The Crisis of National Identity in Thomas Mann and E. M. Forster

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores questions of nation, nationalism, and national identity in the work of E.M. Forster and Thomas Mann. It investigates the articulation of nationalist rhetoric and discourse in Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread, Howards End,* and *A Passage to India* and in Mann's 'Tonio Kröger,' *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*] and *Der Zauberberg* [*The Magic Mountain*]. Forster and Mann share three main concerns: the xenophobic shift in nationalism, the validity of national stereotypes, and the instability of nationalist logic, and they both emphasize the preeminence of human universality over the claims of nationalism.

Keywords: E.M. Forster, Thomas Mann, nation, nationalism, national identity, national stereotypes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Certificate of Examination	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Nation, Nationalism, National Identity	5
Chapter 2: E.M. Forster	10
Where Angels Fear to Tread	10
Howards End	25
A Passage to India	49
Chapter 3: Thomas Mann	67
Tonio Kröger	67
Der Tod in Venedig	78
Der Zauberberg	83
Conclusion	99
Works Cited	101
Vita	104

Introduction

Over the past two centuries, the West has become increasingly estranged from religious belief. But while this traditional expression of faith has declined, the willingness to believe in something — to have faith — has endured. If anything, it was strengthened. As traditional ways of life gave way to modernity, the appeal of irrational and selfless faith became more and more compelling. Most importantly, mass literacy and democratization meant that whole populations could be targeted (and then mobilized) as believers. Among the new faiths — socialism, liberalism, feminism — nationalism has proved to be the most enduring; its claims are so widely accepted as "truth" that it is often regarded not as an ideology, but as a reality, a given.

The novelists E.M. Forster and Thomas Mann are not in a position to give an objective, historical account of the emergence of nationalism; instead, their novels and short stories are a thoughtful fictional rendering of their own era's flirtation with nationalist ideology. By allowing nationalist discourse a strong presence in their fiction, Forster and Mann are able to offer valuable insight into the subtleties of national identity and stereotypes. Both writers countered nationalist claims not only in their books, but in their lives as well. Forster's unsympathetic portrayal of the British in *A Passage to India* is but one instance of his detachment from his own nationality; he spent significant periods of time abroad, and wrote essays which defied the principles of race and nationality, upholding, instead, the values of tolerance. Thomas Mann has never shied from political debate; his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* [*Reflections of an*

Unpolitical Man] (1917), a conservative attempt to vindicate the German case in World War I, were soon displaced by a truly liberal humanist defense of democracy against totalitarianism. In 1933 he abandoned Hitler's Germany and lived the rest of his life in exile, in Switzerland, in the United States and then again in Switzerland.

Born in 1879 and 1875 respectively, Forster and Mann were themselves surrounded by the nationalist sentiment depicted in their fiction. Nationalism had its heyday between the 1880s and the outbreak of World War I, and it was one of the most significant political forces of this turbulent period. In *The Age of Empire* E.J. Hobsbawm observes that "in the period from 1880 to 1914 nationalism took a dramatic leap forward, and its ideological and political content was transformed" (142). By the 1880s, Germany and Italy were proud, new nation-states and younger nationalist movements were spreading across most of Central and Eastern Europe. During this period national and imperial rivalries entered a new, frantic phase, and mass nationalist movements emerged even in small European territories, including nations which had never before been constituted as such (Estonia and Macedonia, for instance). Nationalism had become a force which appealed to all of society, mobilizing all of its strata.

Forster and Mann shared with their contemporary readership an acute awareness of nationalist ideology, for the nation was becoming an ever-greater presence in their daily lives. Although the topic has aroused surprisingly little critical interest, their novels and short stories engage crucial questions related to the nationalist idea. Three main issues emerge in their work. Foremost of these is national stereotyping and the very idea of national character. Forster and Mann investigate how notions of "typical" national

qualities predetermine human interaction, limiting our experience of ourselves as well as others; people thus perceive one another not as individuals, but as an articulation of a reductive principle of nationality. Forster and Mann (with the assistance of an ironic narrator) at once inscribe and destabilize popular national and racial types; in the very act of presenting them, they expose their fundamental limitations and falsities.

Another concern is the shift from liberal national feeling to chauvinistic, xenophobic nationalism. Both writers juxtapose an earlier, more restrained and private feeling of local or national belonging with the aggressive, exclusionary flag-waving that took its place. Forster's *Howards End*, for example, insists that rootedness is indispensable for a full human life. But a sentimental attachment to what could be called home, rather than country, is different from what is commonly understood as nationality and nationalism.

Also, Forster and Mann challenge the validity of the nation as an exclusive political and cultural unit, presenting instead the possibility of a certain cosmopolitanism. Their texts stage international meetings where nationality is not only paralleled by other forms of (collective) identity, but is also shown to be secondary to the underlying commonality of all humanity.

The texts this thesis will focus on (Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End*, and *A Passage to India*; and Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*, *Tonio Kröger*, and *Der Zauberberg*) thus offer a humanistic vision of how human affairs might function if nationality were a less prominent concern. As Peter Sontheimer observed, "ein bedeutender Ausschnitt des Werkes von Thomas Mann ist der Analyse und Deutung des

Deutschtums gewidmet.... Seit ihm im Ersten Weltkrieg die ganze Brüchigkeit der europäischen Ordnung offenbar geworden, suchte er zu erneuern und zu befestigen, was ihm allein noch Verbindlichkeit zu bieten schien: den Glauben an die Humanität" (1966) ["a considerable portion of Thomas Mann's work is devoted to the analysis and identification of Germanness.... The First World War revealed to him the utter fragility of the European order and since then he has tried to renew and secure the only thing that offered some kind of bond: belief in humanity."]. Similarly, C.B. Cox identifies in Forster a liberal, who emphasizes humanitarianism, freedom, and intelligence over social demands and interests. In Forster's view, Cox claims, "nothing must interfere with the natural growth of each particular human being ... Fullness of life, therefore, comes from independence, and the rules of society are potentially dangerous. Forster is not completely explicit about his views on the origin of evil, but certainly in his early work he subscribes to the romantic view that man is naturally good, only perverted by social institutions" (83).

The thesis will begin with a brief overview of the historical background of nationalism. Chapter II will then examine Forster's discussion of the nationalist idea in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End*, and *A Passage to India*. Finally, Chapter III will undertake a similar analysis of three Mann texts: "*Tonio Kröger*", "*Der Tod in Venedig*" and *Der Zauberberg*.

Chapter 1: Nation, Nationalism, National Identity

In order to understand the implications of the discourse of nationalism in Forster's and Mann's work, it is first necessary to examine its ideological and historical development. Nationalism as such is a distinctly modern phenomenon, which, however, has undergone significant changes, especially in the late nineteenth century. Even though premodern expressions of patriotism are often mistakenly viewed as precursors to modern nationalism, it is important to distinguish between them, for patriotism, understood as "a readiness to sacrifice oneself for one's community (king, country) ... was an expression of individual loyalty ... not the collective action of a people" (Woolf 2).

Frederico Chabod, an historian of early modern Europe, dates the emergence of nationalism back to the nineteenth century: "The nation, which previously was only 'felt,' will now be 'desired'" (125). At the time, as he claims, nations transferred "from Herder's purely cultural plane to a political one"; the nineteenth century thus "experienced what the eighteenth century ignored: *national passions*" (126).

Likewise, Woolf suggests that until the late nineteenth century there is no trace of the idea that national patriotism is inherently superior to other loyalties (2); it was not until then that modern nationalism made a crucial transition from an "individual sense of national pride" to the "sectarian exclusion of all others" (7). These views are in agreement with those expressed in *The Norton History of Modern Europe*, which asserts that in the second half of the nineteenth century, "the liberal nationalism of political idealists, who saw in the nation-state a means of achieving constitutional representative

government that would ensure liberty and justice for all citizens, gave way to arrogant nationalism, a belief in the superiority of one nation over another, in which racism played a prominent part. Advocates of this view were increasingly willing to sacrifice the rule of law and the protection of individual rights to the greater power and glory of the national state" (Gilbert et al. 1049).

It was also new for nationalism to mean "the readiness of people to identify emotionally with 'their' nation and to be politically mobilized" in its service (Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire* 143). Until the late nineteenth century, nationalism was mainly intellectuals who embraced the nation as a spiritual force, but with the introduction of public education, military service, and mass communication, it became a factor in the lives of the entire population. Its emotional appeal was successful, for nationhood filled the void left by the decline of traditional sources of community, creating what Hobsbawm calls an "imaginary community" (*Age of Empire* 148). This new nation-state became the underlying structure behind all public life — it was visible in many aspects of everyday experience — and as a consequence it could quite easily inspire, or demand, the national citizen's loyalty and devotion. "The state not only made the nation, but *needed* to make the nation. Governments now reached down directly to each citizen on the territory in everyday life, through modest but omnipresent agents, from postmen and policemen to teachers and (in many countries) railway employees. They might *require* his, and eventually even her, active personal commitment to the state: in fact their patriotism" (Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire* 148).

Liberal nationalism, however, was to give way to a number of right-wing political

movements "built on chauvinism, xenophobia and, increasingly, the idealization of national expression, conquest and the very act of war ... such nationalism lent itself exceptionally well to expressing the collective resentments of people who could not explain their discontents precisely" (*Age of Empire* 160). The experience of imperialism strengthened what Hobsbawm terms the "fundamental racism of nineteenth-century civilization;" the idea that one's own class of people should have a built-in superiority over others was merely exacerbated (*Age of Empire* 160). Jane Mackay and Pat Thane note the comic consequences of this insistence on national qualities that would be both unique and superior to those of other nations:

> A clearly defined, uncontested image of the Englishwoman is surprisingly elusive in this period of the construction and redefinition of Englishness. The classic Englishman of the period was held to combine certain qualities, including leadership, courage, justice and honour, which were defined as distinctively "English." He has no exact female equivalent. The qualities of the perfect Englishwoman were publicly discussed, but they were not generally perceived as being specifically English. Rather they were those qualities — essentially domestic and maternal — believed to be universal in Woman. The ideal Englishwoman's special quality was that she practiced these virtues in a fashion superior to women of other countries. (191)

Hermann Weigand, in *Der Zauberberg; A Study,* elaborates on the impossibility of ever making our intuition of differences in national character into objective, scientific types and categories:

> In practice we all think of the German, the Englishman, the Frenchman,

> the American as sufficiently distinct types. The rub comes when we try to put our discernment of differences on a scientific basis.... As for approaching the problem by comparative measurements and tabulations of the mental habits and moral characteristics of whole populations, it is enough to face the idea to realize its absurdity. There would be no agreement on essential criteria in the first place.... (100)

It was not an unprecedented feeling for people to be attached to a wider community, but the new collective of the nation was a more abstract idea than earlier forms of belonging. This is not to suggest that they were not "deeply attached to some piece of land they called 'home,' especially considering that for most of history the great majority of them belonged to that most rooted part of humanity, those who live by agriculture. But that 'home territory' was no more like the territory of the modern nation than the word 'father' in the modern term 'fatherland' was like a real parent. The 'homeland' was the locus of a real community of human beings with real social relations with each other, not the imaginary community which creates some sort of bond between members of a population of tens — today even hundreds — of millions" (Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire* 148). The nation provided a new kind of home, one which formed a community which was not immediately given: "Man is not born with feelings of national self-consciousness" (Gilbert et al. 1049). The artificiality of this community demanded rituals and symbols, which were often resurrected or invented. "The problem before us derives from the fact that the modern nation, either as a state or as a body of people aspiring to form such a state, differs in size, scale and nature from the actual communities with which human beings have identified over most of history, and makes quite different

demands on them" (Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism* 46). The state took an active role in propagating the nation (which was now its source of legitimacy): "States therefore created 'nations,' i.e., national patriotism and, at least for certain purposes, linguistically and administratively homogenized citizens with particular urgency and zeal. The French Republic turned peasants into Frenchmen. The Italian Kingdom, following D'Azeglio's slogan, did its best, with mixed success, to 'make Italians' through school and military service, after having 'made Italy'" (Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism* 150). Trained in national schools and the army, parading their loyalty on occasions of "national awareness" events, the citizens of modern nation-states learnt a new identity.

Chapter 2: E.M. Forster

The question of unreflective national stereotypes and their influence upon human behaviour is a recurrent theme in the novels of E.M. Forster. Especially in his early work (*A Room with a View*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*), Forster portrays the English abroad; he removes his characters from their comfortable lives in England, satirizing their suspicion of anything foreign and their refusal to explore beyond their own national habits, even when they travel. In his two major novels, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India,* the issue of nationality is part of a wider discussion of contemporary society and its relation to the other. Nonetheless, even these later novels betray a deep concern with the (often limiting and destructive) role of nationality and nationalism in human affairs. As our discussion of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India* will testify, Forster's work consistently attests to the primacy of universality over nationality.

Where Angels Fear to Tread

In its juxtaposition of Italy and England, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) stages a meeting between the two countries that shows national stereotypes and identities in action. It investigates the nature, and the extent, of the cultural clash between England and Italy. Though it uncovers cultural differences, Forster's text disputes the division of peoples and cultures into separate, exclusive nations, finding notions of "national

characteristics" limiting and insufficient. Philip's romanticization of Italy, like Harriet's repudiation of it, are opposite responses to the same principles and rhetoric of the all-important nation and the distinctness of each nationality, an ideology which dominated early twentieth-century Europe. The siblings' attitudes may be opposed, but they are both informed by the same national(ist) *Weltanschauung* that seeks to explain everyone and everything along national lines. In place of a deep faith in nations and nationalities Forster presents a humanist vision of Italians and Englishmen as superficially different, but fundamentally alike.

The text's first clash of nations occurs in the marriage of a middle-aged Englishwoman, Lilia, to a young Italian man, Gino, occasioning in her English in-laws much consternation and the conviction that the union can only fail. The bride's brother-in-law from her first marriage, Philip Herriton, is sent on a patriotic mission to prevent the marriage; he advises the bridegroom, Gino, that "she is English, you are Italian; she is accustomed to one thing, you to another" (37). The rest of the novel is an answer to this drastic judgment, an investigation into whether these national differences are indeed as decisive as Philip contends. As the text proceeds it also undercuts the reasoning that pervaded pre-World War I Europe (and which, though metamorphosized, continues to this day): that is, the belief in the idea of separate and distinct national, and by extension racial, (stereo)types. For Philip it is sufficient to pronounce nothing more than the fact that Lilia and Gino are of different nationalities to defend and explain his disapproval of the match. He does not bother to identify either party as having certain characteristics which might make them incompatible; as far as he is concerned, the mere fact that one is

English and the other Italian already dooms the marriage. Presumably, then, national characteristics are so key as to overrule personal ones, thus implying that people live as representatives of their nation, as an "Englishwoman" and "an Italian" and not as two independent individuals.

This reading is in agreement with the third-person narrator's, who confirms Philip's objections by claiming that: "No one realized that more than personalities were engaged; that the struggle was national; that generations of ancestors, good, bad, or indifferent, forbad the Latin man to be chivalrous to the northern woman, the northern woman to forgive the Latin man" (65). Elsewhere, in a similar tone, the narrator observes: "Signor Carella, with the brutality so common in Italians, had caught her [the cat] by the paw and flung her away from him" (32); one could list other similar instances where the narrator appears to reinforce national stereotypes. But in spite of his prominence in the novel, the narrator's comments lose much of their authority when viewed in the context of the novel as a whole. The sum of narratorial comments suggests that there is no consistent difference between the narrator's perspective and that of Philip and Caroline. At no point in the text is there any meditation on the nature of Englishness, though there are countless references to typical Italian traits. It seems unwise to give such a limited narrator any more credence than the characters themselves.

Moreover, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is a lamentation on the consequences of a heightened awareness of national identity, culminating as it does in the death of a baby of Lilia's and Gino's marriage, and Forster's usage of national stereotypes and characterizations must be viewed in this light. If, by presenting somehow emblematic

English and Italian characters and settings, Forster runs the risk of reinforcing already established national stereotypes — if not initiating his own —, he also takes pains to develop strategies that undermine the stereotypes in question. This complicity between the novel's content and its own immediate relevance to that very content makes *Where Angels Fear to Tread* an especially compelling "political" novel.

