

The Nostalgic Home in E. M. Forster's Novels

By Nessma Salim*

*Edward Morgan Forster wrote 6 novels, all of which revolve around the concept of home in relation to the representation of time and its impact on human soul and spirit. Homes of Forster are created by people and their emotions; hence they are very effective in their lives. In his *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster confirms that the art of fiction depends on facets like characters, plots, patterns, time, and places. This paper handles the representation of homes and the impact of time on these homes in E.M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room With A View* and *Howard's End*. In these novels Forster uses a recurrent theme; that is the impact of time on places and people. As *Angels Fear to Tread* echoes Alexander Pope's line in his *An Essay on Criticism*: "for fools rush in where angels fear to tread", the novel deals with concepts like national character, connection across social differences, the passage of time and its impact on places and houses. In *A Room with A View*, Forster contrasts Florence, Italy and Windy Corner, England, showing their influence on the development of Lucy, the heroine. Lucy is torn between two different lives. She misses the feeling of home, warmth and domesticity. She struggles throughout the whole novel to embrace love, security, and belonging. Home as a concept is an evasive axis in Forster's *Howard's End*. The novel is set in the Victorian era where all houses were rebuilt, reconstructed and replaced. There was a demanding rebuilding initiative across Britain, especially in London. That's why houses and places were obviously an entity for people's emotional values. In *Howard's End*, the Schlegels are evicted from Wickham place, and this leads to their dichotomy. The concepts of places, dwelling, passing of time, and nostalgia, give an opportunity for readers to observe the importance of home in modern life. In Forster's novels, homes are experienced on many levels: homes as places people have already visited and lived in; homes as places people imagined through pictures or dreams; and homes that are never visited or even imagined by dwellers. As John Edward Hardy states: "buildings, and the design of them, the architectural character of civilization, would seem to be in Forster's mind fundamentally related to its character of manners and morals", it would be significant to have a deeper look into the concept of home, time and nostalgia in relation to modern man.*

Keywords: *houses, homes, Forster's novels, passage of time, nostalgia and modernity*

Edward Morgan Forster, born in 1879, wrote six novels, all of which revolve around the concept of home in relation to the passage of time, and human psychological development. Homes in Forster's novels are created and shaped by the people who live in them and their emotions. In *Aspects of the Novel*, E.M. Forster confirms that the art of fiction depends on characters, plot, pattern, time, and places. In his novels *Where Angels Fear to Tread* 1905, *A Room with a View*

*Lecturer, 6 of October University, Egypt.

1908, and *Howards End* 1910, Forster uses the recurrent theme of the passage of time and its effect on homes, and nostalgia. This paper examines the recurring concepts of home portrayed and presented in E.M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* 1905, *A Room with a View* 1908, and *Howards End* 1910. It raises the question whether a home is a fixed place, building, or a changeable state of being peaceful in any place in the world. Home in Forster's novels is a flexible concept associated with no definite place or country. Characters in the novels feel peaceful in other countries or places different from their homelands since home is presented as the environment in which a person feels comfortable, safe and peaceful, and is not necessarily a birthplace of a motherland.

Where Angels Fear to Tread echoes Alexander Pope's line in *An Essay on Criticism*: "for fools rush in where angels fear to tread". Split between England and Italy, the novel deals with concepts like national character, connection across social differences, and the passage of time with its influence on homes. In *A Room with a View*, Forster contrasts Florence, Italy, and Windy Corner, England, showing their influence on the development of Lucy, the main character. Lucy is torn between two different lives. She misses the feeling of home and warmth. She struggles throughout the whole novel to grasp love, security and belonging. Home as a concept is an evasive aspect in the novel. In *Howards End*, Forster puts the novel in the Victorian era where all houses were rebuilt and replaced. A demanding rebuilding initiative across Britain started, especially in London. This fact explains the reason that houses and places are obviously an entity for intimate, emotional values of people and souls living inside. In *Howards End*, the Schlegels are evicted from Wickham place, and this leads to their dichotomy. The concepts of home, nostalgia and the passage of time give the reader an opportunity to observe the importance of home in modern life.

In Forster's novels, houses are experienced and perceived on many levels: houses as places people have already visited and lived in; and houses as places people have imagined through pictures and dreams; and houses that are never visited or even imagined by dwellers. As Avtar Singh states, "buildings, and the design of them, the architectural character of civilization, would seem to be in Forster's mind fundamentally related to its character of manners and morals" (147). It would be significant to have a deeper insight into the concepts of homes and their relation to the passing of time in E.M. Forster's novels.

