situation with respect to Arnold when he states in *Culture and Anarchy* that "the university of Mr. Ezra Cornell, a really noble monument to his munificence, yet seems to rest on a misconception of what culture truly is, and to be calculated to produce miners, or engineers, or architects, not sweetness and light" (22). For those who aspire to an archaeology of knowledge, this comes off as a favorable comparison; an unintended bit of flattery borne out by ongoing methodological changes in academia. But in any case, situated slightly downhill from that edifice in Ithaca, I will briefly take up the shovel of the former profession (albeit not nearly as assiduously as Lytton Strachey digging for dirt on Thomas Arnold in his 1918 biography in *Eminent Victorians*) to excavate some of the material operations concealed by this cultural chauvinism, specifically as they relate to Forster and the social machinery at the disposal of the Arnold family. It would require an exceedingly narrow interpretation of culture to say that Forster's debt to Arnold was purely "sweetness and light." From his third novel, *A Room With a View* (1908) onward, all of Forster's works were edited and published by Arnold's nephew, Edward Arnold. Like his uncle, father and grandfather before him, who were intimately involved in policy-making for the public school system, Edward Arnold contributed to national education as a publisher of school textbooks, beginning with the establishment of his company, Edward Arnold, in 1890. The educational reform of the previous two generations had substantially contributed to the expansion of the reading public and publishing industry, which in turn permitted the commercial viability of literature such as *Howards End*: "The reading public had grown considerably during the previous three decades [1830-1860s] owing to the dramatic increase of the commercial classes; furthermore the 1870 Elementary Education Act not only provided a larger market for school books but also a new instrument for increasing literacy generally. Some idea of this growth can be seen from one simple statistic: in 1850 about 2600 new books were published, in 1900 there were about 6000" (*Edward Arnold* 8).

Although all literary works can be made to reflect the material conditions of their production as well as their positionality within a continuum of other texts, we see here particularly well the intimate connections fostered between state power and liberal knowledge. With respect to much of Forster's work published in his lifetime, Edward Arnold, the man and the company, became the third generation nexus for officially sanctioned culture and its presumptive critique. While it is impossible to assess Edward's ultimate editorial impact upon the expression of his uncle's thought in *Howards End*, we can at least provisionally identify the worldview by which he, too, sought the cultural perfection of man -- exercised in his capacity as editor, and when demand called for it, as censor. In their monograph commemorating a century of publishing at the company, Bryan Bennett and Anthony Hamilton identify a memorable instance of the latter: Edward Arnold's personal refusal to carry Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in *Murray's Magazine* on moral grounds. As Edward Arnold explained in a rejection letter to Hardy, "When I had the pleasure of seeing you some time ago, I told you my views about publishing stories where the plot involves frequent and detailed reference to immoral situations: I know well enough that these tragedies are being played out every day in our midst, but I believe the less publicity they have the better, and it is quite possible and very desirable to grow up and pass through life without knowledge of them.

I know your views are different, and I honour your motives" (*Edward Arnold* 6). So much for challenging narrow Victorian mores. In regard to Helen and Leonard's premarital affair in *Howards End*, Bennett and Hamilton report: "the Helen seduction scene, which worried Arnold, was left in, as Forster felt it was intrinsic to the plot" (37). "Left in" is certainly a curious description of a sex scene which does not actually take place, at least not in the narrative frame. On the other hand, the narratologically immaculate conception of the illegitimate child which ensues from their union seems to have brooked no complaint from Arnold.