Where Angels Fear to Tread does not make the naive gesture of totally denying the existence of national differences and stereotypes. Rather, it questions their validity by uncovering their exaggeration (if not complete inaccuracy) and by demonstrating their unfortunate consequences. In exposing the national(ist) mentality as ultimately groundless, the novel upholds universality over nationality.

Forster's novel illustrates how the rhetoric of the modern nation restricts human experience. The text insists that a world divided along superficial national lines can only be sustained by insufficient stereotypes, and that these misleading stereotypes, and therefore the national categories themselves, demand blind faith, producing someone like Harriet, for whom everything is a question of Englishness and its enemies. Her concern for Lilia's and Gino's child is purely national: the baby must be rescued from Italy. Similarly, the opera is abhorrent to Harriet because it is so distant from her Englishness. Even Lilia, who is expansive (or perhaps sensational) enough to marry Gino, is anxious to defend the principle of Englishness above personal concerns: "An unexpected terror seized her at the thought of Irma or any English child being educated at Monteriano" (44). It is not so much the well-being of Lilia's own daughter that is at stake, but Englishness itself: Irma is no more precious than any other English child.

Lilia's daughter Irma's query, whether "Italian babies talk sooner than us, or would he be an English baby born abroad" (80), exposes the precariousness of national categories. Irma's confusion as to her baby brother's status is revealing in several ways; for one thing, her question indicates that national fervour is indeed so widespread that even ten-year-old children think in its terms. But more interestingly, her child's insight penetrates the point at which national categories collapse into meaninglessness. The notion of inherent, in-born national characteristics is directly undermined by the bizarre yet, according to national rhetoric, logical idea that a baby's biological development might vary according to nationality. Yet unformed and nonverbal, infants defy national categories. It can only seem ridiculous to speak of "English" or "Italian" babies. Like the German-English Schlegel sisters of *Howards End*, Lilia's baby presents a fundamental problem for an ideology which asserts that any nationality is entirely distinct and exclusive. Is the baby English or Italian? And how can two nationalities which are so separate be so easily merged?

Forster succinctly and repeatedly hints at how these national stereotypes do not merely taint perception, but actually predetermine it: "and tourists, flying through the Palazzo Publico opposite, could observe how the Italians wasted time" (52). The acute awareness of distinct national characteristics is not the result of individual observation or consideration; in this scene, as in many others, one sees how the predetermination by national stereotypes prevents any immediate or pure experience of the national other. The tourists in question do not themselves see the Italians, but observe them as merely qualifying (or, in an unfortunate case, disqualifying) their vision of "Italianness." Here,

the stability of national stereotypes is only indirectly debunked: the narrator does not explicitly state that the idea of "time well spent" pertains only to the perceiving subject, and not to the perceived object. Instead, it is left up to the reader to discern the discrepancy, and to infer the inevitable consequences. In other passages, however, Forster uses his narrator to point out the logical inconsistencies of national stereotypes. Hence, for example, the inserted clause in the following passage: "only that week a tramp had grabbed at her watch — an episode which is *supposed* to be indigenous in Italy, though really less frequent there than in Bond Street"(48; my italics). The verb "supposed" hints at a stereotypical cultural prejudice; the narrator's comment, however, undermines the legitimacy of such a claim. Thus Forster's narrator not only reinforces national stereotypes, but also destabilizes them.

Despite their familial bond, Harriet and Philip embrace totally opposite approaches to Italy, their national other; nevertheless, the disparity between their attitudes to Italy is independent of their shared faith in, and support for, the idea of individual and exclusive nationhoods. Originally, Philip, as much as Harriet, accepts national ideology as legitimate; he disapproves of Lilia's marriage to Gino, seeing it as an interruption to his comfortable position of admiring Italy only as an abstraction: "For three years he had sung the praises of the Italians, but he had never contemplated having one as a relative" (19). As he meditates on the beauty of Gino's face, Philip comments: "But he did not want to see it opposite him at dinner. It was not the face of a gentleman" (31). Yet beyond their mutual compliance with national rhetoric, Philip and Harriet experience their "Englishness" and its other, here "Italianness" (and, to a certain extent, Germanness

as well), in vastly different ways. While Philip seeks an escape from England (and himself), Harriet endeavours to reaffirm it, to find a mirror of her own values and customs. She has always holidayed in "the Protestant parts of Switzerland" (12).

Harriet's attitude to her own national identity is almost manic. Her dedication to the duties of being English is boundless. In anticipation of *Howards End, Where Angels Fear to Tread* does not shy from the suggestion that nationalism has become modernity's religious creed, a new expression of blind faith and zeal. Harriet, we are told, is "pious and patriotic" (13). Her "patriotism" is in fact so intense that she is determined not only to ignore, but even to categorically dismiss the legitimacy of any nation outside her native England. This intolerance is unfounded since it is based in ignorance: "She was curiously virulent about Italy, which she had never visited" (12). At first, one regards Harriet as a more or less comic figure, especially in such an exchanges as this, conveying her disregard of anything which is not English.

> [Harriet:] "And there is no church there, I suppose."
> [Philip:] "There is Santa Deodata, one of the most beautiful churches in Italy."
> [Harriet:] "Of course I mean an English church." (12)

But by the end of the novel it is impossible to view Harriet as a figure of fun, given that it is her zealous patriotism that leads to the infant's death and the premature shattering of the growing friendships between Gino, Philip and Caroline. Overall, Harriet must be seen as a tragic figure; most tragic of all is the reader's sense that her crucial flaws — her childlike faith in causes that instantly simplify every dilemma she ever encounters, the

preference for extremism and action over moderation and deliberation — are hardly extraordinary. Multiplied across populations, the same well-meaning ideological extremism was to facilitate the violent course of the twentieth century. For evidence of that it is enough to recall the rush to arms in 1914.

Formed as it is by virulent faith, Harriet's life denies not only thought, but experience, too. For instance, in contrast to Philip and Caroline, she is fundamentally unable to appreciate anything in the opera performance she attends: "Harriet, meanwhile, had been coughing ominously at the drop-scene" (119). Her hostility to the opera is one of many violent reactions to Italy. Like the Protestants who suffered physical pain upon smelling the incense of a Catholic church, Harriet's pious patriotism extends beyond the scope of an idea or a belief.

Philip, on the other hand, is fascinated and "intoxicated" (4) by Italy, reverential of its "beauty and sincerity" (12) and especially elated by the prospect of experiencing the "real" Italy. He admonishes Lilia: "And don't, let me beg you, go with that awful tourist idea that Italy's only a museum of antiquities and art. Love and understand the Italians, for the people are more marvellous than the land" (4). But Philip's vision of the real Italy ultimately proves to be deceptive, an illusion, for his understanding of even the "real" Italy is much closer to fantasy than reality.

Especially in the character of Philip, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* evokes the profound attraction of a romanticized national other. Judging from what the novel allows us to conclude, Italy is the solitary passion, the only source of joy and meaning, in the young lawyer's deadening Sawston existence. For Philip, Italy represents all the qualities

and experiences that Sawston fails to offer, and he comes to embrace this "other" to the point that Italy ceases to be a real place and becomes an ideal, a vision. Just as Harriet can never successfully encounter Italy because of her militant commitment to the principle of Englishness, neither can Philip ever achieve anything but an artificial relationship with his adored national other. While Harriet is crippled by paranoid fear and defensive pride, Philip is equally hampered by his tendency to regard Italy as a perfect idea. This becomes clear when one learns that the young lawyer is loath to embark on his mission to rescue Lilia from Italy, even though he has only just lamented the fact that he could not join her: "he departed for Italy reluctantly, as for something commonplace and dull" (20).

Philip's romanticization and idealization of Italy participates in a rich literary tradition (Shelley, Byron, Goethe): the search for a spiritual home in an "exotic," far away place. Philip is not alone in embracing Italy's "simplicity and charm" (12), since Lilia and the novel itself view Italy in the same way. But it is not just a question of Philip observing two distinct ways of life in Italy and England, and concluding that the former is so much superior. More crucial than whatever endearing qualities it might possess is Italy's unreality. When Philip is dispatched to save Lilia from Monteriano, the fantasy is forced into the realm of reality and he is suddenly "in no humour for Italy" (21). Until this point Philip has never really lived in Italy, never participated in life beyond the undemanding role of the observer and admirer. Contrary to the image he would like to present of himself, Philip, though a more adventurous tourist, has not penetrated Italy any more than the "Baedeker Brigade." He envisions Italy as a monument, a beautiful refuge

from modernity and progress, and this accounts for his angry dismay at the idea that Gino's father should work as a dentist.

> Philip gave a cry of personal disgust and pain. He shuddered all over, and edged away from his companion. A dentist! A dentist at Monteriano. A dentist in fairyland! False teeth and laughing gas and the tilting chair. At a place which knew the Etruscan league.... (26)

Without gaining any insight into his attitude to Italy, Philip realizes that Italy's relevance to him was as a fairyland created in the imagination. "He was anxious for himself: he feared that Romance might die" (26).

Both Philip and Harriet have fallen prey to the very same deception; like his sister, Philip tends to think and feel in exclusively national terms, interpreting every conceivable aspect of life as a function of nationality. He pronounces: "And I do believe that Italy really purifies and ennobles all who visit her" (8). After experiencing Italy (and Italians), not in the guise of a whimsical tourist but as someone who must interact with them, Philip promptly feels disillusioned and betrayed. The passion driving his fascination with Italy explains the intensity of his disenchantment:

> Italy, the land of beauty, was ruined for him. She had no power to change men and things who dwelt in her. She, too, could produce avarice, brutality, stupidity — and, what was worse, vulgarity. It was on her soil and through her influence that a silly woman had married a cad. He hated Gino, the betrayer of his life's ideal....(69–70)

Philip loses his "life's ideal," that is, his faith in the power of "the land of beauty" to

overcome human deficiencies. He realizes that the national oppositions he had embraced are, in fact, of little importance. Cultural differences may exist, but a nation's distinct character does not actually "change men and things." This enlightenment shatters the man who once proclaimed that "there are no cads in Italy" (33). Lilia's repetition of Philip's earlier remark marks the beginning of his disenchantment; confronted with his own nonsensical generalization, transformed from the impulsive role of speaker to the more cautious, passive position of listener, Philip is "taken aback," disconcerted by the experience of hearing, rather than uttering, his own overstatement. As C.B. Cox observes, Forster, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View*,

> extols the virtues of Greece or Italy, and solves the problem of developing his characters by transporting them to a new environment. Whereas for James the movement to Europe is a search for a rich cultural heritage, for Forster travelling takes the weary, over-civilized middle classes back to more primitive societies. So in Italy the stimulus of Gino's natural behaviour helps Philip and Miss Abbott to escape from their suburban imagination. His spitting on the floor, tickling his friend with a lemonade straw, his ebullience at the opera, all are part of a natural flow of good spirits lost to the English after years tied to Victorian conventions. Full justice is done to the unsavoury aspects of Italian life, to the cruelty of Gino and the dirt of Florence. But there remains something artificial about the treatment of Italy. Gino is a stage figure, not properly understood. As in the short stories, there is a touch of fantasy in the effect of Italy on the English. (92)

Although it occupies only a minor place in the text, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* does present the Italian attitude towards the English. Not surprisingly, the reader discovers a parallel between the fascination with which the English approach Italy, and the eagerness with which Italians embrace their vision of England. Each regards the other

as superior, as an ideal. Regardless of its substance, difference is alluring and attractive. The novel implicitly indicates what might potentially be the most sensible relationship to a national other, one which would avoid Harriet's aggressive intolerance and Philip's deluded romanticization: "The Dogana men admitted them with an air of gracious welcome, and they clattered up the narrow dark street, greeted by that mixture of curiosity and kindness which makes each Italian arrival so wonderful" (29). Meanwhile, Mrs. Herriton is totally bored and unmoved by Baedeker's insights into Monteriano: "Some of the information seemed to her unnecessary, all of it was dull" (17). The Italians who witness Philip's arrival are, then, characterized as being at once gracious — dignified and above ingratiating flattery — and kind, welcoming, and receptive. This healthy attitude of the Italians to the English — a genuine friendliness and curiosity devoid of self-righteous pride — is again seen in Gino, who claims to be drawn to England, without diminishing Italy: "Signor Carella, heartened by the spaghetti and the throat-rasping wine, attempted to talk, and looking politely towards Philip said 'England is a great country. The Italians love England and the English.' Philip, in no mood for international amenities, merely bowed. 'Italy, too,' the other continued a little resentfully, 'is a great country'" (31). Though there may be reason to doubt the sincerity of Gino's appraisal of England, his remarks in themselves suggest a healthy approach to the national other. Gino seems to respect and value Italy and England equally; they are both "great," though in different ways. Harriet's excessive patriotism and Philip's escapism into the fantasy of Italy are both extreme responses to the problem of forming a national identity; Gino, on the other hand, supplants these one-sided approaches with a more balanced one, which

avoids constructing a hierarchy of superior and inferior nations, competing for authority. The "Italian view" appears to overcome this competitive drive with one which strives for equality.

Certainly, Forster's novel acknowledges that national cultural differences can interfere in international interaction; but, in the act of identifying these discrepancies, *Where Angles Fear to Tread* also exposes their irrelevance. For example, in his negotiations with Gino, Philip soon perceives that basic English courtesies — offering a cigarette or chair as a token of politeness (37) — no longer have their desired effect: "He was in the enemy's country and everything — the hot sun, the cold air behind the heat, the endless row of olive trees, regular yet mysterious — seemed hostile to the placid atmosphere of Sawston in which his thoughts took birth" (22). The text presents several instances of misunderstandings resulting from the conflicting cultural conditioning of diverse nations. Once identified, these unfamiliar cultural standards cease to obstruct international mingling.

Although the novel attests to cultural differences among nations, it is equally concerned with identifying those more universal human qualities and needs that defy national boundaries. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* repeatedly depicts Italy as untouched by class divisions, though strictly divided by gender:

> There one may enjoy that exquisite luxury of socialism — that true socialism which is based not on the equality of income or character, but on the equality of manners. In the democracy of the *caffè* or the street the great question of our life has been solved, and the brotherhood of man is a reality. But it is accomplished at the expense of the sisterhood of women.

> Why should you not make friends with your neighbour at the theatre or in the train, when you know and he knows that feminine criticism and feminine insight will never come between you? Though you become as David and Jonathan, you need never enter his home, nor he yours. All your lives you will meet under the open air, the only rooftree of the South, under which he will spit and swear, and you will drop your h's and nobody will think the worse of either. (47)

This seems to be in stark contrast to England, where these exclusions are reversed; but isn't the narrator comparing Italians to only one specific sort of "English?" These juxtapositions may be valid when speaking of the middle classes of England, but one doubts that the same modes of socialization apply to less genteel parts of the population. There is indeed much reason to dispute this opposition; Gino's anxiety about his peers' approval suggests that social position is also a concern for Italians:

> But he was very young, and he could not bear it to be said of him that he did not know how to treat a lady — or to manage a wife. And his own social position was uncertain. Even in England a dentist is a troublesome creature, whom careful people find difficult to class. He hovers between the professions and the trades; he may be only a little lower than the doctors, or he may be down among the chemists, or even beneath them. The son of the Italian dentist felt this too. For himself nothing mattered; he made friends with the people he liked, for he was that glorious invariable creature, a man. (59-60)

Apparently Italian women "do not go out much, for it is not genteel to walk" (47). Gentility is as much a concern in Italy as it is in England. Philip says of Gino: "He's a bounder, but he's not an English bounder. He's mysterious and terrible" (92). Here, again, there is the suggestion that, qualitative variations aside, Italy and England are equally productive of "bounders." The exact form of bounder may differ, but the

essential content — male irresponsibility and wastefulness — is the same. As part of her attempt to pacify Philip, Lilia alludes to Gino's skill at pallone, upon which "he suddenly became shy and developed a conceited grin — the grin of the village yokel whose cricket score is mentioned before a stranger" (32). Regardless of their separate nationalities, Gino and "the village yokel" of England share identical expressions and feelings. Often, characters exploit the myth of national differences for their own benefit. Gino, in urging his family to give up on their plan of residing with him and his wife, assures them "that they could not understand, much less associate with the English lady who was his wife" (42). Gino, as much a provincial Italian as his parents, is able to associate with Lilia; he merely exploits the popular faith in national differences for his own interests.