Where Angels Fear to Tread 1905 is Forster's first novel. It unfolds the mystery of Edwardian England through a fake love affair of Lilia, representing England, and Gino, representing Italy. The novel creates a unique multi-cultural society through juxtaposing both characters; Lilia and Gino. Lilia escapes the Edwardian English life through marrying the inferior Italian Gino. Split between England and Italy, the novel deals with the theme of social contradictions; as Lilia lives in two worlds: the English world of Sawston, and the Italian world of Monteriano. Out of this theme of social contradictions, emerges the theme of the search for home. Home in the novel is the symbol of belonging and identity. Sawston is the home of the traditional middle class English Herriton family. It is represented in the novel as the world of repression, conventions and duties.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the word "house" is mentioned fifty six times and the word "home" is mentioned twenty one times. House as a concept is an essential symbol in E.M. Forster's works as he tells the story of the human desire to live, connect and melt with the universe and other human beings. In the novel, places and homes are significant in creating and symbolizing various opportunities of connection. Places, houses and homes represent the inner struggle of each character to develop reconciliation with society and the outer world; it is the concrete bond that connects characters' inner emotions to the external world. Places and houses are the central symbols of people's inner conflict. Forster always uses locations and places to develop the hidden sides of characters. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, readers perceive the duality of place. In actual life, Italy is a geographical entity, an actual part of Europe; it is a cultural touristic place, while in the novel Italy is more than a tourist destination. For Herriton and Caroline Abbot, Italy is a place where their journey of self-awareness starts and develops. Italy in the novel is presented as a transformative place of identity.

Italy for Lilia is the escape from the traditional life of rules, codes, and conditions. Forster portrays Italy as a dream place for Lilia, a home of happiness and love; a homeland to which Lilia feels nostalgic. It is the place where she finds a more natural and romantic life: "Lilia gave up her house, sold half her furniture left the other half and Irma with Mrs. Herriton, and had now departed, amid universal approval, for a change of scene" (6). The house that Lilia sold is the symbol of her wish to let go and forsake her life in England, aspiring for a better lively life in Italy. For the first time in her life, she finds a place; a home, where she can do crazy and untraditional things. Italy in fact is the place Lilia feels nostalgic for. Lilia falls madly in love with a young Italian man, Gino Carella. The fact that Lilia meets her lover in Italy enhances Forster's portrayal of the Italian hero as a lively and romantic character.

Gino is a natural man, full of life. When Lilia falls in love with Gino, Mrs. Herriton, the symbol of the traditional English woman sends her son Philip to stop this marriage of Lilia and Gino. However, Philip cannot stop this marriage as the wedding has already taken place before his arrival. Lilia dies in childbirth and now Forster turns to continue his portrayal of Italy as a world of happiness and life versus England, the place of conventions and traditions. After the death of Lilia, Philip and Caroline return to Sawston, but with different spirits and mentalities. Philip is in love with Caroline, who is in love with the Italian Gino. Forster moves between Italy and England in a cycle of departures and reunions echoing the cycle of human life. Gino's home in Italy is the symbol of intimacy, love and reunion. Caroline moves to Gino's home to save Lilia's baby from that savage Italian father; Gino. Forster portrays Caroline's change of mind and heart as a symbol of the whole setting of the novel. Gino's home is ironically the place where she encounters true love:

She turned away her head when Gino lifted the son to his lips. This was something too remote from the prettiness of the nursery. The man was majestic; he was a part of Nature; in no ordinary love scene could he ever be so great. For a wonderful physical tie binds the parents to the children; and—by some sad, strange irony—it does not bind us children to our parents (81).

Forster sheds light on this scene, stressing this moment of reunion, intimacy as the major motif of life in general. Kissing his child passionately, Gino changes the perspective of Caroline to the whole world. The English woman who comes to Italy to rescue the little baby is now entrapped in the love of the claimed savage father. In his book *A Companion to E.M. Forster, Volume 2*, Sarker (2007) says "in the novel, Lilia, actually, and Philip and Miss Caroline Abbot, imaginatively, enter into the world of Gino, an instance of cultural conflict between England and Italy" (402). The conflict between England and Italy is a conflict between a world of conventions and another of freedom.