With the blueprint of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* laid out before us, we can now trace the narrative structure of *Howards End*, its symbolic relationships and deployment of a racialized vocabulary of class conflict. Hellenism and Hebraism correspond to the two families around whom the story primarily unfolds, the Schlegels and Wilcoxes. The threefold division of Barbarians, Philistines and Population expands this binary with additional nuances, allowing as well for the inclusion of the lower class representative Leonard Bast, wife Jacky in tow. The personalities of these characters, reinforced by the literality of their names, attest to Forster's use of an Arnoldian schema. The sense of impending national crisis and technophobia sparked by the degeneration of folk and folkways in turn leads us to the discourse of eugenics, which had come to the fore of cultural politics by the 1910s. Combining Arnold's ideals of national unity with the *deus ex machina* of an eugenic solution, Forster seeks to prolong the inevitable demise of England and civilization as he knew it; a matter to be taken up again from the futuristic angle of *The Machine Stops*. The Schlegels, with their artistic sensibility and emotional depth, speak to the spontaneity of conscious of Hellenism, Helen's name a dead ringer for this provenance. Although the Schlegels suit the financial parameters of Arnold's Philistines, standing atop their small islands of renewable interest-based income, the similarities end there. The Wilcoxes, on the other hand, display the narrowness of scope and severity of conscience of Hebraism, yet also fit the bill of rapacious Barbarians. This doubling is made possible by the emphasis upon their business acumen, a quality closely associated with European Jewry, yet indispensable to the championing of a Protestant-led capitalism. As we have seen, Weber was obliged to disqualify Jewish finance and entrepreneurship as an historical "pariah-capitalism," falling outside the dialectical mainstream of the Protestant ethic. Jews are conspicuously absent in *Howards End* (another violence of exclusion), and the models for the Wilcoxes are instead heroic Americans, Theodore Roosevelt and J.P. Morgan. The name Wilcox attempts to do justice to English imperialism, combining the meaning of willpower, or the future tense of "to do," with cox, a shortened form of coxswain: one who steers a boat. Etymologically, the Wilcoxes are the ones with "their hands on all the ropes," though they may lack the vision to see where their helmsmanship shall lead.

The subject of the interracial hybridity of the English, particularly with respect to German origins, bears a long lineage in English literature. For instance, the eponymous hero of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, his father a "Foreigner of Bremen," derives his name from a corruption of the German *Kreuznauer*. Resonant with the word for the cross, *Kreuz* (cross), it takes on the dualistic associations of racial crossing and the imperial mission of "carrying the cross" to foreign lands. Kurtz from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is another prominent figure whose mixed European origins are carried over to colonial space, although hardly with Crusoe's spiritually or materially profitable results. In *Howards End*, Forster borrows Margaret and Helen's patronymic from the Romantic philosopher Friedrich Schlegel, whose early thought becomes the (unelaborated) touchstone for their beliefs. The narrative elevates his value for personal relationships and love to such heights that they just might overcome world-historical problems such as the fate of Empire. Recalling Margaret and Helen's deceased father as much as a "fathering principle" as an actual person (instanciating what Lacan might call the *nom du pere*), the narrator explains: "Their father had belonged to a type that was more prominent in Germany fifty years ago than now. He was not the aggressive German, so dear to the English journalist, nor the domestic German, so dear to the English wit. If one classed him at all it would be as the countryman of Hegel and Kant, as the idealist, inclined to be dreamy, whose Imperialism was the Imperialism of the air" (22-23). Margaret, Helen and their effeminate brother, Tibby (who somewhat disdainfully studies an Oriental language, Chinese, among his studies at Oxford), are identified with the feminine

characteristics of intellectualism, in contrast to the physical masculinity of the Wilcoxes. This mapping of gender difference prompts one of the few explicit statements of evolutionary science into the narrative, belying the usual circumspection with which Forster handles matters of race. In a friendly debate over women's suffrage, Margaret counters Ruth Wilcox's desire to be kept out of such worldly matters, asking: "Whether women are to remain what they have been since the dawn of history; or whether, since men have moved forward so far, they too may move forward a little now. I say they may. I would even admit a biological change" (58). Significantly, Margaret's queries are preceded by her praise of progressive thought on the Continent, especially in Germany. With a distinct echo of Arnold, she remarks, "There is more liberty of action here in England, but for liberty of thought go to bureaucratic Prussia" (58).