Last but not least, an essential aspect of the novel's debunking of the ideology of the nation is its indication of other collective entities existent both within and without the nation. By suggesting alternative groupings which might be equally valid — especially by suggesting that collectives can be endlessly magnified or reduced — Forster diminishes the supreme importance attributed to the nation. The municipality of Sawston is often referred to almost as if it were a country, with its own distinct customs and standards: "Lilia would not settle down in her place among Sawston matrons" (10). And upon her recognition that English tea parties are a foreign concept in Monteriano, Lilia concludes "that Continental society was not the go-as-you-please thing she had expected" (47). Lilia does not hesitate to associate the collective Italy with a wider one — the European Continent. It seems a tremendous step to create a unity out of Europe's disparate cultures, whose diverse ways have been contrasted throughout the novel

(especially common are juxtapositions of Germans and Italians). But this jump is possible because every collective must always be constructed, and from one limited perspective. For the English, Italy and the Continent are equally remote and strange.

Forster's first novel thus not only introduces the question of the nation, nationalism, and national identity, but it also questions the very validity of each of these concepts. It shows both the logic of the nationalist discourse and its (sometimes tragic) consequences. In his later novels, Forster returns to the very same issue, probing it from different perspectives, searching for possible alternatives or answers to the challenge of nationalism. *Howards End* (together with *A Passage to India*) is, in this respect a perfect example.

Howards End

Howards End (1910), Forster's fourth novel, explores many of the same issues at stake in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* with a new self-assurance and conviction, engaging questions of nation and nationality with an urgency not found in the previous text. While *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is confined to identifying key difficulties associated with the nation and national identity, *Howards End* is committed to settling these problems, and answering these questions. If *Where Angels Fear to Tread* consists of scattered speculation, *Howards End* delivers a clear proclamation: that the nation's proper role is as a stable, sentimental home, best approached with affection rather than belligerent pride.

It urges the importance of securing a home (and resisting the sameness and transience of true cosmopolitanism). As Anne Wright observes, "The novel and Mrs. Wilcox insist on the value of house as home, and home as the centre of a stable society" (38). However, it seems that in the modern world this attachment to a familiar place cannot be detached from the prevailing doctrine of individual, distinct nations.

Wright regards *Howards End* as "an Edwardian 'condition of England' novel," adding that Forster's England "is not a geographic, political or demographic entity to be recorded objectively" but "rather a series of disparate possibilities for a definition of England as community or way of life" (23, 27). The novel's epigraph "Only connect — " immediately alerts the reader to this plurality and division. Of the divisions that are at work in the lives of the characters of *Howards End* — among them class, gender, generation, political and cultural inclinations — nationality is at once the most immediate and the most remote. Existing outside every other category, it is the most crucial and decisive of all possible divisions: one is often first identified according to nationality, before there is any mention of age, class or gender. Margaret and Helen's mother, for example, is not known by her name, Emily, but by her nationality; her husband's relatives refer to her simply as "die Engländerin." But, paradoxically, nationality is also the least visible grouping, for it is a construction more abstract than either class or gender.

Much of *Howards End* is devoted to evoking, and ultimately exposing as misguided and malevolent, a proud and self-righteous attitude towards one's nationality, for it inevitably encourages an aggressive and childishly competitive approach to all other nationalities. The novel's occasional references to the threat of war reinforce its critique

of chauvinistic nationalism. Forster's text counters this expression of patriotism by pointing to a more enlightened approach based in affection rather than self-aggrandizing pride, and curiosity in place of hostility. Self-satisfied patriotism is a powerful presence in the book, comically brought to life by the Schlegels' aunt Mrs. Munt and the eldest Wilcox son Charles. Mr. Henry Wilcox too remains suspicious of cosmopolitanism and the continent, but without betraying the same irrational hostility. Though he is similarly seduced by the rhetoric of patriotism, Henry does not resemble Charles and Mrs. Munt in their tendency to reduce every conceivable issue to the often xenophobic logic of "the nation."

An important element in the novel's vision of a more meaningful and sensible patriotism is its uncovering of the blunders that result from Charles's and Mrs. Munt's prejudices. Mrs. Munt, for example, learns "to her horror" that her niece, Margaret, "was taking her money out of the old safe investments and putting it into Foreign Things, which always smash" (14), and she convinces Meg to transfer some of her resources to English shares. Since Aunt Juley's anxieties are based in complete ignorance and error — "the Foreign Things did admirably and the Nottingham and Derby declined ... with steady dignity" — they are revealed to be not only mistaken but damaging too. One might pardon the closed-mindedness of Mrs. Munt's ardent patriotism, but one can hardly applaud its results.

Following Margaret's criticism of the restoration of Stettin cathedral, her aunt pronounces that "The Germans are too thorough, and this is all very well sometimes, but at other times it does not do" (8). The fact that this is an individual case of thoroughness

is quickly obscured by its reflection of Germanness. According to Mrs. Munt's reasoning, the details of one single incident naturally provide sufficient evidence for a conclusion about Germany as a whole, though Mrs. Munt herself has never encountered the thoroughness she describes.

The Wilcox counterpart to Mrs. Munt is Charles, Henry's eldest son. Like Aunt Juley, his appreciation of England is expressed in a blind hostility towards all foreign nations (an attitude which is shown by the narrator to be doubly flawed). In his confusion of patriotism and xenophobia, Charles loses all that is noble in an appreciation of one's home and gains nothing in exchange. Upon being informed of Helen's pregnancy, for instance, he is "anxious to fasten the scandal on Germany" (310). For Charles, this is not an individual indiscretion, but a national one. Ironically, the scandal is, in fact, England's. Following the news of his mother's unexpected directions to bequeath Howards End to Margaret Schlegel, Charles denounces his future step-mother: "'She's a cosmopolitan,' said Charles, looking at his watch. 'I admit I'm rather down on cosmopolitans. My fault, doubtless. I cannot stand them, and a German cosmopolitan is the limit. I think that's about all, isn't it? I want to run down and see Chalkeley. A bicycle will do. And, by the way, I wish you'd speak to Crane some time...'" (101). In this passage, Charles freely admits that his distaste for cosmopolitans says more about himself than it does about them: "my fault, doubtless." But this realization is futile, for the young Wilcox happily persists in his anticosmopolitanism, merely intensifying it with the remark that "a German cosmopolitan" (forgetting that Margaret is half-English and has lived all her life in England) "is the limit." Charles fails to account for exactly how

German cosmopolitans are any worse than English ones, making an empty generalization even more meaningless. The opportunity for reflection and perhaps a revision of his opinions is immediately rejected; like Mrs. Munt, Charles is content to hold strong opinions without taking the least responsibility for them.

As well as being at a loss to defend his xenophobic views, Charles further trivializes them by mingling them with random, insignificant domestic matters. What is most intriguing is Charles's identification of Margaret as a cosmopolitan, applying a label which is itself problematic — Margaret and the narrator seem to regard cosmopolitanism as the (often business-propelled) drive towards eliminating cultural variations, to rationalize the world by submerging regional differences in an amorphous sameness, while Charles's understanding of cosmopolitanism is the remotest interest in anywhere beyond the borders of England. Disregarding these complications, it seems unfair to make a strong association between Margaret and genuine cosmopolitanism. Though eager to explore, at least intellectually and culturally, beyond the scope of England, she does not actively promote internationalism. By the end of the novel Margaret has become deeply attached to England, elated by its familiarity, permanence, and security. In fact, only ten pages after Charles's condemnation of Miss Schlegel and her despicable cosmopolitanism, Margaret makes the sort of remark one would expect from a Wilcox, but not from a "cosmopolitan" Schlegel: "A nation who can produce men of that sort [i.e., Paul Wilcox, stationed in Nigeria] may well be proud. No wonder England has become an Empire.... I can't bother over results.... They are too difficult for me. I can only look at the men. An Empire bores me, so far, but I can appreciate the heroism that builds it

up" (111). Here Margaret subscribes to the complacent circular logic of a patriotism so often associated with empire: England has "produced" men of whom it should be "proud," and, as a consequence, it simply deserves to become an empire. In this exchange between Margaret and her brother Tibby, Forster exposes a notion which is fundamental to the discourse of the modern nation-state: the idea that nations *produce* men. A man's key formative influence is the country he grows up in. These men then belong to, and owe everything to, their native country over themselves as individuals, or any other arguably more immediate collective, be that family, region, religion, or class.

Although he is only briefly present in *Howards End*, the Schlegels' father is crucial to an understanding the novel's insights into the proper place of the nation. Like Mrs. Wilcox, and the mature Margaret, he feels an attachment to his native country that is the very opposite of Mrs. Munt's petty patriotism, and which is betrayed as soon as it is transformed from an airy sentiment and an ideal into a tangible reality: "Peace came — it was all very immense, one had turned into an empire — but he knew that some quality had vanished for which not all Alsace-Lorraine could compensate him" (29). If there is indeed something noble and uplifting in feeling close to one's home and those people associated with it, this emotion is not adequately expressed in aggressive pride or self-satisfaction, and it is especially ill-expressed in rabid hostility to others who feel the same way, but in relation to a different nation. Herr Schlegel deplores this trend, which he considers misguided and fundamentally wrong: "Your pan-Germanism is no more imaginative than is our Imperialism over here. It is the vice of a vulgar mind to be thrilled with bigness, to think that a thousand square miles are a thousand times more

wonderful than one square mile" (29). He represents the idealism of a lost world, having fought for Germany's nationhood "without visualizing the results of victory. A hint of the truth broke on him after Sedan, when he saw the dyed moustaches of Napoleon going grey; another when he entered Paris and saw the smashed windows of the Tuileries" (29). Herr Schlegel could have been fighting for any other freedom or truth — religious or socio-economic — and he would have felt the same disillusionment at the translation of the unreal into the real, for he "had belonged to a type that was more prominent in Germany fifty years ago than now.... 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" (28), and his interest is in ideals rather than the results and facts he disdains as "failing to rekindle the light within" (30).

If each member of the Schlegel family corresponds to a Wilcox (Margaret to Henry, Helen/Mrs. Munt to Charles, Tibby to Evie), it seems that there is no more perfect parallel than that between Herr Schlegel and Mrs. Wilcox. Both share Margaret's childhood insight that "any human being lies nearer to the unseen than any organization" (30), and they retreat from the realm of pragmatic action into a personal one of isolated emotion and thought. Somehow they have recognized that the modern approach is moving further and further away from what they feel to be real and true. Unlike the purposeful men of empire, Mrs. Wilcox and Herr Schlegel are inclined to feel and intuit, rather than think or calculate: Herr Schlegel is "inclined to be dreamy" (28), while Mrs. Wilcox and "daily life were out of focus: one or the other must show blurred. And at lunch she seemed more out of focus than usual, and nearer the line that divides daily life

from a life that may be of greater importance" (76).

Neither Herr Schlegel nor Mrs. Wilcox resolutely opposes the realm of action — Margaret's father fights in no less than three wars in aid of German nationhood, and Mrs. Wilcox has raised three children and been a supportive wife to her husband Henry — but these forms of action stem from their dedication to emotion and ideals, not any regard for results. An academic, Herr Schlegel is deeply distressed at the increasing importance in the modern era of pragmatic goals over ideals, and Mrs. Wilcox is similarly loath to surrender sentiment to purpose, resisting all attempts at modernizing Howards End (the pony stable being converted to a garage, for example).

Mrs. Wilcox is even more remote from the active realm than her Schlegel counterpart, for she has never entered it sufficiently to suffer the same disenchantment. It would seem that Mrs. Wilcox has never emerged from an almost child-like stage of self-enclosed emotion, sentimentality, and curiosity, having decided to take responsibility for herself and her family without concerning herself with anything outside of this familiar and most meaningful space. She fails to see the need for discussion and debate about which of "the two supreme nations" might be superior, but she is concerned about war: "I am sure that if the mothers of various nations could meet, there would be no more wars" (90). Most importantly, Mrs. Wilcox withholds her allegiance to any side. Many of these tendencies become evident during her lunchtime visit at the Schlegel home. The conversation evolves into a discussion of the different artistic sensibilities of Germany and England, leading Mrs. Wilcox to comment to Margaret: "Your last speech interested me so much. Generally people do not seem quite to like Germany. I have long wanted to

hear what is said on the other side" (76). Unlike the vast majority of her countrymen, Mrs. Wilcox is intrigued by the distinct characters of England and Germany. Instead of articulating the habitual hostility towards Germany, she is puzzled, even troubled, by this dislike and is actually curious to hear what the Germans' attitude towards England might be. Mrs. Wilcox is unusually aware of the other side, which must also have an equally legitimate voice; this may seem self-evident but it is a fact which Mrs. Munt and Charles are quick to forget. They behave as though Germany exists only in the critical eyes of the English. In denying her own loyalty to any side she appears to refute that there really are, or at least should be, sides at all: "'I have no side. But my husband' — her voice softened, the chill increased – 'has very little faith in the Continent, and our children have all taken after him'" (76). Although she is surrounded by — and tolerates — those people who are sceptical about the Continent, Mrs. Wilcox refuses to be associated with a given side. More than that, she is just as suspicious of the idea that the generations should be so different from one another: "For another, you young people move so quickly that it dazes me. Charles is the same, Dolly the same. But we are all in the same boat, old and young. I never forget that" (78). Her attachment to the simplicity and tradition of Howards End is an expression of values which are universal. As Barbara Rosecrance notes: "The rural values not only transcend the claims of personal relations and the inner life: Forster posits the attainment of a universal human harmony through a vital relation to the rural tradition" (115). Margaret too comes to dispute the division of the world and its people into strict oppositions and to urge that the novel's epigraph be followed: "How dare Schlegels despise Wilcoxes, when it takes all sorts to make a world?" (104).

Margaret joins her father and Mrs. Wilcox in their more enlightened and peaceful patriotism, regarding England as a home: a place which is meaningful for its familiarity, stability and security, and whatever makes it distinct. This is a sentimental attachment, untainted by the remotest animosity to other nations. Such a "sentimental love of the mother-country, particularly when traced to recollections of youth and perceptions of rural England, proves central to expressions of Englishness in the literature of the period" (Colls and Dod 117). Margaret appreciates England for its own qualities, without championing them as being superior to those of any other country. In their essay "A Literature for England," Peter Brooker and Peter Widdowson note that there is a "distinction between forms of declamatory, cajoling and uplifting patriotism and a non-aggressive, sometimes non-militaristic, patriotism invested in ideas of the national character, its traditions, and a unifying love of the country" (Colls and Dodd 117).

> She recaptured the sense of space, which is the basis of all earthly beauty, and starting from Howards End, she attempted to realize England. She failed — visions do not come when we try, though they may come through trying. But an unexpected love of the island awoke in her, connecting on this side with the joys of the flesh, on that with the inconceivable. Helen and her father had known this love, poor Leonard Bast was groping after it, but it had been hidden from Margaret till this afternoon. It had certainly come through the house and Miss Avery. (204)

As in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Forster ironically manipulates national stereotypes, alternately inscribing and destabilizing them in an ambitious effort to penetrate their genesis and functioning, and to seek out their meaning, or lack thereof.

The novel uncovers the effects of the intermediate state between national isolationism and full internationalism. In place of a genuine experience of, and interaction with, foreign cultures, there is merely its illusion, in the form of stereotyped information and images. Mrs. Munt and Charles are confident in their opinions about Germany, though they have never ventured there; their smug insights into Germany and Germans are uncritical reiterations of popular stereotypes. This is a uniquely modern problem; for the first time there is an acute consciousness of an international community, but without the dialogue and congenial spirit necessary for it to function happily and peacefully.

As far as Mrs. Munt is concerned, "one knows what foreigners are" (14). She regards a stereotype — the questionable idea that all foreigners should be similarly disagreeable — as truth. A foreigner is left no opportunity to act autonomously, human actions being not individual but rather a reflection of foreignness. What is most remarkable is the definitive *knowledge* of "what foreigners are" — how can the foreigners ever be openly encountered if their qualities are always already established? The subject of this verb is also of interest: *one* knows. It is not Mrs. Munt who knows, nor any of her acquaintances, but an anonymous, untouchable yet authoritative "one." This is the voice of stereotypes.