Forster portrays Italy as a home of purgation and reconciliation. The scene of the baby bath may be viewed as a baptism. The bathing of the baby stands for the cleansing and renewal of adults who are purified, and restored once more to the world of love: "Miss Abbott reverently averting her eyes—both of them had parents whom they did not love so very much" (81). In "may I help you to wash him?" Sarker (2007) says "on the one hand, Philip, Harriet and Miss Abbot, are given to the conventional morality that demands conformity to the English tradition of rationality predominating over emotion, of uniformity and discipline; and on the other hand, Gino, the Italian, akin to Nature, is emotional and unconventional" (403). Gino's natural love for his child is the engine that convinces Caroline of the cycle of regeneration. This regeneration is found in Gino's home, the place where the baby, as the symbol of innocence rests, in a place that is womb-like.

The tragic scene of the death of the unnamed baby, after being kidnapped by Harriet, symbolizes the evil and destruction that may result when "fools rush in where angels fear to tread", Stape (1956) confirms that:

Where Angels Fear to Tread also introduces Forster's characteristic theme of a conflict between two cultures. Forster believes that place shapes characters. Here it is Italy versus England. England, as epitomized by Mrs. Herriton and even more by the next generation in the person of her daughter Mrs. Herriton and depicted as sexually repressed, emotionally sterile, and impotent in personal relations. Philip, the self-conscious, disengaged man who has difficulty feeling and suffers from a kind of anomie, introduces a new character into English fiction. By contrast, Italy retains passion, poetry, sexuality and thus offers the possibility of intimacy and perfect relationship. Gino represents an older tradition of instinctive life that survives in spite of civilization's conventions and restraints. Certainly Caroline and Philip are changed by their days at Monteriano. The passions of Lilia, Gino and finally Caroline overwhelm the traditions that would restrain them. The novel shows that feelings and passions are the essences of being alive (379).

According to Stape (1956), the importance of E.M. Forster's places and homes lie in their relation to the psychology of his characters. Places and homes in themselves have no significance if they are stripped of characters and impressions. Forster's Characters are categories that represent human passions and feelings. Nostalgia and homesickness are not the literal concepts of craving or longing for a location; it is however a longing for feelings. These feelings may be feelings of security, love, and passions. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, each character represents one of the human feelings: Mrs. Herriton represents the conventional,

aristocratic and heartless lady. She condemns people and things from her angle of morality. Sending Philip to Italy for the purpose of breaking the relationship between Mrs. Herriton attributes boredom and melancholy to residence in England as:

Lilia's sister in law, Harriet Herriton, perhaps Forster's cruelest and most hilarious caricature of suburban Englishness, kidnaps Lilia's and Gino's son; later in a carriage crash, the baby is killed. Forster's rendering of Harriet as an English harridan presents his critique of English normality at its most harsh: although she bears primary culpability for the death, she denies any guilt, returning quickly to her old self (Bradshaw 2007, p. 50).

Forster depicts nostalgia for love, emotions and passion through the Sawston group in Italy. Singh states that Forster

examines, ironically of course, maternal affection of Lilia and Mrs. Herriton, the spiritual love of Caroline Abbott, sexual love of Lilia and Gino, paternal love of Gino for his child, the near absence of love in Philip, and the perversion of love in Harriet. Indeed the whole quest of the Sawston group in Italy, though they are unaware of it until it is over, is for the love which the ugliness of middle-class suburban life in England had denied them. Harriet fails utterly being too long confirmed in Sawston's sterile hardness of heart. Philip and Caroline, perhaps unhappily for them, are tied to both worlds (58).

Lilia, the English woman, follows her heart in loving and marrying Gino, as a quest for passion; ironically, her feeling of nostalgia is for another country, another homeland, she searches for love in Italy. She loves Gino as a quest for passion, love and life. However, unfortunately, her love story ends up unhappily. In the novel, Monteriano overcomes Sawston, but for a short period of time. England, as a place is depicted as a boring country since "no fruitful marriages are found there. Philip is a bachelor and his sister will remain a spinster...Even Lilia has to go to Italy to have her child" (Singh, 58). In describing the child's spiritual position in both places, Sawston is portrayed as a repulsive country for the little Irma as "Sawston, her own home, was within easy reach of London, and they were not late for tea. Tea was in the dining-room, with an egg for Irma, to keep up the child's spirit (*Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 3).