Weber, too, makes a similar comparison of Germans and English, who despite belonging to closely related strains of Protestantism, are found to differ in the character of their "naturalness." Taken out of context, we might understand this to indicate nothing more than a sense of comfortableness with oneself, the presence or absence of affectation. But in its original usage, it is not so innocent, amounting to a racialization of class, or what we might call the displacement of class differences onto racial differences: "The typical German quality often called good nature (*Gemütlichkeit*) or naturalness contrasts strongly, even in the facial expressions of the people, with the effects of that thorough destruction of the *status naturalis* in the Anglo-American atmosphere, which Germans are accustomed to judge unfavorably as narrowness, unfreeness, and inner constraint" (127). In the works of Arnold, Weber, and Forster, who were by no means exceptional for their era, we see scientific racism mix with theories of culture and the casual observations still permitted of travel writing. It becomes increasingly apparent that in principle differences between the so-called liberal tradition and fascist ideology, however substantial, are a matter of degree rather than kind. Weber's disavowal of Jews from the dialectical mainstream of Protestant rationality and progress, Arnold's distancing of English culture from Semitism and Forster's leaving actual Jews out of the picture altogether cannot help but rest uncomfortably with postwar disavowals of racial thinking, to say nothing of the far more difficult question of tacit or unintended complicity. We can see a strikingly similar perpetuation of the divisions between German Romantic spirit and English commercialism offered by Arnold, Weber and Forster in a rising Austrian politician's speech on imperialism to an association of industrialists on 27 February 1932: "When Germany, for instance, began to found colonies, this guiding principle, the cold factual British principle for the formation of colonies, had already become partially obscured by more or less romantic ideas; we wanted to transmit German culture to the world, to spread German civilization?questions which never entered the heads of the British during the colonial period" (Maser 156). The author, Adolf Hitler, prefaces these remarks with a candid declaration that European imperialism was in no uncertain terms based upon European racial superiority, which in turn permitted the free exercise of military might. The expansion of national territory that was so essential for Britain's ascendance, he stresses, is no less important for Germany to become an imperial power. In Germany's past, however, too much emphasis on spirit and not enough pragmatism led to the failure of its colonial ambitions. In a curious reversal of Forster's strategy, Hitler is here wooing German Wilcoxes -- the industrialists -- to wed their nation's "Imperialism of the air" to what would later become a call for *Lebensraum*, an Imperialism of the land.

In *Howards End* we are given to understand cultural production according to two related, but distinct, registers: as mechanical apparatuses of imperial modernity; and as the essence of the arts and literature. On the one hand, this extends the Wilcox-Schlegel divide, but it also pursues at a deeper narrative level Arnold's denouncement of formal organizations and materialism for hindering the creative wellsprings of culture. While the latter use of culture for the most part recurs as a reminder of the inner potential of the Schlegels, and perhaps as that which eugenically redeems what lies within Leonard Bast, in the former sense it highlights the ways in which communication and transportation networks materially transcend personal relationships to encircle the nation and globe. This is indicated from the outset by Helen's abortive romance with Paul Wilcox. Helen's letters, delivered daily by post, send Mrs. Munt scurrying off to rescue her niece, lest she become involved with the wrong sort of man, i.e., one of a lower class background. But



only moments after Mrs. Munt departs, a telegram arrives, defusing the need for her intervention. Still the farce of miscommunication continues, first with a railway trip, then by a wild drive in an automobile. Together these technologies form an assembly which the narrator critiques as the imminent crisis to the age-old landscape and the inhabitants who have occupied it in perpetuity. Forster's vision of England is, of course, selective to the point of cliché. It is the portrait framed in the cinematic spectacles of Merchant-Ivory period films (they've "remastered" four of his novels), magazines of the *House & Garden* variety, and so on. Forster calls forth the idyllic southern landscape of gently rolling farmland and stately manors from whose vantage point, as George Orwell wryly phrases it in *Homage to Catalonia*, "The industrial towns were far away, a smudge of smoke and misery hidden by the curve of the earth's surface" (231). It is the artifice of nature in this picture-postcard view, liberally sprinkled with man-made monuments stretching back to ancient times, which Forster would have us believe is the one, true England. Issuing a seductive pitch for such a unifying myth, the narrator insists that modern technology disrupts traditional life, presenting an insurmountable obstacle to the restoration future of the glorious past. If only one could overcome modernity so easily. His attempts to resolve the racialized class conflict grounded in both the blood and soil of the nation, the narrator surveys the dislocation of persons from property, and blames the spiritually regressive effects of modernity, a deficiency in *techne*, upon increased mobility: "The feudal ownership of land did bring dignity, whereas the modern ownership of movables is reducing us again to a nomadic horde. We are reverting to a civilization of luggage, and historians of the future will note how the middle class accreted possessions without taking root in the earth, and may find in this the secret of their imaginative poverty" (109).