Howards End demonstrates how an acute awareness of nationality encourages an experience of the world that excludes individual perception and thought. Forster suggests that these images and concepts of what it is to be "English" or "German" assume a crucial role in forming individual behaviour and character. It is not only others that are understood as stereotypes come to life, but oneself, too. Rather than thinking and acting

as an independent individual, the modern national citizen comes to live life as an affirmation of the national character, aspiring to and emulating its chosen traits and virtues. *Howards End* laments modern life for manifold reasons. One aspect of this critique is the mindless drive to maximum size (as Herr Schlegel says, "when their [England's] poets over here try to celebrate bigness they are dead at once, and naturally. Your poets too are dying, your philosophers..." [29]) and speed; another is the threat of an anonymous nomadic and cosmopolitan existence. Yet the novel's interest in nationality, and the grave degree to which it intrudes into the modern individual's identity, should also be considered as an essential element in its disparaging depiction of Europe in the Age of Empire. For Leonard Bast a national identity has intruded into an individual one. He assures his companion Jacky: "My word's my word. I've promised to marry you as soon as ever I'm twenty-one, and I can't keep on being worried. I've worries enough. It isn't likely I'd throw you over, let alone my word, when I've spent all this money. Besides, I'm an Englishman, and I never go back on my word" (53). Whether or not Leonard makes this final comment seriously, it illustrates that he has had the same exposure to this reasoning as Mrs. Munt and Charles, and that he himself endorses it. A particularly vulnerable target of national(ist) rhetoric, given just enough education to have been instructed in patriotic sentiment without acquiring the skill to evaluate or understand it, Leonard claims that the mere fact of being an Englishman demands and accounts for certain behaviour. It is fair to suppose that Leonard welcomes the appeal of a national identity because he lacks one of his own; and one hardly doubts that this compliant clerk would keep his word, if only to affirm that he is a proper

"Englishman."

Howards End is particularly interesting in its illustration of how national stereotypes invade individual identity; how hackneyed images of "Englishness" or "Germanness" are embraced as real, and how they are avidly propagated at the expense of individual thought or taste. Forster also illustrates the omnipresence of national stereotypes. There appears to be no endeavour into which they do not intrude; whether attending a musical concert or patronizing a restaurant, there is always the question of how this activity is an expression of national character. Many figures in the novel are consumed by this notion of national character, to the point that their judgments of the aforementioned concerts and restaurants disregard all other considerations.

For the Schlegels' cousin Frieda, at least, the motivation of listening to Beethoven's music is to appreciate its "typically German" qualities. During the performance of his Fifth Symphony Fräulein Mosebach "remembers all the time that Beethoven is 'echt Deutsch'" (31). Mrs. Munt is suitably distraught at the thought that Germans might be considered the better composers, insisting that Ms. Mosebach and her companion, Herr Liesecke give Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* a chance: "'Oh Margaret, you tiresome girl,' cried her aunt... "I am so anxious for him to hear what *we* are doing in music. Oh, you mustn't run down our English composers, Margaret'" (36). Mrs. Munt has nothing to say about the musical merit of Elgar; he is simply a musical affirmation of England's supremacy. Elgar's significance is his Englishness, not any unique quality of his compositions. Suitably, Forster selects Beethoven and Elgar as the key musical figures of Germany and England. Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* is most

appropriate for this role, for its creator and audience alike associate its restrained, dignified grandeur with the English national character. "Elgar's music was at the forefront of national rivalry" (Crump 166). Those composers who fail to express Elgar's Englishness are never canonized; their compositions are never counted among England's great musical achievements. These are, of course, English composers but their Englishness is not the Englishness that has been constructed as official truth.

Howards End loses no time in disputing the notion that there could ever be truly distinct, exclusive nations, by introducing as its principal characters a family which combines two separate nationalities: English and German. The children of a German father and an English mother, Margaret, Helen, and Tibby Schlegel lack a clear national identity, one which cannot be accommodated within the logic of chauvinistic nationalism. Since it defies purity and clarity, their nationality can only ever be judged and interpreted. Mrs. Munt assures Meg: "Of course I regard you Schlegels as English.... English to the backbone" (8). But the Schlegels are not and never will be English to the backbone. They can only ever be regarded as such, measured and judged by others intent on applying national labels where none can be applied. The simple fact of the Schlegels' double heritage succinctly introduces into the text the basic question of what exactly nationality consists of. There is no hope of a definitive answer to this question, for, like other abstractions, nationality exists only in the minds of those who believe in it, and this belief is by no means constant over time or space. Evidently, it is not enough to have been born and raised in a country in order to lay claim to its nationality, for the narrator and nearly everyone else disputes that the Schlegel children are "English to the backbone." Though

there are cultural differences between England and Germany, these are for the most part relatively slight and, in any case, learned. One ought to question whether it is really nationality that divides men, for though they have both grown up in England, it is evident that Charles Wilcox and Tibby Schlegel have "nothing in common but the English language" (309); rather, "the gulf between them was economic as well as spiritual" (309).

Genetically, the Schlegel offspring are neither properly English nor wholly German, but an impossible mix of the two, accepted by either country with reservation: "They were not 'English to the backbone,' as their aunt had piously asserted. But, similarly, they were not 'Germans of the dreadful sort'" (28). Meanwhile, their father's German relatives "knew that his children, though scarcely English of the dreadful sort, would never be German to the backbone" (29). It would seem that the English and the Germans are not so vastly different, for their understanding of nationality and each other is virtually identical. They share the concept of a nationality which would be to the backbone, and the collocation "Germans/English (any foreign nationality) of that dreadful sort" is also common to both. One phrase is as meaningless as the other; what does "to the backbone" mean? What distinguishes a German of the dreadful sort from a German of the non-dreadful sort? Are the "Germans of the dreadful sort" dreadful in the same way as the "English of the dreadful sort"? As is common in the logic and rhetoric of the nation, these are just empty, convenient labels. R.N. Parkinson notes that this "syntactical repetition may appear simply to intensify the comedy: we are presented with equal, opposite and ridiculous prejudices whose complacent extravagance is antithetically absurd" (58). The shift between humour and earnest discussion allows Forster's narrator

to advocate his own position. The passage creates "a double perspective [at once 'serious and comic, affirmative and ironic'] which persuades the reader that the author is reliable and enables him to accept the important statement about Margaret which follows further comedy. 'Her conclusion was, that any human being lies nearer to the unseen than any organization, and from this she never varied' — almost without noticing that he has done so" (Parkinson 58–59).

Until the creation of a German-English national mythology, the Schlegels are no one but themselves. With these transnational Schlegels Forster poses an insoluble problem for national(ist) rhetoric. As soon as there is the possibility of meeting, as Margaret and Helen's parents do, nations cease to be so distinct and separate. The Schlegel children enjoy a privileged position: their German Englishness or English Germanness allows them to resist the pressures of either nationality:

> It was a unique education for the little girls. The haughty nephew would be at Wickham Place one day, bringing with him an even haughtier wife, both convinced that Germany was appointed by God to govern the world. Aunt Juley would come the next day, convinced that Great Britain had been appointed to the same post by the same authority. Were both these loud-voiced parties right? (30)

One suspects that both loud-voiced parties are wrong. It is at this very early stage in the text — the fourth of forty-four chapters — that Forster is most explicit in his exposure of the logical impossibility of early twentieth-century nationalism, and the rest of the novel is consistent with this introduction to the subject of nations and nationality. Once again, the Germans and the English betray more similarities than differences,

adopting attitudes to nationality which perfectly mirror each other. Both parties are proud supporters of a belligerent patriotism which is to be manifested in governing the world. The German nephew and Mrs. Munt alike are eager participants in the race for national supremacy, anxious for their nation to emerge as the best and the most powerful. If we are to see the Schlegel children's English aunt and German nephew as representative of their respective nations (and it seems that we should), it appears that the sentimental and idealistic patriotism of Herr Schlegel and Mrs. Wilcox has been discarded in favour of an aggressive nationalism that values dominance and power. If the Schlegels' German nephew and English aunt do entertain an affectionate and sentimental attachment to Germany and England, it is only as an afterthought to their jingoism, for such patriots are much more interested in their own nations as substitutes for their own competitive egos. They are elated by the lure of power and preeminence, readily supporting the idea that one single nation should govern the world.

People like Mrs. Munt are confident in their national superiority, but because they are unable to prove such an impossibility (there being no universally accepted scale to measure supremacy), they invoke God as their appointee. In implicating divinity in these petty national rivalries, the nephew and aunt make the grave mistake of confusing the seen and the unseen, the real and the unreal. God can only retain His sacred significance as long as He is dissociated from secular institutions like the nation. It is, in any case, nonsensical to speak of God's appointing nations to govern the world; He is invoked only because there is no possible way, not even through war, for one country to assert its spiritual supremacy. God is also conveniently speechless and absent, but nonetheless

authoritative, and so He is an ideal candidate for the role the nephew and Mrs. Munt wish to assign. But how could God ever convey His judgments of which supreme nation is to govern the world? This is an intriguing question, for it seems that He has appointed both England and Germany to the very same position. This leads the young Margaret to request a debate of the matter, "whereat they blushed and began to talk about the weather" (30). The text abounds in such examples of people confessing virulent opinions, without accepting responsibility for them, what Parkinson calls "complacent extravagance," a fateful combination that may invite war: "The remark would be untrue, but of the kind which, if stated often enough, may become true; just as the remark, 'England and Germany are bound to fight,' renders war a little more likely each time that it is made, and therefore made the more readily by the gutter press of either nation" (62–63). Though yet a child, Margaret is more sensible than her adult relatives, concluding thus: "To me one of two things is very clear; either God does not know his own mind about England and Germany, or else these do not know the mind of God.... Her conclusion was that any human being lies nearer to the unseen than any organization, and from this she never varied" (31).

Howards End exposes the artificiality of any nation's borders. A country only officially begins to exist after some authority has assigned borders it considers appropriate. And though national(ist) dogma would like to obscure this fact, borders are hardly intrinsic or essential, but require an act of creation. These borders, and the nations they define, are then, rather arbitrary and are open to revision: "They were nearing the buttresses that force the Severn eastern and make it an English stream, and the sun,

sinking over the Sentinels of Wales, was straight in their eyes" (211). Like the Schlegels, this river denies borders, being at once Welsh and English; but the text appears to question that the Severn is an English stream at all: it is only made so. "It [Oniton] , too, had suffered in the border warfare between things as they are and as they ought to be" (231). Given their precarious creation, it seems remarkable that nations should inspire such intense loyalty.

As these quotes affirm, natural landmarks existed long before nations. Mrs. Munt and Frida Mosebach seem absurd when they competitively compare the hills and rivers of England and Germany, using natural phenomena to demonstrate their native country's supremacy:

> So Frieda Mosebach, now Frau Architect Liesecke, and mother to her husband's baby, was brought up to these heights to be impressed, and, after a prolonged gaze, she said that the hills were more swelling here than in Pomerania, which was true, but did not seem to Mrs. Munt apposite. Poole Harbour was dry, which led her to praise the absence of muddy foreshore at Friedrich Wilhelms Bad, Ruegen, where beech-trees hang over the tideless Baltic, and cows may contemplate the brine. Rather unhealthy, Mrs. Munt thought this would be, water being safer when it moved about.
>
> "And your English lakes — Vindemere, Grasmere — are they, then, unhealthy?"
>
> "No, Frau Liesecke; but that is because they are fresh water, and different...." (68)

Howards End draws attention to the visual representation of the world's nations in geographical maps, which make arbitrary borders official and obscure the fact that man's claim to land can never be intrinsic or essential. The novel seems to deplore this modern

tendency, especially associated with imperialism:

> And even when she penetrated to the inner depths, she found only the ordinary table and Turkey carpet, and though the map over the fireplace did depict a helping of West Africa, it was a very ordinary map. Another map hung opposite, on which the whole continent appeared, looking like a whale marked out for blubber, and by its side was a door, shut, but Henry's voice came through it, dictating a "strong" letter. She might have been at the Porphyrion, or Dempster's Bank, or her own wine-merchant's. Everything seems imperial in these days. But perhaps she was seeing the Imperial side of the company rather than its West African, and Imperialism had always been one of her difficulties. (196)

With mapping, places and cultures assume the status of mere possessions, caught and then depleted like "a whale marked out for blubber." Such maps are the perfect expression of imperialism, implying its interest in foreign nations as material which is to be possessed and then proudly displayed. Imperialists, cartographers, and businessmen discard emotion and curiosity from their dealings with foreign countries, interacting with the unknown cultures of Africa and Asia in a manner that is purely clinical and detached, conveying it in what is only "a very ordinary map." Later on in her relationship with Henry, Margaret recalls this sad map: "Now she thought of the map of Africa; of empires; of her father; of the two supreme nations, streams of 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.... But it was the house beating, faintly at first, then loudly, martially. It dominated the rain" (267). Meg apprehends the illusion of nation and empire, intuitively sensing that empires and supreme nations are mistaken in their desire

for maximum size and power. The grandeur of empire is merely seductive, but Howards End, an individual home to but a few people, is real. The modern age has turned to impersonal collectives and vast enterprises for meaning, titillated by the challenge of proving their preeminence. Like her father and Mrs. Wilcox, Margaret is unmoved by these petty struggles, and she rejects them in favour of the individual: "In these English farms, if anywhere, one might see life steadily and see it whole, group in one vision its transitoriness and its eternal youth, connect — connect without bitterness until all men are brothers" (269). Imperialism is exploitative and empty, nationalism belligerent and false. It is only individual places and relationships that offer any hope of truth and meaning.

Forster's novel is illuminating in its uncovering of the invention and myth-making essential to the construction of a national character. John Lucas points to the deliberate search for national qualities: "There has to be at least the pretense of a common purpose, and this purpose is linked to and expressed by means of nationalism. 'Essential' national characteristics are then *discovered* and celebrated. They are what *we* have in common" (2, my emphasis). *Howards End* shows the idea of a national character to be highly suspect; it shows that there is no such thing as a demonstrable, tangible, authentic national character, only specific interpretations of it. Careful selection and invention must precede the codification of typically English (or any other nationality's) traits and values. It seems an impossible task to ascribe certain tendencies to certain nations, for any national unity is based in regional differences. It also seems unlikely that specific characteristics, such as honesty or propriety, should be any more natural to the English

than to any other nationality. And if differences between people are indeed so relevant, how can individual, familial, gender, religious, and class divisions be reconciled within a single, strictly defined national character? Who decides what the national character is, and by what criteria? How can these criteria ever be proven? Does national character change? As Lucas argues "to produce this nationally sanctioned authority, this at-oneness, not only requires the kind of surveillance to which Gidden draws attention, it also requires a homogenising of culture in its broadest aspects" (2).

It may well be that significant numbers of Englishmen evince honesty and propriety, but only because they have been instructed to do so. A national character is thus nothing more than a set of values chosen and then propagated by the establishment, and it serves a double purpose. It conveniently instills uniform behaviour across the nation, making it more cohesive and governable; but more important is its legitimization of the claims of distinct nationhood. The idea that all Englishmen really do share distinct qualities grants national(ist) rhetoric an authority and rationale it desperately needs.

The modern nation-state is itself a novel phenomenon, as is the concept of different national characters. But if permanence suggests authority, the past must also be shown to evince this newly discovered (that is, invented) national character. The "Old English" decor of the restaurant where Margaret meets Henry for lunch is a good example of this pretence at a historical national character:

> Her [Margaret's] eyes surveyed the restaurant and admired its well-calculated tributes to the solidity of our past. Though no more Old English than the works of Kipling, it had selected its reminiscences so adroitly that her criticism was lulled, and the guests whom it was nourishing for

> imperial purposes bore the outer semblance of Parson Adams or Tom Jones. Scraps of their talk jarred oddly to the ear.
> "Right you are! I'll cable out to Uganda this evening," came from the table behind. "Their emperor wants war; well, let him have it," was the opinion of a clergyman. She smiled at such incongruities. (153)

Until very recently there has been no such acute consciousness of a distinct, cohesive entity known as England; it seems false to speak of the past in these modern terms. People may now think of themselves as English, but this is not a constant identity. "Old English" is an empty phrase, conveying a mythologized image of the past which has been consciously created. It excludes far more of the essence of Old England than it can ever include, and this characterization of the national past, like that of the national present, is a selection, an interpretation. Kipling has been sanctioned as expressing the spirit of "Old England" but Charles Dickens has not. And, even if there is such a thing as "Old English," Margaret does not agree with Henry that this restaurant captures it. She probably senses that it is a much better representation of a 'New England,' evoking its imperial atmosphere.