Deciding to give birth to her son of Gino in Italy, is an attempt of escaping from England, the place of hypocrisy; Lilia plans to deliver her baby in Italy in search for love, and passion. She was creating her homeland. She tries to seed her baby in a land of love. Caroline, the Edwardian English heroine, unexpectedly changes her views of England and Italy after the death of Lilia. Miss Abbott is now responsible for the child of Lilia and Gino. She has to make the decision either of taking the child to England or keeping it with his father in Italy. She decides not to separate a father and a child. This decision shows an emotional and spiritual development in her character. Doing this, Forster wants to confirm that "Sawston is harsh, ungracious and ugly; it falls like a lump from the tongue. Monteriano is greatly, musical and light" (Singh 1996, p. 58).

After their marriage Lilia asked Gino to buy her a brick house in Italy:

This house is bigger than it looks, for it slides for two storeys down the hill behind, and the wooden door, which is always locked, really leads into the attic. The knowing person prefers to follow the precipitous mule-track round the turn of the mud wall till he can take the edifice in the rear. Then—being now on a level with the cellars—he lifts up his head and shouts. If his voice sounds like something light—a letter, for example, or some vegetables, or a bunch of flowers—a basket is let out of the first-floor windows by a string, into which he puts his burdens and departs. But if he sounds like something heavy, such as a log of wood, or a piece of meat, or a visitor, he is interrogated, and then bidden or forbidden to ascend. (Forster 1975, p. 23)

Forster portrays Italy as a homeland of romance, pleasure and peace of mind. Gino's house is a symbol of Italy in the novel. Lilia's residence in Gino's house is an attempt of escaping her traditional life in Sawston, England. However, Forster does not portray Italy as the perfect place on earth; it is still a place with its flaws. All characters that visit Italy change their personalities; "an instance of cultural conflict between England and Italy, Forster has shown us in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* through a minor bickering between Lilia and Gino where the narrator tells us about the couple...On the one hand, Philip, Harriet and Miss Abbott are given to the conventional morality that demands conformity to the English tradition of nationality predominating over emotion, of uniformity and discipline; and on the other hand, Gino, the Italian, is 'a kin to nature' is emotional and unconventional" (Sarker 2007, pp. 403-404).

Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* uncovers the nature of the Edwardian period through characters, symbols and decisions. Characters yearn for a world of their own creation; the English characters of the novel ironically escape their native land in search for happiness in the Italian world. Forster creates his characters from different socio-cultural segments of society in an attempt to give his audience a deeper insight into the human psyche.

Lilia, the heroine of the novel, has different identities. She is a wife of an English man; Charles, a mother to two babies, and a lover of an Italian man at the same time. Her identity is a mixture of a typical English wife, and a romantic lively beloved. Lilia feels nostalgic for a world of freedom. For her, Italy is the homeland where she loves Gino, marries him and delivers his baby. Italy is the place where she achieves her dreams. Lilia tries to be an independent female in an Edwardian society, and when she fails, she resorts to Italy. Lilia's residence in Italy is a regenerative attempt for her recovery. In his book *The Novels of E.M. Forster*, Avtar Singh states that "in the early novels of the pattern is to associate values with certain places. Sawston in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *The Longest Journey* represents the repressive and philistine middle class, quintessentially expressed in the English public school, whose key characteristics are dogged industry, respectability and narrow snobbery" (121). Singh believes that Foster establishes a connection between characters' psychological development and places through emotions stirred in characters. Creating this connection, Forster confirms the importance of places, represented in homes in his novels.

In Forster's novel *A Room with a View* 1908, places and homes are significant. Forster, like other novelists, shows significant places in his own private lives and cultures through symbols, characterization and motifs. In his book *The Role of Place in Literature*, Lutwack (1984) argues that "places lend themselves readily to symbolical extension because there is so little that is inherently affective in their physical properties. Spatial dimensions and climactic conditions, for example, do not in themselves stimulate a constant emotional response; rather the qualities of places are determined by the subjective responses of people according to their cultural heritage, sex, occupation, and personal predicament" (35). E.M. Forster is one of the novelists that utilize the effects of places and houses in his novels to convey his themes. As for his novel *A Room with a View*, Forster indicates that places themselves are not hated or loved except when viewed and associated with people's feelings and emotional development. Forster claims that people are strongly with or against a place only through the emotions they develop towards this place. According to Dowling (1985),

the first book of *A Room with a View*, the first seven chapters set in Italy, were written after he had published two other novels, where Angels Fear to Tread and The Longest Journey...Forster tried to make the form of this novel as innocuous and unobtrusive as possible...even the title of the novel suggests that how one sees one's neighbor is intimately bound up with how one sees the world. Again the arts come in a beating, but landscapes and landscape-painting are exempt from the general censure, because they have much to do with one's moods and responses to others. Views are extremely important to rooms (49-50).