The intrusion of the automobile into the countryside adds to this menace, the epitome of the destructive force of the imperialist even on home turf. It is demonstrated by Charles Wilcox's drive through the country with Mrs. Munt, the car leaving a sinister dust cloud in its wake: "It was settling again, but not all into the road from which he had taken it. Some of it had percolated through the open windows, some had whitened the roses and gooseberries of the wayside gardens, while a certain proportion had entered the lungs of the villagers" (15). This environmental damage also finds a parallel in the perceptual distortions experienced by those who ride in it. Not only does the car as a symbol of unfettered movement physically alter the landscape and its people for the worse, it also prevents one from calmly meditating upon it. The merits of a new perception and a new culture of the machine such as that celebrated by Italian Futurism are nowhere to be found: to the Romantic idealist, motion sickness is the sole result. With Margaret en route to the house at *Howards End*, the narrator observes: "She looked at the scenery. It heaved and merged like porridge. Presently it congealed. They had arrived" (142). The loss of rootedness to the land in *Howards End* finds its extreme in *The Machine Stops*, where the erasure of cultural difference into global homogeneity is the order of the day, as is the thorough despoilment of nature and degradation of the human form. In homage to H.G. Wells' *Time Machine*, the earth is a wasteland and humans live below the surface, only rarely donning respirators to walk upon its surface. Over-reliance upon prosthetic devices and automated dwelling-places has left humanity soft and weak, though they are capable of communicating across great distances via televisual screens and traveling anywhere in the world in air-ships. Still, Few traveled these days, for, thanks to the advance of science, the earth was exactly alike all over. Rapid intercourse, from which the previous civilization had hoped so much, had ended by defeating itself. What was the good of going to Pekin [sic] when it was just like Shrewsbury? Why return to Shrewsbury when it would be just like Pekin? Men seldom moved their bodies; all unrest was concentrated in the soul (94).

With humanity metaphorically reduced to the limpid blood which circulated to keep alive the all-powerful Machine -- a mechanized prototype of today's society of the spectacle -- Forster revises the conflict between technology and spirit here into the battle between natural man against machine. Thus the hero, Kuno, embarks down the road of freedom when he rejects a decadent existence in the subterranean tunnels of the machine for the bracing reality on the surface. But natural man is still determined by an ethnic, or national, essence, for at this juncture, Forster introduces the mythic vision of an Anglo-Saxon king wresting his country from the Danes. Less dramatic than Aelfrid, Kuno nevertheless struggles to regain a more immediate relation between

blood and soil in his defiance of the Machine. When it climactically collapses from within at the conclusion of the story, he surveys the piteous state of his fellow man and sanctimoniously declares: "Humanity has learnt its lesson" (118). The Romantic ideal which binds the return to the land in *Howards End* is that of homeliness: a familial, as well as familiar, sense of belonging which cannot be found in experiences of rapid movement, nor in the relocations of living space (houses not yet become homes), nor again in any expansion of national territory for its own sake. Margaret's discovery of these insights are made within the confines of *Howards End*, and although her thoughts range in time and space to world-historical proportions, she eventually comes back to awareness of the compass her own movements, registered as the vigorous heartbeat which brings life to the house: "Pinned in by the desolate weather, she recaptured the sense of space which the motor had tried to rob from her. She remembered again that ten square miles are not as wonderful as one square mile, that a thousand square miles are not practically the same as heaven ... Now she thought of the map of Africa; of empires; of her father; of the two supreme nations, streams whose life warmed her blood, but, mingling, had cooled her brain. She paced back into the hall, and as she did so the house reverberated" (145). In the next moment, Margaret is surprised by Miss Avery, who claims to have mistaken her for Ruth Wilcox. It is tantamount to an objective confirmation of what we already knew: Margaret is spiritually wed to Ruth just as she is legally and conjugally wed to Henry. Or at least legally. Her marriage to Henry Wilcox is apparently inadequate to produce the necessary heir. It is Leonard Bast, or rather, the latent possibility of his genes, which becomes the missing ingredient in what amounts to a eugenized, proto-Heideggerian framework to reunite the blood of the national folk with their native land. From the start, Leonard is held up as a straw man to confirm the superiority of the ruling middle class: "He was not as courteous as the average rich man, nor as intelligent, nor as healthy, nor as lovable" (35). His ontological inauthenticity signified as surely by his name, Bast (Leon)ard, as his social inadequacy is by Helen's double theft of the phallus -- the status marker of his umbrella and the genetic marker of his semen -- Leonard is the lamentable end-product of indigenous traditions corrupted by modern civilization. It is only by recourse to the false nostalgia of an imagined past, that Leonard can be projected back to the natural community from whence he presumably came: "had he lived some centuries ago, in the brightly coloured civilizations of the past, he would have had a definite status, his rank and income would have corresponded" (35). In the present, however, he is most useful as the genetic catalyst for rapprochement between the indigenous yeoman and Hellenic-Germanic race.