As a novel about modernity, *Howards End* presents a serious discussion of imperialism. Indeed, the book's attack on cosmopolitanism is very closely linked to the imperial drive: cosmopolitan and imperial become virtually synonymous terms. There are frequent indications in the text that both these trends – away from the personal, towards infinite size; away from diversity and character to one faceless mass – are misguided, ushering in the destruction of 'human relations' and slowly erasing all that is meaningful in favour of what is "grey." Forster portrays this "rootlessness ... as a modern horror"

(Rosecrance 115).

As far as Forster is concerned, a cosmopolitan and imperial world will produce a new form of humanity, one which has lost sight of feeling and compassion and cares only for speed, size, and productivity. "At the chalk pit a motor passed him. In it was another type whom Nature favours — the Imperial. Healthy, ever in motion, it hopes to inherit the earth. It breeds as quickly as the yeoman, and as soundly; strong is the temptation to acclaim it as a super-yeoman, who carries his country's virtue overseas. But the Imperialist is not what he thinks or seems. He is a destroyer. He prepares the way for cosmopolitanism, and though his ambitions may be fulfilled, the earth that he inherits will be grey" (323). True cosmopolitanism will be just as disastrous for human relations as the current flirtation with xenophobic nationalism: "London was but a foretaste of this nomadic civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly, and throws upon personal relations a stress greater than they have ever borne before. Under cosmopolitanism, if it comes, we shall receive no help from the earth. Trees and meadows and mountains will only be a spectacle, and the binding force that they once exercised on character must be entrusted to Love alone. May Love be equal to the task!" (261).

A Passage to India

A Passage to India was to be Forster's final novel; written over the course of 12 transformative years and published in 1924, it is critically regarded as his masterpiece. It is a more mature work than his earlier fiction: at once a novel of fuller characters, wider themes, and a more serious tone. The gentle irony and satire of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *Howards End* has been displaced by an immense existential angst: a preoccupation with the problems of spirituality and the human condition as such. While *Howards End* urges "Only connect," *A Passage to India* suggests that even if such a connection is possible, it is ultimately meaningless in what seems to be a godless universe. Unlike Forster's earlier fictional works, *A Passage to India* is a portrait of imperialism, rather than of England's relationship to itself or other European nations, and it evokes the British Empire's particular brand of Englishness, which is tainted by the experience of (alleged) racial superiority and expatriate life. It would be fair to assert that Forster's attitudes towards national identity remain fundamentally constant — each of his novels urges that national identities formed by reductive, largely illusory stereotypes obscure humanity's essential common ground. But his perspective undergoes several transformations. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* portrays the manner in which the English experience an exotic national other, while *Howards End* is a lamentation of belligerent jingoism. *A Passage to India* in turn dramatizes the injustices and consequences of imperialism, an official structure which seeks to unite disparate cultures, but within a hierarchy of inequality.

Appropriately, *A Passage to India* begins with a casual discussion of whether friendship between Englishmen and Indians could ever be possible. We are first introduced to many of the novel's principal Indian characters as they debate this question. Naturally, this dilemma is central to the book, and its many nuances and complexities are exhaustively explored over the course of the novel. *A Passage to India* begins and ends with the hopeless conclusion that true friendship will only ever elude these two peoples as long as they are joined by empire; the action contained between this beginning and end might be regarded as an experiment in English-Indian relations, a test of whether the potential for intimacy is really so bleak. Hamidullah presents an interesting figure; he has been to England, receiving "a cordial welcome at Cambridge" (31). His reception in the home of Reverend and Mrs. Bannister was a kind and warm one: "They were father and mother to me, I talked to them as I do now. In the vacations their rectory became my home" (32). In England, there seemed to be no limit to the intimacy that could develop between a young Indian and an English family; Hamidullah was able to express himself to talk as freely among the Bannisters as in the company of his fellow Indian Moslems, Mahmoud Ali and Aziz. But such cordiality is attainable only in England. As soon as the location is shifted to colonial India, the conditions for friendship have transformed so radically that it is rendered virtually impossible. For in the British Raj no one can live as an independent-thinking individual; one has no choice but to become the voiceless, faceless member of a herd. Imperialism cannot function without this levelling of people into two totally distinct groups, the colonial*ists* and the colon*ized*; its authority, legitimacy, and rationale all derive from the assumption that those who colonize are

superior, endowed with certain qualities which they all naturally possess, now and forever, and which the colonized can never hope to achieve. All Englishmen, and all Englishwomen, are, of course, not the same, but they must be made so if they are to be successful imperialists. Similarly, imperialism is maintained by the belief that all the colonized are alike, that they all betray given characteristics recognized by the imperialists and then forever presumed by them, informing their policy and attitudes. Living within an imperial order, one is obliged to make an absolute exchange of the freedom of an individual identity for the security of a collective one; independent thought is restricted, if not totally obstructed. When confronted by his concerned mother, Ronny simply mouths the exact words of his superiors, unable or unwilling to think past them: "in order to silence her he had been using phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials... " (49). Ronny does not hesitate to make his opinions conform to popular, official ones. In colonial India, it is impossible to make a division between one's life as a private individual and as a public, national citizen; the two identities are inseparably intertwined. Ronny can only think of himself as a type, living as an official on and off the job: "but the only link he could be conscious of with an Indian was the official, and neither (Godbole, Aziz) happened to be his subordinate. As private individuals he forgot them," excusing himself with the explanation that he's "the sun-dried bureaucrat, no doubt" (86).

As far as Hamidullah is concerned, friendship "is possible in England. ... It is impossible here" (31). He perceives that the British Raj does not tolerate anything but conformist behaviour: "'Yes, they have no chance here, that is my point. They come out

intending to be gentlemen and are told it will not do" (32). Mahmoud Ali mentions "the red-nosed boy" as a prime example of an official whose kindness was forbidden, and one is surprised to hear Hamidullah speak of Turton in the same vein. It seems that the imperial authority — the Collector, the Governor — and its milieu is so oppressive, so persuasive, that resistance and dissent are either forgotten or abandoned. To vary from the accepted, standard views and values would demand a rare strength of character. Adela seems to have understood all this when she remarks: "there's nothing special about me, nothing specially good or strong, which will help me to resist my environment and avoid becoming like them'" (143). As Hamidullah sees it, "they all become exactly the same — not worse, not better. I give any Englishman two years, be he Turton or Burton. And I give any Englishwoman six months. All are exactly alike" (32). Individuality is sacrificed to a collective mentality; independent action and individual responsibility become unthinkable. One is obliged to live as a representative of England, blindly embracing its mythologized values and behaviour and slowly losing the capacity to live individually.

The novel's array of English characters would seem to confirm many of Hamidullah's suspicions: with the exception of Fielding and the newcomers, Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested, the herd mentality has prevailed. Yet it is important that there are exceptions to this general trend. Aziz concedes that "Queen Victoria and Mrs. Bannister were the only exceptions" (33); with the admission that there have been exceptions in the past, it seems likely that there shall be more in the future. As soon as there are divergences from any statement about "the average," the generalization can't be taken

completely seriously. If there are exceptions, how can it be fair to judge people according to a generalization? Mahmoud Ali insists: "'The average woman is like Mrs. Turton, and Aziz, you know what she is.' Aziz did not know, but said he did. He too generalized from his disappointments — it is difficult for members of a subject race to do otherwise. Granted the exceptions, he agreed that all Englishwomen are haughty and venal" (33). The narrator admits that it is "difficult" for the likes of Aziz and Mahmoud Ali to abstain from making, and thinking in terms of, generalizations, but in so doing he implies that this attitude is flawed. The final section in the passage shows why; having granted that there are exceptions, Aziz is still able to attribute the same traits to "all Englishwomen." This "all" is no longer valid: if there are obviously exceptional Englishwomen, it is false to make the same observation of them "all." And, indeed, it is Aziz who is so impressed by Mrs. Moore, another exception.

Earlier in the conversation, Hamidullah distinguishes between Englishmen and Englishwomen, observing that the men's transformation takes three times as long as the womens'; within the collective category of Englishness, there thus emerges a secondary division between the genders. This also seems problematic; if the essential quality of the imperialists is their shared Englishness — whether this means English "blood" or a youth experienced in England no one can say — there should be no such discrepancy between the character of Englishmen and Englishwomen. Otherwise, gender is a more important collective than nationality. How, then, can men and women co-exist?

Continuing a trend from Forster's previous novels, *A Passage to India* points to the ultimate universality uniting humankind. The superficial differences which divide it

are momentarily suspended, and divisive allegiances give way to a "universal brotherhood." Once again, this is not a gesture toward denying the real cultural differences that become obvious as soon as two distinct cultures meet. On the contrary, this novel repeatedly illustrates how immense these differences are: Aziz's invitation to the caves is merely flippant, but Adela and Mrs. Moore understand that it is sincere; the two English ladies do not notice that they have offended the Bhattacharyas. What the novel does dispute is the enthusiasm for strict divisions based on cultural differences, fortifying them rather than overcoming them, and creating misunderstanding and conflict. As in his other work, Forster suggests the terrible consequences of a world where these divisions overstep their role of identifying difference and take on a life of their own, instilling fierce loyalty that is manifested in ignorance, intolerance, and aggression. Cultural differences may interfere in human interaction, but as long as their significance is not overestimated or exaggerated they may be quite easily overcome.

Aziz is struck by his first encounter with Mrs. Moore; assuming that she conforms to his earlier generalization of all Englishwomen as "haughty and venal," he reprimands her for entering the mosque without removing her shoes. To his great astonishment and delight, she already had in fact acknowledged this custom. Having just experienced the usual Anglo-Indian contempt — from Major Callendar and then from the two women who thoughtlessly deprive him of his "carriage" — Aziz is uplifted by the exceptional Mrs. Moore and made ashamed of his instinct to despise the English. In a moment of disdaining the English, Aziz realizes the limitations of his own attitudes. It is highly unlikely that such a meeting should take place, but, once it does, divisions seem to

disappear. Aziz and Mrs. Moore discover that their situations are surprisingly similar, in spite of differences of age, gender, and race. As Aziz himself says, "then we are in the same box" (40); both are widowed, and parents to two sons and one daughter. It is also worth noting that the mosque the two meet in is uncannily like an "English parish church whose side had been taken out" (37); spirituality is expressed similarly in either culture. Europe and the Orient, Christianity and Islam are not so estranged from each other as one might expect.

The English missionaries Sorley and Graysford are only marginally successful in converting Indians to a faith which promises that "In our Father's house are many mansions ... and there alone will the incompatible multitudes of mankind be welcomed and soothed. Not one shall be turned away by the servants on that veranda, be he black or white, not one shall be kept standing who approaches with a loving heart..." (52–53). In suggesting the essential bonds uniting all men and defying their "incompatibility," *A Passage to India* nevertheless expresses grave doubts as to whether this universality will ever be achieved. Its fulfillment is deferred, dissociated from earthly existence. The narrator is explicitly doubtful that the multitudes could ever become compatible: "Perhaps it is futile for men to initiate their own unity, they do but widen the gulfs between them by the attempt" (52). This implies that humans are unequal to the task, incapable of functioning outside divisive groups. Only God, or some wider impersonal force, can hope to surmount this difficulty.

Mrs. Moore, like Godbole, has approached this insight. Though she lacks what Fielding calls Adela's "priggishness," she is aghast at the official attitude towards

Indians, and reprimands her son, Ronny, for failing to perceive the error of an ideology which sacrifices goodwill and love to "civilization" and efficiency. She argues that it is imperative to be "pleasant to Indians ... because India is part of the earth. And God has put us on the earth in order to be pleasant to each other. God ... is ... love. God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding" (64). According to her world-view, love should overcome animosity: the very meaning of humanity is its capacity to love, and this ought to be its foremost concern. Godbole, too, has reached beyond earthly loyalties and animosities; he is aware that these divisions are false, and he embraces spirituality instead. "The clocks matched the turban, and his whole appearance suggested harmony — as if he had reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed" (82). His fatalism is accompanied by a sense of unity; he perceives the universe as a diverse yet cohesive entity: everything that exists, even a wasp, is part of one and the same divine plan. To obscure this basic unity is misguided and wrong, and so Godbole praises the only one of Aziz's poems that extends beyond the particularities and details of one single faith and nationality. "In one poem — the only one funny old Godbole liked — he [Aziz] skipped over the mother-land (whom he did not truly love) and gone straight to Internationality. 'Ah, that is bhakti, ah, my young friend, that is different and very good. Ah India, who seems not to move, will go straight there while the other nations waste their time. May I translate this particular one into Hindi? In fact, it might be rendered into Sanskrit almost, it is so enlightened'" (265-6).

Many of Fielding's attitudes closely resemble those of Mrs. Moore and Godbole;

he, too, refuses to act as a blind follower of a herd-like group. The school Principal is quite unique in his resistance to the pressure of the Club, and he finds himself less and less drawn to Englishmen: "He did succeed with his pupils (Indians), but the gulf between himself and his countrymen, which he had noticed in the train, widened distressingly. He could not at first see what was wrong. He was not unpatriotic, he always got on with Englishmen in England, all his best friends were English, so why was it not the same out here?" (73). Though he is immune to imperialist rhetoric — Fielding is happy to associate socially with Indians — he nevertheless lacks the vision of both Mrs. Moore and Godbole. Most of his views evolve by mere accident or out of coincidence, rather than any intense conviction: "The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of goodwill plus culture and intelligence — a creed ill suited to Chandrapore, but he had come out too late to lose it. He had no racial feeling — not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish" (74). He associates with Indians because it is "convenient and pleasant" (74), without considering any more compelling reason to attempt such friendship. Yet even in the absence of a profound will, divisions might be defied.

In the first third of the novel, Aziz enjoys a second chance meeting with an Anglo-Indian. His encounter with Mrs. Moore is made possible by their mutual dissatisfaction with and retreat from Anglo-India (Mrs. Moore was escaping a performance of *"Cousin Kate"*), and this meeting also uncovers the same impulse in Aziz and the subaltern. Both have sought out physical activity as a release; their spontaneous

game of polo uplifts the Indian and the Englishman alike:

> The ball shot away towards a stray subaltern who was also practicing; he hit it back to Aziz and called "Send it along again."
>
> "All right."
>
> The newcomer had some notion of what to do, but his horse had none, and forces were equal. Concentrated on the ball, they somehow became fond of one another, and smiled when they drew rein to rest. Aziz liked soldiers — they either accepted you or swore at you, which was preferable to the civilian's hauteur — and the subaltern liked anyone who could ride.... They reined up again, the fire of good fellowship in their eyes. But it cooled with their bodies, for athletics can only raise a temporary glow. Nationality was returning, but before it could exert its poison they parted, saluting each other. "If only they were all like that," each thought. (69–70)

As with Mrs. Moore, Aziz's affection for the subaltern is mediated; but the mediation of family and nationality is more powerful than this second one of athletics, and the warmth between the two is momentary and almost subconscious. They become "fond of one another" because they are "concentrated on the ball" (69). It is not surprising that *A Passage to India* is commonly understood as a deeply pessimistic book. The "good fellowship" sparked by their polo-playing disappears as soon as normal consciousness returns, following the "temporary glow" of athletics. But how is one to achieve a permanent glow? If the "poison" of nationality is as natural as it is in the British Raj, human brotherhood is doomed, confined to extraordinary, instinctual exchanges such as this one.

Ironically, both Aziz and the subaltern regard one another as singular, unusual members of one another's race. It is, however, already clear that Aziz has a weakness for self-aggrandizing patriotism, and one later learns that the subaltern is inclined to a similar

intolerance and self-satisfied national pride. The truth is that "they," the English and the Indians are almost "all like that"; peaceful and happy interaction should be possible. But because the rhetoric of nationality willfully obscures this fact, exaggerating cultural differences and insisting on their absolute importance, such encounters are restricted to an extraordinary moment.

A Passage to India provides a thorough study of nationality in an imperial setting. Its examination of an individual's relationship to a national identity under the peculiar conditions of Empire dominates the book, incorporating a variety of themes. Imperialism produces a unique sense of nationality, in the imperialists as much as in their subjects. Because empire is based on strict distinctions of nation and race, the usual stereotyping and prejudiced dogma of national discourse are officially enacted, rather than idly talked about. Living overseas, the English become even more dependent on their national identity; and, confronted by an alternative, unfamiliar climate and culture which they are obliged to disdain, their own integrity and superiority can only be defended by exaggerating the rites of Englishness, compensating for expatriate life by making their national identity omnipresent. Conversely, the Indians adopt the same approach, clinging to their national identity out of desperation at its humiliation.