Forster depicts Italy and its impact on the English heroine Lucy Honeychurch. Lucy's trip to Italy is necessary for her spiritual and psychological development. Lucy and her cousin travel to Florence to see real Italy. However, this place is extremely English; which disappoints Lucy: "And a cockney, besides!" said Lucy, who had been further saddened by the Signora's unexpected accident. It might be London" (*A Room with a View*, 2). Lucy and her spinster cousin Charlotte Bartlett stay in a pension decorated in English style in Italy; a room with an unpleasant view. In his book *E.M. Forster's A Room with a View: The Attitude of English People Abroad*, Schuller (2001) comments on Lucy's visit to Italy:

by describing the behaviour of the English tourists and residents at Florence Edward Morgan Forster reveals a lot about English mentality, and he sometimes overtly criticizes it. As Forster himself travelled Italy and Greece, it can be assumed that he made experiences and acquaintances that served as a model for some of the situations and characters described in *A Room with a View*, Forster clearly distanced himself from this kind of people, or more precisely, tourists. Edward Morgan Forster offers an interesting point of view to the readers because he was English himself, but nevertheless critically observed the attitude of his fellow countrymen (2).

The English travellers face a problem when they arrive to Florence as their rooms do not have a view. However, when another male guest offers to switch rooms, the acceptance of Lucy and Charlotte is an indication of English women's interest in things that men are not interested in. Lucy's time in Florence and her

experience with the Emersons, who offer her the room with a view, helps her to grow and develop and to think about the world around her differently. Lucy's departure from Italy and her return to England, her homeland, doesn't keep her away from George Emerson and his father. The Emersons symbolize another different choice for Lucy. Forster is interested in how deeply Lucy will live and how greatly she will change. In the novel there are two settings: Florence, Italy and Summer street, England. Florence is totally different from the traditional quiet English countryside Lucy is used to; as "a magic city where people thought and did the most extraordinary things (Forster 1978, p. 43).

Florence is Lucy Honeychurch's home of love and passion. It is the place she longs for. In Florence, Lucy finds her love George Emerson. The view, which is the title of the novel, is the symbol of escape, experience, and inner mental development. Lucy's acceptance to change rooms in Florence is her decision to escape from the imprisonment and conventions of the deathlike life imposed on her in England. The Emersons who gave their room with a view to Lucy and Charlotte, are portrayed as the only English people who understand the Italian style of life. They are underestimated and looked down upon for not conforming to English social rules and standards. Love in the novel is so much related to nostalgia. Lucy yearns for love; she is nostalgic to a life of love, which she finds with George Emerson in Florence. Lucy has to choose between George Emerson and Cecil Vyse.

Cecil, representing the conventional English life, despises Lucy and her family. Forster portrays Cecil as an arrogant, unpleasant and callous character. He, like most English people, judges others all the time. He feels superior. On the other hand, George Emerson, the symbol of Lucy's home of love, passion and development, represents liberal ideas that are encountered in Italian culture. Belonging to a lower social class than Cecil and Lucy, he is still more passionate and emotional; "only in *A Room with a View*, Forster takes up the fragments contrasting Italy and England which are found in the early Lucy novels and brings them to a successful conclusion. The critic on the constrictive and rigid rules of social life in English society has often been an issue discussed by Edward Morgan Forster, and it is a central issue in *A Room with a View*" (Schuller 2001, pp. 2-3).

George Emerson is a landmark in Lucy's life as he strongly encourages her to express and show her true feelings. Actually, most of George's behavior is acquired and learned from his father Mr. Emerson. Lucy's choice of George to be her lover and later her husband reflects the main theme of the novel; that is passionate life is a priority for Lucy. She is nostalgic to Italy; Italy is the homeland of love, passions, freedom and development. The couple elopes to Italy to live a passionate life. The judgmental English social norms do not accept George's liberalism or the fact that a couple from different social classes would like to get married. Actually, Forster makes fun of the English social norms and portrays Italy as the homeland of love, passion and psychological development.