It is instructive to situate Leonard, the representative of Population and birth-father of Helen's child, amidst heightening anxiety for the slowing growth of the English population at the turn of the century. In a walk-on role with newspaper in hand, Leonard's neighbor Mr. Cunningham, informs him of the declining birth-rate in Manchester: "If this kind of thing goes on," he remarks, "the population of England will be stationary in 1960" (37). Six years after the production of *Howards End*, English alarm over their diminishing place and numbers in the world was indeed confirmed by the ravages of World War I. As Marouf Hasian records in *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought*, "In 1916 the National Birth-Rate Commission finally presented its delayed report, and many members concluded that the war had exacerbated the problems associated with declining fertility rates among native Englishers. Some estimated that with the loss of 700,000 men of child-producing age and more than 1.6 million wounded and maimed, it would be difficult to replace the cream of the British empire" (46). Repercussions of imperial policy and industrial capitalism had reverberated throughout the 19th century, but were increasingly coupled with eugenics. Fears that an older, more traditional, way of life was being extinguished were tied to the widespread belief among elites that racial purity was on the decline. Elazar Barkan documents in *The Retreat of Scientific Racism* that John Beddoe, the president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, issued the following dire prediction in 1905, the likes of Leonard Bast clearly in mind: "I regret the diminution of the old blond lympho-sanguine stock, which has hitherto served England well in many ways, but is apparently doomed to give way to a darker and more mobile type, largely the offspring of the proletariat, and more adapted to the atmosphere of great cities" (252-6).

Although the conclusion of *Howards End* to some extent eugenically recuperates the desired Germanic type with Helen's child, any such straightforward reading must be complicated by Paul Wilcox's scathing reference to it as a "piccanniny" down in the field. More than just a racist insult - although it is that, too -- this deliberate misrecognition of the as-yet unnamed child betrays the ambiguity of its future place in the racialized class hierarchy and halls of power. At the very moment when the child wins the farm, it is shown to be a hollow victory. *Howards End* is left behind in more ways than one: While grudging Paul Wilcox may be to cede his mother's ancestral home to a bastard's bastard, he does not particularly want to live there, either. Nor do the other Wilcoxes. It is abundantly clear that the decisions which affect the nation will be made by the imperialists in metropolitan centers and distant colonies. As a place to live or viable way of life, the national interior represented by *Howards End* has been irreconcilably evacuated. The limits of the child's inheritance are further driven home by the rejection of modern technology, which is expressed in the fatalistic wait-and-see attitude of watching the red haze of cosmopolitanism loom ever nearer on the horizon. Yet in spite of its many practical drawbacks, we cannot be so quick to dismiss Forster's imaginative projection of a harmonious, natural community. The appeal of the rural retreat remains as strong as ever, not only for the tourist agencies and upscale boutiques which market a fantasy life of the English countryside as an antidote to the hectic pace and vacuity of modern life, but as a potently deceptive symbol of national unity and origins. The racialized aspects of class and national culture which Forster adapted from Arnold also remain inadequately addressed in our time. But that is not to say no good will come from a renewed study of his or Arnold's thought. Indeed, one cannot help but wonder in the communications and biotechnology-dominated economic growth of the past decade when there will be a return to questioning the proliferation of machinery for a sake other than its own.

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