Turton only ever speaks of people as types, immediately excluding their individuality and making them part of a wider group whose definition they are powerless to define or change. Even if one resists typing, this cannot stop the officials from applying this reasoning. Turton tells Adela: "You can practically see any type you like. Take your choice. I know the Government people and the landowners..." (44). He

remarks of Ronny: "'The long and the short of it is, Heaslop's a sahib; he's the type we want, he's one of us,' and another civilian who was leaning over the billiard-table said, 'Hear, Hear!'" (43). This is the logic of nation in miniature; by virtue of being English one is automatically assigned given behaviours, obliged to cultivate "national" qualities and attitudes in order to be a worthy citizen.

Echoing *Howards End* and its meditations on the hollowness of a possessive mapping of the world, *A Passage to India* calls attention to the way nations construct and express themselves through the disposition and marking of property. The logic of nationality requires a claim to some given piece of land, which will then serve as an expression of the national character, at once creating and affirming it. The modern nationalism of empire values places as possessions, and bigger is better. It is no longer sentimentality that is at stake, but a desire for self-aggrandizement and the marginalization of all rival countries. Once acquired, these geographical possessions are then marked with names that endow them with an overt national significance. Aziz feels this oppression when he approaches the Anglo-Indian civil lines: "As he entered their [civil lines] and tidiness, depression suddenly seized him. The roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes" (36). What for Aziz is India, has been appropriated by the English, linked to their experience and prerogative. By being named after English heroes, the streets of Chandrapore are unequivocally allied with the Anglo-Indian authority, proclaiming and propagating its supremacy. Aziz, like India, is symbolically possessed by the simple act of naming the streets after Englishmen, and he

feels that he has been "caught" by England, confined to the "net" that they have captured him and his country in: "But 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!" (36). Precisely because they are being denied, Aziz longs for such manners and gestures. On one level, Aziz is simply lamenting the loss of all that is familiar and meaningful to him; the intrusive "manners and gestures" of the English are tainted with possession, dominance, and subtle force, provoking a defensive reaction in Aziz, and illustrating once again why English-Indian friendship eludes India. Were the two nations' different manners and gestures to be interchanged in an atmosphere of equality and co-operation, Aziz's reaction would likely be far less resentful and patriotic.

As part of India's colonized population, Aziz is highly aware of the absolute significance of nationality, and he enthusiastically embraces his own nationality: "Here was Islam, his own country, more than a faith, more than a battle-cry, more, much more.... Islam, an attitude towards life both exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home" (38). Typically, Islam is "more than a faith, more than a battle-cry"; like most nationalities, it encompasses everything in life. Furthermore, it is overtly identified as an "attitude," an idea rather than a tangible reality. Aziz welcomes this home, which is to guide and legitimize his existence. In his retreat to a nationality which will rival the oppressive English one, Aziz embraces a romanticized idea of the Mogul age of Akbar, rejecting the challenge of individuality to become part of another collective's ideology. Understandable though this instinct may be, Aziz's attachment to Islam, his direct equation of its ideas with his own thoughts and emotions, privileges

religion over independent thought. It seems a natural strategy of any collective to legitimize itself by attacking its rivals, and Aziz eagerly derides Hindus: "Elsewhere some Hindus were drumming — he knew they were Hindus, because the rhythm was uncongenial to him..." (38); "Slack Hindus — they have no idea of society; I know them very well because of a doctor at the hospital.... It is as well you did not go to their house, for it would give you a wrong idea of India. Nothing sanitary" (79).

Aziz's English superiors share his preoccupation with a collective identity, but in their case this identification with a national group is particularly potent, combined as it is with the integrity of the official authority: "Her husband agreed with her in his heart, but he never spoke against an Englishwoman if he could avoid doing so..." (45); "He felt disloyal to his caste, but he promised..." (49). Aziz and his associates cling to their nationality because it is suppressed, and the English are drawn to their national identity for the opposite, but parallel, reason. Because it is authoritative, their national identity must be made omnipresent, convincing Indians and English alike of its distinctness and supremacy. It is important to understand that the colonialism portrayed in *A Passage to India* is the enactment of the national(ist) discourse that haunts *Howards End*; the flippant opinions of Charles Wilcox and Mrs. Munt inform official policy and a whole state is governed according to the doctrine of nationality. In India, nationality is no longer just an extension of one's private identity; it has been transformed into the total obliteration of it:

> Meanwhile the performance ended, and the amateur orchestra played the National Anthem. Conversation and billiards stopped, faces stiffened. It

> was the Anthem of the Army of Occupation. It reminded every member of the Club that he or she was British and in exile. It produced a little sentiment and a useful accession of will-power. The meagre tune, the curt series of demands on Jehovah, fused into a prayer unknown in England, and though they perceived neither Royalty nor Deity they did perceive something, they were strengthened to resist another day. Then they poured out, offering one another drinks. (43)

As is common among expatriate communities, Forster's British develop their own distorted sense of Englishness, compensating for separation from home by recreating it in exaggerated form abroad. Convinced as they are that each nationality is fundamentally distinct and separate, and that understanding and sympathy between them is impossible, it would be unthinkable for the English to associate with the Indians. Their social intercourse is, then, limited to other English exiles, and in this incestuous environment they repeatedly observe the Englishness of others, while reaffirming their own: "They had tried to reproduce their own attitude to life upon the stage, and to dress up as the middle-class English people they actually were. Next year they would do *Quality Street* or *The Yeoman of the Guard*" (55).

Occasionally, the novel seems to undermine and subvert the nationalist discourse it portrays. These moments are rare, but their striking infrequency adds greatly to their force and import; they are a shocking interruption to the national discourse that is taken for granted throughout the book, questioning and challenging the validity of an ideology which understands individuals as a mere extension of nations which are distinct and separate. Curiously, these diversions from national(ist) doctrine can often be attributed to

those very characters who are most devoted to it. Following Mrs. Moore's remark that "I don't think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them," Aziz comments "Then you are an Oriental" (41). Impossibly, an Englishwoman is able to think and feel in a way associated with the Orient, although she has no link to this remote realm. Though she has spent all of her life in England, her outlook is oriental.

Adela is the character who is most aware of her individuality, and most concerned to preserve it. She is determined to resist the pressures to make her part of someone's "sort," and she cannot bear to be labelled. Mrs. Moore reminds Ronny of this: "I don't think Adela'll ever be quite their sort — she's much too individual" (62). Adela recoils at having her private views explained as a reflection of her nationality. She is troubled by the implication that individuality is secondary to a national identity, that she is an Englishwoman before she is Adela Quested: "'I do so hate mysteries,' Adela announced. 'We English do.' [Fielding] 'I dislike them not because I'm English, but from my own personal point-of-view,' she corrected" (79). For Adela if no one else, opinions are personal and not national.

Nationality, or a sense of national identity, cannot be taken seriously until it is substantiated by definitive facts and knowledge. The English Club has sought out some such "knowledge," which they regard as authoritative and conclusive, and they are unwilling to jeopardize it by updating it: "They [the younger generation of Indians] altered the idiom, but they could say whatever they wanted to say quickly; there were none of the babuisms ascribed to them up at the Club. But then the Club moved slowly; it still declared that few Mohammedans and no Hindus would eat at an Englishman's table, and

that all Indian ladies were in impenetrable purdah. Individually it knew better; as a club it declined to change" (76). They must create the illusion of substance, formulating a rhetoric which would make the claim of distinct nationhood convincing. *A Passage to India* disputes the idea that one could ever really *know* a nation or a nationality; how could one ever possess knowledge of what doesn't really exist, of what is only a construction, an idea? What nationalists consider 'knowledge' is nothing more than selective interpretation and conjecture, and as such it provides insufficient grounds for a judgment which would be even slightly fair or conclusive. Like nationality, the nation is itself unknowable, too vast and varied to be limited to one, definitive representation. Any effort to define it accurately is bound to fail, for the enterprise is inherently reductive. The process of formulating national identities is so imperfect, so unscientific, that the resultant identities deserve little authority. One Anglo-Indian lady asserts "I really do know the truth about Indians" (44), but the only truth she can ever know is her own experience. Ironically, British officials sometimes admit that they can never fully comprehend India — that it is far too complex ever to be conclusively known and understood. But this does not discourage them from inscribing stereotypes and myths as if they did. Ronny observes that "no one can even begin to think of knowing this country until he has been in it twenty years" (45), but he does presume to know Indians, even without a full understanding of their country: "Incredible, aren't they, even the best of them? They're all — they all forget their back-collar studs sooner or later. You've had to deal with three sets of Indians today, the Bhattacharyas, Aziz, and this chap, and it really isn't a coincidence that they've all let you down" (100).

Judging from the prevalence of the theme in his novels, it is clear that Forster was intrigued by the question of what it is that makes nations so distinct from one another, how it is that each seems to have its own unique mood and character; why does an Englishman feel so different when abroad in Italy or India? What exactly is it that contributes to this distinctness? Towards the end of the nineteenth century, such discussions were perfectly ordinary, but they were usually undertaken for the sole purpose of asserting one's own national character while dismissing all alternatives. Foreign countries might equally be assigned the role of the exotic other, romanticized from afar and escaped to as a release from the twin realms of home and reality.

It would be pedantic to dispute that different geographical and cultural realms occasion diverse impressions and reactions, but what Forster questions is the affection for hackneyed, prescribed images of nations, sufficiently popularized as to preclude any individual experience and evaluation of the phenomenon. In *A Passage to India*, most English characters are confident in their judgments of India, but their interpretation of the country is as limited as their stereotypes about its people.

The narrator, too, dwells on India's character, but in a much more illuminating way. He seems reluctant to risk repeating the meaningless characterizations of the officials: "It was as if irritation exuded from the very soil. Could one have been so petty on a Scotch moor or an Italian alp? There seemed no reserve of tranquility to draw on in India" (86). An oppressive climate and barren landscape do of course influence life in India; the discomfort they produce creates an atmosphere of tension and irritation. "India is the country, fields, fields, fields, then hills, jungle, hills, and more fields" (135).

Chapter 3: Thomas Mann

Thomas Mann, as well as E.M. Forster, allows the issues of nationality and nationalism a prominent presence in his work, yet there are important differences between the two. Both writers question the secure status of national identity, but on different levels. While Forster limits himself to the social dimension of national coding, Mann is more concerned with how national identity and nationalist ideas impose themselves upon the human psyche. In Mann, the conflict between the social — in our case, national — and the individual self is parallelled by other tensions, like art versus life or sensuality versus intellect. These correlated dualisms counter two sets of qualities: the blond, blue-eyed German (or Nordic) is associated with discipline, respectability, will and physical health, while the dark Latin and/or Slavic is associated with sensuality, decadence, immorality and disease. Having constructed these categories, Mann eventually shows the impossibility of their strict separation. All in all, Mann overcomes the dualistic logic of nationalism by taking recourse to a more universalist, humanistic position. 'Tonio Kröger,' 'Der Tod in Venedig' and *Der Zauberberg* set up different oppositions, but all three texts urge reconciliation over opposition.

Tonio Kröger

Although it is not as explicitly stated as it is in *Howards End* or other Mann texts, "Tonio Kröger" certainly implies a shift from the earlier, liberal phase of nationalism — or indeed "prenationalism" — to the chauvinistic, self-aggrandizing one that helped to bring about the First World War. In recounting Tonio's *Bildung*, Mann's story traces the rise of nationalism and the nation-state, including more and more signs of the acceptance of nationalist and racist doctrine.

The narrator never reveals the circumstances of Tonio's parents' marriage; it is unclear whether his father simply rebelled against expectations that he should marry a local — or at least a German — girl, or whether his parents and peers welcomed his exotic bride from "ganz unten auf der Landkarte" (5) ["from someplace far down on the map" (79)]. In any case, the mere fact that the union took place suggests the defiance of exclusionary, nationalist prejudices. The issue of nationality did not discourage either party from entering the marriage; somehow Tonio's mother was willing to live her life in a Baltic town where she was "überhaupt so anders ... als die übrigen Damen" (12) ["so absolutely different from all the other ladies" (79)], and his father did not worry that his wife might introduce foreign blood into the respectable Kröger family. Throughout their son's lifetime, however, nationality becomes more and more crucial.

At school Tonio is isolated not so much because of his mixed heritage, but on account of his unusual temperament: "Dieses, daß er ein Heft mit selbstgeschriebenen Versen besaß, war durch sein eigenes Verschulden bekannt geworden und schadete ihm sehr, bei seinen Mitschülern sowohl wie bei den Lehrern" (11) ["The fact that he had a note-book full of such things, written by himself, leaked out through his own carelessness

and injured him no little with the masters as well as among his fellows" (79)]. The narrator mentions just one occasion on which Tonio's confused nationality incites hostility, and that is when Hans Hansen insults his "crazy" (because it is foreign) first name. Exclusionary, chauvinistic nationalism only really emerges as Tonio approaches adulthood. In contrast to her first, transnational marriage, his mother's second betrothal is to an Italian, and the rest of her life is to be lived in this southern country. While the first union was nationally mixed, allowing for a meeting and mingling of different cultural tendencies, the second is racially pure. Symbolically, intercultural intimacy is recanted.

Growing up, Tonio is highly conscious of different physical and temperamental types and is himself only ever attracted to those who are opposite to his own dark looks and sensitivity. Tonio has always seen physical qualities as an outer expression of traits, referring to Ingeborg Holm as "blond, jolly Inge," for example. But it is not until he is much older, past thirty, that Tonio directly associates these types with nationalities and races. In his conversation with Lisabeta he refers to "Diese Romanen," whom he disdains as being "fürchterlich lebhaft mit dem schwarzen Tierblick" (38) ["Romance peoples ... frightfully animated," with "animal-like eyes"(106)]. Even an artist accepts the conventional wisdom that each nation and race, of however many millions, has its own exclusive qualities. Tonio mouths a variety of nationalist rhetoric; he pronounces judgments on places without ever being there (he declares that he knows and loves Denmark, even though he has never actually visited there), and asserts that Scandinavia surpasses all other nations. Its meals are "unvergleichlich" ["incomparable"], while there is "nothing like" Scandinavian literature (39,107).

When Tonio travels to Denmark, the full extent of the transformation in nationalism since his father's marriage to Consuelo is revealed. The hotel he resides at monitors all forms of identity, including nationality, with its register. Here Tonio is obliged to record his "Name, Stand und Herkunft" (41) ["name, station and place of origin"(110)]. In order to counter the suspicion that he might be a wanted swindler, Tonio is required to present his passport. The passport is the perfect emblem of xenophobic nationalism; at once a means to control domestic citizens and monitor foreigners, it makes inclusion and exclusion official. The individual's identity is now the property of the state. The passport is significant for other reasons; in this document the particulars of an individual identity — name, date of birth, height — are conjoined with the wider identity of nationality, establishing an immediate correspondence between the two. It so happens that Tonio has never acquired a passport because of his dislike of officials; this transgression might have easily resulted in his arrest, were it not for two fortuitous facts. The hotel proprietor supervising the interrogation still recognizes Tonio, and the manuscript he produces as proof of his identity finally convinces the police officer that Tonio is indeed who he says he is.

'Tonio Kröger' suggests several ways in which nationalist ideology comes undone. Like *Der Zauberberg* and Forster's novels, the story suggests other more meaningful frameworks for belonging and community. In 'Tonio Kröger' the most fundamental element in an individual's identity turns out to be not nationality, but temperament. Hans Hansen's friend Erwin Jimmerthal diverges from the Nordic norm as much as Hans's admirer Tonio does. He has "krumme Beinen und Schlitzaugen" (25) ["His legs were

crooked and his eyes like slits" (82)]. Nevertheless, Erwin is accepted by Hans because they are temperamentally alike; whereas these boys share an appreciation for horses and riding, Tonio is elated by Schiller's *Don Carlos*. What isolates Tonio are his artistic inclinations, his heightened sensitivity and melancholy.