The room with a view in Florence is a compensation for the English Lucy and Charlotte who were given a room with a poor view at first. The room is metaphorical as it symbolizes human life; a life that all characters feel nostalgic for. According to Forster, Lucy's room with a poor view of a country yard, is the

symbol of the repressive English society. It is significant that the Emersons have given her a room with a better view as they improve her actual vision of the whole world. George Emerson has changed Lucy's perception of life, teaching her how to be more expressive and open.

In "he saw radiant joy in her face, he saw the flowers beat against her dress in blue waves. The bushes above them closed. He stepped quickly forward and kissed her" (Forster 1978, p. 53), George follows his instinct and kisses Lucy; he acts on his emotions, not paying attention to social norms. George changes Lucy's attitude to life. *A Room with a View* is a social comedy with hints of deeper significance of the concept of nostalgia. Italy is the true home for which Lucy longs.

Nostalgia in Forster's *Howards End* takes a different perspective as he associates housing conditions and locations with his characters; their features, behavior and development. In *Howards End*, there are three different types of houses. First, the country houses, second the urban lower middle-class houses and third the London town houses. These types of houses do have an impact on their dwellers. Forster's main concern is focused on living in the countryside versus living in the city; living in houses versus living in flats.

London is always mentioned in the novel as cheerless, foggy and grey. The air is always pitiless as "Margaret glanced at the pitiless air and then at the tired face of her companion" (Forster 1984, p. 60). London as a city is presented to be dirty and unpleasant; "the city seemed satanic, the narrower streets oppressing like the galleries of a mine" (Forster 1984, p. 84). Throughout the whole novel Margaret feels that life in London is like "the sense of an imprisonment" (Forster 1984, p. 84). For Margaret, nothing pleasant can develop in London. She never feels nostalgic to such a dreary place.

The London city life is associated with hard and joyless labour connected with a dim climate where nothing lively can develop or flourish. Houses and places of London reflect this atmosphere of melancholy. In London "month by month the roads smelt more strongly of petrol, and where more difficult to cross and human beings heard each other speak with greater difficulties, breathed less of the air, and saw less of the sky. Nature withdrew: the leaves were falling by midsummer; the sun shone through dirt with an admired obscurity" (Forster 1984, p. 107). Forster portrays faceless houses which are built as faceless to suit the masses of faceless people. This picture of the faceless masses does echo Ezra Pound's *In a Station of the Metro*, 1913, in which he describes faces in the metro station in Paris as dead: "the apparition of these faces in a crowd; Petals on a wet, black bough". The image of Pound's poem corresponds to Forster's description about the faceless masses: "and month by month the roads smelt strongly of petrol and were more difficult to cross and heard each other speak with greater difficulty, breathed less of the air, and saw less of the sky. Nature withdrew: the leaves were falling by midsummer, the sun shone through dirt with an admired obscurity" (Forster 1984, p. 107). According to Pound's poem, death in people and plants corresponds to death of the metropolis itself. People in London miss contact with nature; they are dehumanized. Leonard symbolizes people of London where he is described as "colourless, toneless, who had already the mournful eyes above a

drooping moustache that are so common in London" (Forster 1984, p. 115). Again, the Schlegels have the "lives of gibbering monkeys" (Forster 1984, p. 78). They are the intellectual symbol of the English upper class. Margaret and Helen feel nostalgic to the beauty of the English country. Margaret hates the "eternal formlessness" (Forster 1984, p. 186) of London. Both Helen and Margaret seek life in a place far from London. They are nostalgic for a place of love, warmth and harmony.

On the other hand, Forster represents the countryside through Leonard Bast and his wife Jacky. Being a modest clerk in an insurance company, the Leonards represent the lower social class in Forster's novel. Singh (1996) states that

if Lawrence is the poet of place, Forster is its philosopher. The spirit of place is rooted not only in his work but also in the ideas about form and infinity that give shape to his thinking. The true possession of the spirit that the "house" will survive so long as the pattern of integrity among the inhabitants is maintained. Gransden has noted the significance of Ruth Wilcox's answer to Margaret's comment that a house 'cannot stand by bricks and mortar alone'. There is a persistent note of misgiving about it. It is more than nostalgia (147).