While Hans and Inge belong to "den Blauäugigen, die den Geist nicht nötig haben" (36) ["the blue-eyed ones who do not need mind" (104)], Tonio identifies himself and his Russian friend Lisabeta Iwanowna as "wir Künstler" (36) ["we artists" (104)]. Tonio's own reflections on the matter, and the story itself, suggest that the real division is not between North and South, but between artists and non-artists. Tonio's generalizations about nations are imprecise, while his summation of "the artist's character" and its contrary are informative. He speaks of Romance peoples' liveliness and animal-like eyes, but the story's description of dancing Danish and Germans suggests similar effusiveness: "Die Paare flogen zum rasenden Eiltakt der Musik an Tonio Kröger vorüber, mit kurzem, atemlosen Gelächter" (63) ["They flew past Tonio Kröger to a maddeningly quick tempo, crossing, advancing, retreating, with quick, breathless laughter" (131)]. In characterizing Germans and other Northern peoples, Tonio can only say that they have "Gewissen in den Augen" (38) ["soul in their eyes" (106)]. In contrast, Tonio's generalizations about artists are precise and considered; they are specific enough to suggest a fundamental gulf between artists and their audience: "Es ist nötig, daß man [als Künstler] etwas Außermenschliches und Unmenschliches sei, daß man zum Menschlichen in einem seltsam fernen und unbeteiligten Verhältnis stehe" (30) ["The artist must be inhuman, extra-human; he must stand in a queer aloof relationship to our humanity" (98)]. An artist's strangeness and

remoteness is just as extreme as a foreigner's. Tonio reflects that the difference between him and Inge is, in part, linguistic. He finds communication with Inge impossible, for even when he is sitting near his beloved, she is "fern und fremd und befremdet ... denn seine Sprache war nicht ihre Sprache" (23) ["remote and estraged, his speech not being her speech" (91)]. Like citizens from foreign countries, the artist even looks different: "Sie unter Tausenden das Zeichen an ihrer Stirne spüren und fühlen, daß es niemandem ergeht" (31) ["You among thousands feel the sign on your brow and know that everyone else sees it" (99)]. Their nonconformity cannot be concealed: "Sie werden kaum die Augen aufzuschlagen und ein Wort zu sprechen brauchen, und jedermann wird wissen, daß Sie kein Mensch sind, sondern irgend etwas Fremdes, Befremdendes, Anderes... " (31–32) ["You hardly need to give a glance or speak a word before everyone knows you are not a human being, but something else: something queer, different, inimical" (100)].

'Tonio Kröger' goes so far as to question, at least implicitly, whether the nation is a valid entity at all. The particular novella does not call attention to the artificial creation of national borders as Forster does in *Howards End*, but rather to the elasticity of these boundaries. The story suggests that the community represented by an individual nation is often nothing more than a microcosm of a wider grouping. Those characteristics a nation claims for itself are in fact regional ones; far from being metaphysical realities, these "distinctive" qualities merely reflect the local landscape and climate.

Throughout the text, the dichotomy is not between Germany and Italy, but North and South. Tonio does not abandon Germany as a whole, but rather the Northern, Baltic region. Munich is already a different world: "Er lebte in großen Städten und im Süden, von

dessen Sonne er sich ein üppiges Reifen seiner Kunst versprach" (25) ["He lived in large cities and in the south, promising himself a luxuriant ripening of his art by southern suns"(93)]. As a young man, Tonio views his mixed blood as a meeting of regions, rather than countries. When Tonio reports to Lisabeta his intention to visit Denmark there is a curious movement away from national detail to regional generality. Tonio begins by announcing that he loves Denmark : "dennoch habe ich das Land von jeher gekannt und geliebt" (38) ["Still I have always known and loved the country" (107)], but his next remarks extend beyond the individual country of Denmark to include the whole of Scandinavia. "Aber nehmen Sie die Bücher, die *dort oben* geschrieben werden.... Nehmen Sie die *skandinavischen* Mahlzeiten... (39) ["But just take the books that are written up there.... Or take the Scandinavian meals..."(107)]. Tonio ends by including his native town, a German one, within the same grouping; he tells Lisabeta that these Scandinavian meals are also eaten "bei mir zu Hause" (39) ["we ate that way up there" (107)]. Not only that, but all three geographic entities, now a northern whole, share similar names and the Baltic Sea. The collocation "dort oben" ["up there"] serves as Tonio's name for this region; it appears three times within the brief exchange. Whatever individual qualities Denmark may have, there are several important ones that it shares with a whole geographical area. These common habits and attitudes can be explained by the region's location on the Baltic coast; proximity to the sea affects the weather (Tonio's native town is usually windy, rainy and cold), which in turn produces a certain mood that would be less natural to a sunny, warm climate.

The question of national and racial (stereo)typing is at the very centre of 'Tonio

Kröger'; the story's premise — that Tonio's confused character (and successful literary career) is the result of his mixed parentage — immediately inscribes the validity of national and racial stereotypes. At the same time, though, Mann shows the notion of "typical" national and racial qualities to be more of an idea than a reality. Like Forster, Mann includes national and racial types in his texts but not without ironically undermining their validity.

Tonio's father and mother are both depicted as being emblematic of their respective nationalities /races, and the reader is expected to accept Tonio's explanation that this combination is at the heart of his dual identity: "Ganz ohne Zweifel war dies eine Mischung, die außerordentliche Möglichkeiten — und außerordentliche Gefahren in sich schloß. Was heraußkam, war dies: ein Bürger, der sich in die Kunst verirrte..." (65) ["The mixture was no doubt extraordinary and bore with it extraordinary dangers. The issue of it, a *bourgeois* who strayed off into art..." (133)]. Tonio describes his father as "ein nordisches Temperament: betrachtsam, gründlich, korrekt aus Puritanismus und zur Wehmut geneigt" ["had the temperament of the north: solid, reflective, puritanically correct, with a tendency to melancholia"] while he identifies his mother as "schön, sinnlich, naiv, zugleich fahrlässig und leidenschaftlich und von einer impulsiven Liederlichkeit" (65) ["beautiful, sensuous, naive, passionate, and careless at once, and, I think, irregular by instinct" (133)]. There are obvious contradictions in these characterizations which already undermine their validity. Tonio's father is at once "solid" and melancholic, while his mother is simultaneously passionate and indifferent; it is not just Tonio whose character is confused, but his parents' as well.

There is also some doubt as to whether Tonio's father is a typical northerner, since the other two characters who are supposed to embody the Northern type — Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm — betray different qualities. Hans is certainly "solid" and pragmatic, but he is in no way melancholic. In an imaginary dialogue, Tonio muses: "Stets bist du auf eine wohlanständige und allgemein respektierte Weise beschäftigt. Wenn du die Schulaufgaben erledigt hast, so nimmst du Reitstunden oder arbeitest mit der Laubsäge, und selbst in den Ferien, an der See, bist du vom Rudern, Segeln und Schwimmen in Anspruch genommen, indes ich müßigängerisch und verloren im Sande liege und auf die geheimnisvoll wechselnden Mienenspiele starre, die über des Meeres Antlitz huschen" (13) ["You are always spending your time with some right and proper occupation. When you have done your prep you take your riding lesson; even in the holidays, at the seashore, you row and sail and swim all the time, while I wander off somewhere and lie down in the sand and stare at the strange and mysterious changes that whisk over the face of the sea" (80)]. National and racial types are shifting and inconstant; the father is a model of the Northern temperament, but Hans diverges from it as far as melancholia is concerned. On the contrary, it is the southern-looking Tonio who is inclined to melancholic feelings: he experiences a "Wehmut, die tiefer und zehrender brennen kann als alle jähe Leidenschaftlichkeit, die man von seinem fremden Äußern hätte erwarten können" (13) ["melancholy that gnawed and burned more terribly than all the sudden passion one might have expected from his exotic looks" (81)]. The correspondence Tonio sees between physical features and emotional ones does not always work.

As a child, Tonio is acutely aware of his nonconformity and eccentricity. He asks

himself: "Warum bin ich doch sonderlich und in Widerstreit mit allem, zerfallen mit den Lehrern und fremd unter den anderen Jungen?" (12) ["Why is it I am different, why do I fight everything, why am I at odds with the masters and like a stranger among the other boys?" (80)]. With his child's perspective Tonio reasons that his physical opposites, the blond and blue-eyed, must also be his emotional opposites, embracing a conflation of the internal and the external. Tonio comes to view the blond and blue-eyed Hans and Inge as individual instances of a whole racial type: "dieser lichten, stalblauäugigen und blondhaarigen Art, die eine Vorstellung von Reinheit, Ungetrübtheit, Heiterkeit und einer zugleich stolzen und schlichten, unberührbaren Sprödigkeit hervorreif" (60) ["This was the blond, fair-haired breed of the steel-blue eyes, which stood to him for the pure, the blithe, the untroubled in life; for a virginal aloofness that was at once both simple and full of pride...." (128)]. The idea that each people had typical physical and temperamental qualities became an integral part of nationalist and racial doctrine.

Mann admits the possibility that there might be national or racial characteristics, passed on through blood, but the story makes it clear that this is only a possibility and not a certainty. "Ich muß *wohl* diese nördliche Neigung von meinem Vater haben" (38–39; my emphasis) ["I *must* have this northern tendency from my father" (107)]. The narrator only speculates that "*vielleicht* war es das Blut seiner Mutter" (25; my emphasis) ["*perhaps* it was the blood of his mother's race" (93)] that draws Tonio to the South. "Perhaps" it is his mother's southern blood that lures Tonio away from his home at the North Sea, and "perhaps" it is the "Erbteil seines Vaters in ihm ... das ihn dort unten so leiden machte" (25) ["it might have been his father in him ... that made him suffer so down

there in the south" (93)]. But long before there is any suggestion that Tonio is the passive receptor of racial impulses, the narrator has already explained his migration as a rejection of the "plumpe und niedrige Dasein" (25) ["lowly and vulgar life" (92)] of the North. Knowing himself to be an artist, Tonio feels that his gifts require different surroundings.

As far as we can tell from the text, Tonio's admirer Magdalena Vermehren is no less German and Nordic than Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm. Yet she resembles Tonio both physically and emotionally: "Magdalena Vermehren ... mit dem sanften Mund und den großen, dunklen, blanken Augen voll Ernst und Schwärmerei. Sie fiel oft beim Tanzen ... sie wußte, daß er Verse dichtete" (20) ["Magdalena Vermehren ... with the gentle mouth and the great, dark, brilliant eyes, so serious and adoring. She often fell down in the dance ... she knew he wrote verses" (88)].

There are moments when Tonio is deeply troubled by his eccentricity, but the narrator insists that, rather than aspire to perfect conformity, Tonio longs for a companion to ease his solitude. Hans Hansen is the object of his affection because he represents to Tonio all the qualities that are absent in him. Obedient, popular, athletic and studious at once, Hans is Tonio's "Widerspiegel und Gegenteil" (13) ["opposite and foil" (80)], especially in his effortless pragmatism and ease with the world around him. It is not so much that Tonio would like to be Hans Hansen, but that his own nonconformity would be relieved by the presence of someone who conforms so perfectly to his society's expectations of what a schoolboy, and a man, should be: "er machte nicht den Versuch, zu werden wie Hans Hansen, und vielleicht war es ihm nicht einmal sehr ernst mit diesem Wunsche. Aber er begehrte so schmerzlich, so, wie er war, von ihm geliebt zu

werden..."(13) ["He made no attempt to be like Hans Hansen, and perhaps hardly even seriously wanted to. What he did ardently, painfully want was that just as he was, Hans Hansen should love him...(81)"]. Tonio's love of those who are his opposites (first Hans and later blonde, lively Ingeborg Holm) suggests a search for wholeness. The presence, at the end of the story, of the three American youths holidaying in Denmark seems to indicate the promise of reconciling national differences within a superstructure of universality. The United States, the so-called "New World," welcomes the various European types 'Tonio Kröger' establishes. It vows to overcome difference, uniting all within a common state of multiple influences and heritages.

Der Tod in Venedig

In *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*] (1911) many of the questions raised in 'Tonio Kröger' reappear. Mann's text resumes the discussion of national typing, but approaches it more radically than the earlier novella. Like *Der Zauberberg [The Magic Mountain]*, *Der Tod in Venedig* brings these diverse national types together, testing popular understandings of typical national qualities by directly depicting citizens from across Europe. The story of Gustav von Aschenbach also explores other familiar themes such as the xenophobic shift in nationalism and the logical impossibility of nationalist doctrine. In all these respects, and especially in its insistence on universality, *Der Tod in Venedig* presents a powerful challenge to nationalism.

After we have been made aware of Aschenbach's current status as "the voice of the nation," we are eventually acquainted with his family history. The narrator mentions that Aschenbach's mother was in fact not German, but the daughter of a Bohemian musical conductor. Judging from the tension and aloofness that surrounds meetings of Germans and their fellow Europeans in Venice, it seems that such a union would be impossible for Aschenbach's own generation. The fact that Aschenbach must leave Germany in order to meet citizens from other European nations, even though Germany is less distant from them than Venice, is, according to John Burt Foster Jr. (200), indicative of xenophobic German nationalism.

The contrast between Aschenbach's relationship to the state, and that of his forefathers, also illustrates a fundamental shift in nationalism. Traditionally, the Aschenbachs have always been involved in the public affairs of the state: "Seine Vorfahren waren Offiziere, Richter, Verwaltungsfunktionäre gewesen, Männer, die im Dienste des Königs, des Staates ihr straffes, anständig karges Leben geführt hatten" (14) ["his forbears had all been officers, judges, departmental functionaries — men who lived their strict, decent, sparing lives in the service of king and state" (8)]. By the time Aschenbach pursues a profession, it is no longer possible to serve king and state, but rather the nation state; traditional loyalties have been reworked. Earlier Aschenbachs have always worked in public offices, directing their ambition to the collective interest of their local state. This dedication to king and state is quite distinct from modern national feeling; the scale and the very nature, of these traditional, local loyalties are transformed by nationalism. Like his paternal ancestors, Aschenbach willingly immerses himself in the

service of the state. But the authority presiding over the state has changed; the king has been usurped by the nation. With its diverse and multitudinous population, the nation state works with new mechanisms: public education, the propagation of "national" values and qualities. While Aschenbach's ancestors served in more or less functionary roles, his own creative work is employed in the state's service. As soon as his style

> [entriet] in späteren Jahren der unmittelbaren Kühnheiten, der subtilen und neuen Abschattungen, er wandelte sich ins Mustergültig– Feststehende, Geschliffen–Herkömmliche, Erhaltende, Formelle, selbst Formelhafte ... die Unterrichtsbehörde ausgewählte Seiten von ihm in die vorgeschriebenen Schul-Lesebücher übernahm. Es war ihm innerlich gemäß, und er lehnte nicht ab, als ein deutscher Fürst, soeben zum Throne gelangt, dem Dichter des 'Friedrich' zu seinem fünfzigsten Geburtstag den persönlichen Adel verlieh. (21)
>
> [became fixed and exemplary, conservative, formal, even formulated ... the school authorities adopted selections from his works into their text-books. And he found it only fitting — and had no thought but to accept — when a German prince signalized his accession to the throne by conferring upon the poet-author of the life of Frederick the Great on his fiftieth birthday the letters-patent of nobility. (14)]

Although Aschenbach does not completely lose his name, the appendage "von" explicitly allies him to a public identity over a personal one, the usual associations of a name. Even if he himself were to overlook the titular interruption into his name, the outer world will immediately identify Aschenbach as a figure aligned with (and therefore admired by) the state.

Der Tod in Venedig at once presents characters who are identified in terms of typical national characteristics: "Man sah die trockene und lange Miene des Amerikaners,

die vielgliedrige russische Familie, englische Damen..."(35) ["There were long, dry Americans, large-familied Russians, English ladies..." (25)]. The guests are not considered individually, but are associated with a collective, well-defined national group to which they automatically and categorically belong. In its allusions to popular national stereotypes the text exposes the inevitable inadequacy of such reductive characterizations. It is hardly possible that all Americans should be "long and dry," for example. The Russians Aschenbach encounters at the hotel are consistently associated with boisterousness, unrestrained sensuality and the lack of self-reflection. These same qualities will characterize Russians in Mann's later text *Der Zauberberg*. But the diverse nationalities gathered at the hotel — Russians, French, Polish — are not only different from one another. There are behaviours and values which are shared, and which point to at least some degree of commonality between them: "der weltgültige Abendanzug, eine Uniform der Gesittung faßte äußerlich die Spielarten des Menschlichen zu anständiger Einheit zusammen" (35) ["that uniform of civilization, the conventional evening dress, gave outward conformity to the varied types" (25)]. The text, then, simultaneously asserts and undermines national stereotypes; "the uniform of civilization" suggests that there are collective identities beyond the national one.