The design of houses in *Howards End* is a complex metaphor. The designs of buildings, houses and homes are extremely symbolic in the novel since they symbolize the two types of people in *Howards End*. Forster's choice of the characters depends on sociological and psychological basics. They are formed and portrayed to present the English middle-class people in their natural life cycle. Forster situates his characters in two settings—the Schlegel's house in Wickham place, London, and the Wilcoxes' house in the country, Howards End. Characters find liveliness, warmth and happiness in the countryside as London is a chaotic harsh place; all characters seek to escape London life and long for the country. London is the place that ruins Leonard Bast, and it is also the place that makes Margaret Schlegel search for a passionate life in another place. The Schlegels and Wilcoxes resort to the country to build and reform their families, and to restore a connection between England's past and future:

"In these English farms...one might see life steadily and see it whole... connect—connect without bitterness until all men are brothers" (Forster 1984, p. 279). Margaret contemplates the countryside around Howards End. She encounters new emotions and feelings in her heart. She reflects on the children playing happily. She enjoys this new experience of having a great harmony between her inner feelings and the outer world. The countryside is the place for which she longs. Howards End establishes a deep connection in all living beings that she misses in her life, longs for and finds so absent everywhere else.

Actually, Margaret has "a new feeling came over her; she was fighting for women against men" (Forster 1984, p. 302). For her Howards End is a place of power, strength and victory as she protects the pregnant Helen from these men who want to examine her pregnancy. She protects her sister by preventing these men from getting into their house. In his book *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, Cavaliero (1979) describes Forster's creation of houses in the novel, saying that

another recurring theme is that of houses, the character of places where people make their houses...Howards End itself is understandably vivid, but Oniton, the country house in Shropshire, and Leonard's wretched little sitting room are portrayed with equal skill. The importance of living in the right house is something that Margaret and Henry together, and it is one of the first things that he discusses with her after their engagement (121).

In fact, Margaret achieves her balance and psychological inner peace only when she is united with Howards End, when she takes possession of this place. Margaret functions as a uniting agent in the novel. She connects people. Her nostalgia is not only for a place; Howards End, but also for a feeling of passion, unity and domesticity. Helen describes Margaret's role in uniting everyone at Howards End saying:

"You!" cried Helen. "You did it all, sweetest, though you're too stupid to see. Living here was your plan—I wanted you; he wanted you; and everyone said it was impossible, but you knew. Just think of our lives without you, Meg—I and baby with Monica, revolting by theory, he handed about from Dolly to Evie. But you picked up the pieces, and made us a home. Can't it strike you—even for a moment—that your life has been heroic? Can't you remember the two months after Charles's arrest, when you began to act, and did all?" (Forster 1984, p. 358)

Howards End is the home for which all characters yearn. They are portrayed as voyagers whose destination of stability and balance is in Howards End. The house of Howards End is portrayed as a living soul; with its own life. Getting into the house for the first time, Margaret feels that she is out of time; she experiences a kind of timeless mood: "but it was the heart of the house beating, faintly at first, ten loudly, martially. It dominated the rain" (Forster 1984, p. 207). The house is a timeless agent in the novel that connects the past with the present; "you are living here, and have been for the last ten minutes, if you ask me.

It was a senseless remark, but with a queer feeling of disloyalty Margaret rose from her chair. She felt that Henry had been obscurely censured. They went into the dining room where the sunlight poured in upon her mother's chiffonier, and upstairs, where and upstairs, where many an old god peeped from a new niche. The furniture fitted extraordinarily well. In the central room—over the hall, the room that Helen had slept in four years ago—Miss Avery had placed Tibby's old bassinette (Forster 1984, p. 283).

Howards End represents a time free flowing agent, connecting people, and objects through the house itself and its being. It is through Howards End that Forster embodies a powerful design of controlling time, through bringing past time with present and connecting it to the future. Times, places, and objects are all elements of eternity with which all characters identify themselves, in an attempt to immortalize their beings. Nostalgia here in Howards End is not only for the past; it is also for an unknown future. Characters start to retrospect the past through tactile objects, like furniture, so as to freeze the future and re-envision their upcoming lives.

E.M. Forster is one of the distinguished modern novelists who portrays the new type of man that comes into being; the helpless individual who was deprived of his own personality and identity, melting into an artificial industrial community. This community was the result of the change that came to Western civilization towards the end of the 19th century all over Europe. This social, economic and psychological change was brought about by industrialization; and the rise of machinery. Forster's novels *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View*, and *Howards End*, represent an attempt to regain the true self of the English man/woman which was lost in an age of fragmentation. It is through his novels that Forster tries to delve deep into human existence.

Most of Forster's English characters go to Italy for the cultural enrichment, and also the psychological, personal and sociological development. In his novels, Italians are portrayed as passionate and emotional, a feature that some English people lack. English characters resort to Italy and long for Italy as the land of passions, emotions and freedom at the same time. Nostalgia takes different perspectives in Forster's novels. Each character feels nostalgic for a specific feeling inside his/her heart. Italy is a country that touches and affects all heroes and heroines of Forster. Italy changes the characters in different ways.

Characters of Forster's novels search for a homeland throughout the whole novels. Each character yearns for a home in which he/she can live the life he/she aspires for. This home or place is not that perfect or ideal one. In Forster's three novels, Italy is portrayed as the home for which all characters yearn, in an attempt to achieve self-identity. However, Italy is portrayed as an imperfect country so as to confirm Forster's message that modern man, with his fragmented vision of the universe, tries to feel in harmony with the surrounding world, even if this world is imperfect. This attempt of creating a harmonious perfection of man and nature, allows Forster to create an aesthetic world in a distorted universe. Forster's novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View* and *Howards End*, revolve around the themes of connection, and harmony: connection of soul and place, man and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness, melancholy and cheerfulness and finally connection of different cultures. The genius of Forster's fiction lies in its timelessness. His novels are timeless; they are suitable for all periods, and all cultures as they tackle universal themes. Forster's novels create a universal order for a chaotic disorganized world. Forster tries through his ideas to convince his readers that the only hope to maintain inner peace in a chaotic world is to identify oneself with homes, places and houses. Homes and houses are the means of establishing an orchestrated harmonious identity with the outer chaotic world.

In conclusion, after visiting Italy, Forster's characters started to act more on their impulses. They find their happiness and peace in communion with the Italian community. Forster claims that the feeling of home is not necessarily associated with one's birthplace, it is, however, detected in an environment where someone feels free, loved and appreciated. Characters of Forster's three novels feel nostalgic for a homeland where they do what they feel right, which sometimes is not deemed right in their own original homeland. Lilia Herriton, Gino Carella, Lucy Honechurch, Margaret Schlegel and Helen Schlegel find passion to empower love instead of ruining it. This paper explores the image of Italy and how it is considered

a homeland for many characters of three novels by E.M. Forster *A Room with a View*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howard's End*. For Forster, the concept of home is changeable; it depends on one's feeling of passion, peace, and comfort. He is deeply influenced by his own life and personal thoughts. Forster describes the women of the middle class perfectly. He also hints about the mixture of cultures as he shows how Italian and English cultures can derive inspiration from one another. However, he never claims that one nationality is superior to the other. He stresses throughout his works that both nationalities have their positive and negative aspects. Actually, England is a place where people are of fully developed cultures, minds, and civilization. The fact that the English characters seek love and passions in Italy, doesn't mean that England is not a great country. On the contrary, England is depicted as a country of perfection to the extent that the English character looks down upon anything that is not elevated to his/her level. Forster tries to change the readers' views as he believes that "what is so wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse" (Forster 1925, p. 152).

References

- Bradshaw D (2007) *The Cambridge Companion to E. M. Forster*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cavaliero G (1979) *A Reading of E. M. Forster*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Dowling D (1985) *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and The Novels of Forster and Woolf*. London: The Macmillan Press LTD.
- Forster EM (1925) *Anonymity: An Enquiry*. London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press.
- Forster EM (2000) *Howards End*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Forster EM (2011) *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Mineola: Dover Publications.
- Forster EM (2012) *A Room with a View*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lutwack L (1984) *The Role of Place in Literature*. USA: Syracuse University Press.
- Sarker SK (2007) *A Companion to E. M. Forster, Volume 2*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors Ltd.
- Schuller M (2001) *E. M. Forster's A Room with a View: The Attitude of English People Abroad*. Johannes Gutenberg-Universitat Mainz Proseminar: The British and the Continent.
- Singh A (1996) *The Novels of E. M. Forster*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
- Stape JH (1956) *E. M. Forster: Critical Assessments, Volume IV*. Bodmin, Great Britain: MPG Books, Ltd.