The question of national types leads to the larger question of conformity as such. It is in the depiction of Tadzio's sisters that the text engages most obviously with this issue.

More than the drabness and coldness which is attributed to them, it is their sameness which is most shocking. Beyond size, there is no differentiation possible between the three. And just as their deliberate plainness stands in opposition to Tadzio's

careless beauty, so does the sisters' excessive conformity collide with their brother's extreme individuality, who as the only son is exempt from common rules and egoistic in his attitude to others. "Eine gleichmäßig klösterliche Tracht, schieferfarben, halblang, nüchtern und gewollt unkleidsam von Schnitt, mit weißen Fallkrägen als einziger Aufhellung, unterdrückte und verhinderte jede Gefälligkeit der Gestalt. Das glatt und fest an den Kopf geklebte Haar ließ die Gesichter nonnenhaft leer und nichtssagend erschienen"(36) ["All three wore half-length slate-coloured frocks of cloister-like plainness, arbitrarily unbecoming in art, with white turn-over collars as their only adornment ... their hair lay smoothly plastered to their heads, giving them a vacant expression" (26)]. Tadzio's sisters have been denied any opportunity of individuality in the name of an idea, that is, virtue and restraint, while their brother has been allowed to remain free of any such "pädagogische Strenge" (36) ["pedagogic severity" (26)].

The crucial relationship in the text is that between Aschenbach and Tadzio. Foster, in his "Why is Tadzio Polish? Kultur and Cultural Multiplicity in *Death in Venice*," suggests that Mann's novella reflects the sensitive politics of German and Polish nationalism in the fifty years preceding World War I. In the early years of the twentieth century there was an "aggressive German policy of cultural domination in the East," and a campaign to Germanize the empire's Polish population (195). The Germans' national and racial rhetoric of the time was characterized by a "Teutonic-Slav tension," a desire of the Germans to assimilate their Slavic neighbours, and the position of the Slavs in relation to this condescension.

The affection Aschenbach develops for Tadzio is, in part, a reflection of this

cultural conflict. There are several incidents where Tadzio's Polishness draws the writer's attention. (Aschenbach is elated by the sound of Tadzio's name as it is spoken in the vocative, and he follows him and his family as they visit the Cathedral). What is it that makes Tadzio so appealing to Aschenbach? The affinity is partly the product of Aschenbach's own mixed blood; in his appearance there are "Merkmale fremder Rasse" (14) ["foreign traits"(8)] and Aschenbach seems to appreciate his Slavic origins more and more as the story unfolds.

Aschenbach feels "satisfaction or relief" in his decision to remain in Venice, in part because he has acknowledged "a mixed heritage previously suppressed owing to his single-minded pursuit of German *Kultur*" (Foster 201). Tadzio "exposes the falsity of Aschenbach's public persona, not just as a morally edifying figure who could never indulge in a scandalous sexual adventure but as the voice of German *Kultur* that felt itself utterly distinct from the Slavic East; it is a boundary that, in Aschenbach's case, is artificial and untenable" (Foster 207).

Der Zauberberg

In its very conception, *Der Zauberberg* is intended as a study of the relationship between an individual and the wider cultural context of which he is a part: "Der Mensch lebt nicht nur sein persönliches Leben als Einzelwesen, sondern, bewußt oder unbewußt, auch das seiner Epoche und Zeitgenossenschaft" (36) ["A man lives not only his personal life, as an

individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries"(33)]. Like his short stories *Der Tod in Venedig* and 'Tonio Kröger', Mann's *Der Zauberberg* is fascinated by the human predicament of trying to reconcile an individual identity with a social one. Individuality is always formed and framed by a variety of social forces: family, nation, class, social milieu, and historical contingency. In the words of Lodovico Settembrini, one of the novel's principal characters, "das gesellschaftliche Problem, das Problem der Koexistenz selbst ist Politik, durch und durch Politik, nichts weiter als Politik" (543) ["The social problem, the problem of our co-existence, is in itself politics, politics through and through, nothing else than politics" (515)].

The first thing the novel's prologue does is to introduce its protagonist Hans Castorp not as an isolated individual, but as an ideal representative of the time and place in which he happened to live. Which is to say, Hans Castorp is of interest not so much for his own sake, but as a reflection of a particular historical period: "Indeed, the author invites us to consider his novel as a portrait of the European psyche in the early part of this century" (Lukács 41). It is precisely his lack of a strong or dynamic character, his passive acceptance of the demands of the world which surrounds him, that makes Hans Castorp a vehicle for Mann's investigations into the state of Europe in the years immediately preceding the First World War, "vor einer gewissen, Leben und Bewußtsein teif zerklüftenden Wende und Grenze" (5) ["before the epoch when a certain crisis shattered its way through life and consciousness and left a deep chasm behind" (v)].

In accounting for Hans Castorp's childhood, the narrator presents a thorough and

evocative portrait of his paternal grandfather Hans Lorenz Castorp. Like the absent Schlegel father of *Howards End*, he is affiliated with an earlier, more dignified, and traditional age, whose patriotic sentiment was untouched by aggressive pride. Hans Lorenz is disillusioned by the new trends of boundless progress, maximum size and display, the tools of the modern quest for self-aggrandizement and supremacy:

> Sein Wirken war in Jahrzehnte eines heftigen Aufschwungs und vielfältiger Umwälzungen gefallen, Jahrzehnte des Fortschritts in Gewaltmärschen, die an den öffentlichen Opfer- und Wagemut beständig so hohe Anforderungen gestellt hatten. An ihm aber, dem alten Castorp, das wußte Gott, hatte es nicht gelegen, wenn der Geist der Neuzeit die weit bekannten, glänzenden Siege gefeiert hatte. Er hatte auf Vätersitte und alte Institutionen weit mehr gehalten als auf halsbrecherische Hafenerweiterungen und gottlose Großstadt-Alfanzereien, hatte gebremst und abgewiegelt, wo er nur konnte, und wäre es nach ihm gegangen, so sah es in der Verwaltung noch heutigentages so idyllisch-altfränkisch aus wie seinerzeit in seinem eigenen Kontor. (28)
>
> [His active years had fallen in a decade of rapid growth and repeated upheavals, a decade of progress by forced marches, which had made continual demands on the public capacity for enterprise and self-sacrifice. Certainly he had had no part or lot, old Castorp, in the brilliant triumph of the modern spirit that followed hard upon. It was not his fault; he had held far more with ancestral ways and old institutions than with ruinous schemes for widening the harbour, or godless and rubbishing plans for a great metropolis. He had put on the brakes; he had whittled things down wherever he could; and if matters had gone to his liking, the administration would have continued to wear the same old-fashioned, idyllic guise as, in his time, his own office did. (23-4)]

Like so many of Mann's characters, Hans Castorp is the last in a line of civic leaders. His family has traditionally belonged to the minority of citizens involved in the social and political affairs of Hamburg; as such they have had the uncommon experience

of a close tie between their individual lives and the life of their society. The grandfather's engagement with a collective identity is of a radically different nature than that of both his grandson Hans and his grand nephew Joachim. Hans Castorp [the grandson] is immune to the civic pride manifested by his grandfather. Although it is expected that he should take on an "öffentliche Rolle" ["public rôle"], both as a member of the privileged classes and as the new head of the Castorp family, he eludes these expectations (39; 35). His indifference signals the decline of this traditional way of life; he belongs to a new age of empires and vast, anonymous nations. Even before he departs from his *Vaterstadt* [paternal city] to visit Joachim at Berghof, Hans has already left Hamburg to study at polytechnics across Germany, in Danzig, Braunschweig, and Karlsruhe. Like millions of others, Hans is a German citizen. He owes his loyalty to this vast and faceless entity, and he manifests it by volunteering to fight at the front in World War I.

National feeling and loyalty cannot be seen as a mere extension of civic pride. As Hobsbawm insists, a Hanseatic city such as Hamburg forms a tangible community; its members interact with one another daily and it is possible to detect how they influence each others' lives. Because it is based in local detail, rather than grand, impersonal notions, their commonality is not just metaphorical: "nationalism and the state took over the associations of kin, neighbours and home ground, for territories and populations of a size and scale which turned them into metaphors" (*Age of Empire* 148). In his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson echoes Hobsbawm's reservations about the fabrication of national consciousness with his own evaluation of the the nation as "an imagined political community ... *imagined* because

the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). This is not to say that the community represented by a city is more "real" or "genuine"; a community can only ever be imagined: "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (6). While the nation "is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7), the civic body is defined as more of a political and administrative unit than an emotional, metaphysical one.

Settembrini's grandfather presents a figure similar to that of Hans Lorenz Castorp. He joined the fight for Italian liberation from Austria, determined that "his people" should be united and granted their own, independent nationhood: "große Liebe [hatte ihn] zu seinem Vaterlande verbunden, das er einig und frei wissen wollte" (162) ["a profound love [bound him to] his native land, which it was his dream to see free and united" (152)]. Hans Castorp is struck by the fact that in their old age, both grandfathers, one in the North and the other in the South, were always dressed in black, in protest of the emergence of a new and misguided age. "Da waren sie nun beide immer in Schwarz gegangen, der Großvater im Norden und der im Süden, und beide zu dem Zweck, einen strengen Abstand zwischen sich und die schlechte Gegenwart zu legen" (164) ["So both grandfathers had worn mourning, the one in the north and the one in the south, and both in the same idea; namely, to put a great gulf between them and the evil present" (154)]. Their resistance did not spring from the same source, but Hans Lorenz Castorp's pious traditionalism and Giuseppe Settembrini's liberal radicalism were similarly affronted by the rejection of their

ways and ideals in favour of something new and, as they saw it, inferior. The grandfathers' positions seem to be opposed: Hans Lorenz Castorp represents Protestant faith and conservatism, while Giuseppe Settembrini is the agitating voice of liberalism. But though their beliefs are, in essence, contrary, they are harmonized by their mutual aversion to the substance and structure of modernity. Neither of the grandfathers saw their patriotism or civic pride as an end in itself, to be upheld as superior to that of all rival groups. Their devotion to such causes was inspired by a desire for effective government, and their commitment to the principles of freedom and tradition. Hobsbawm's distinction between the liberal phase of nationalism (1789 to 1875) and the modern one that followed is helpful in illustrating the divide that separates the patriotic spirit of the grandfathers' age from the nationalistic one of their grandsons. It is important to recall that Settembrini's grandfather's devotion to independent statehood was not limited to his own native Italy; during his exile he married a German woman, and joined the Greek and Spanish fights for independence: "[er war] aber nicht nur ein italienischer Patriot gewesen, sondern Mitbürger und Mitstreiter aller nach Freiheit dürstenden Völker" (162) ["But Grandfather Giuseppe had been not only an Italian patriot. He had been fellow citizen and brother-in-arms to any people struggling for its liberties" (153)]. Giuseppe Settembrini's patriotism is hardly comparable to the jingoistic nationalism that soon grew in its place. His return to Italy sees him advocate the formation of a single state that would unify all free peoples (163;153).

One way of expressing a collective loyalty is to dress in those garments — the "uniform" — which the relevant collective entity has sanctioned. Hans is confused when

Joachim returns to Berghof, dressed in the uniform of a Private, even though he has advanced to the position of Lieutenant. His cousin tries to make him realize the significance of his officer's uniform: "Ach nein, die Uniform habe er hübsch zu Hause gelassen. Mit der Uniform, müsse Hans Castorp wissen, habe es was auf sich" (530) ["He had left his uniform at home, of course. It was not such a simple matter with a uniform — you couldn't wear it just any place" (503)]. The novel's implication that the passing of the nineteenth century was accompanied by a significant shift in collective loyalties is very effectively demonstrated in its contrasting of the *Amtstracht* [official garb] of Hans' grandfather, and the military uniform of his cousin Joachim. As a Ratsherr [city councillor] of Hamburg, Hans Lorenz Castorp appears in his portrait wearing the specific garments associated with this office. The suit he wears is free of the symbols and insignia of a military uniform; it is nothing more than an intensification of normal bourgeois clothing, an exaggeration of, rather than departure from, what he would otherwise wear. In contrast, a military uniform presents not only a break from ordinary, civil dress, but it also proclaims a different organization of society: that of an ordered machine.

In 'Tonio Kröger', the cultural opposition is between North and South, and it is confined to Europe. *Der Zauberberg* exchanges this juxtaposition for the broader one of East and West, or Asia versus Europe; many of its characters view these as two distinct realms, so foreign to one another that they can never be satisfactorily reconciled. Whichever of these oppositions is the case, the protagonists are removed from their native, natural settings and placed in contexts which bring them into contact with those who are culturally strange: "Both [Castorp and Aschenbach] find themselves in an enclosed and

cosmopolitan society and are disoriented by climatic and cultural influences and meetings with strange, even grotesque characters. Neither succeeds in escaping the fateful milieu, though both are warned and consider or attempt it. They are held fast by a passion which is contrary in different ways to reason and conscience and therefore not avowed by their conscious minds, in each case for an exotic (Slavonic) beloved whom they live near yet only worship from a distance" (Reed 60). *Der Zauberberg* is an especially rich exploration of this phenomenon of the national other, who is at once alluring and threatening.

At Berghof, Hans mingles with countless nationalities, but it is the Slavs, and the Russians in particular, who awake in him the most intense feelings of curiosity, disapproval and attraction. Hans has always been drawn to the East; in his youth, he was besotted with Pribislav Hippe, "das Produkt einer alten Rassenmischung ... einer Versetzung germanischen Blutes mit wendisch-slawischem — oder auch umgekehrt (127) ["the product of an ancient mixture of races, a grafting of Germanic stock with Slavic, or the reverse" (120)], and at Berghof he is again attracted by high cheekbones and slanted eyes. It is not just Hans who is enamoured of a Russian woman, but Hofrat Behrens and Joachim, too. Clawdia and Marusja attract the Germans' attention because their faces are "fremdartig und charaktervoll (denn nur das Fremde scheint uns Charakter zu haben)...." (155) ["unusual ... and full of character (for only the unusual seems to us to have character)...." (146)] .

Der Zauberberg is a careful and ponderous investigation into the rhetoric and logic of the modern nation. By presenting various attitudes towards the nation and national

identity, the novel explores the complexities of national typing, alternately inscribing and undermining its claims. *Der Zauberberg* articulates the discourse surrounding the nation — national typing, national identity — and a precise portrayal of the demands it makes and the loyalty it inspires. Like Forster, Mann reveals the moments at which nationalist logic flounders and national categories are overcome. The very notion of a national identity, or of the archetypal German, is flawed. A national identity or character, no matter how clearly defined or "objective," is only ever an idea; like the nation itself, a national character does not exist — does not mean — until it is first recognized as such. As Hermann Weigand observes, "The term national character, properly used, is nothing other than a concentrated symbol for those features of a national community's past development and environment that are *felt* as still alive and recognizably active in that community at a *given moment*" (102, my emphasis). Because there is no scientific process by which national character might be identified and measured, it can only be a momentary interpretation, devoid of both essence and permanence (Weigand 100–101). A central aspect of Weigand's study of *Der Zauberberg* is its careful discussion of these difficulties. With occasional allusions to Nietzsche, he exposes the shortcomings of the national(ist) mentality and rhetoric that are so prominent in *Der Zauberberg*. Weigand reiterates Hobsbawm's insistence on the self-conscious creation of national identities: "An additional factor that has played an increasingly important rôle during the last century and a half particularly, is the growing self-consciousness of nationalities, the will to regard themselves as distinct in type from their neighbours, the conviction of each that it has a unique contribution to make to humanity" (101–102). As Henry Hatfield explains in his

article "*The Magic Mountain*," there are only national possibilities, and no representative national citizens. "As a citizen of upper-class Hamburg, however, Castorp would seem on the whole closer to an upper-class Britisher than to a Prussian lieutenant or a Bavarian peasant .... Castorp is a German possibility, hardly the representative German" (90). As soon as national typing is put into practice it is shown to be insufficient. For instance, among the Russians at Berghof, there are two groups that are visibly separate from each other during meals. There is both a "guten Russentisch" and a "schlechten Russentisch" (46); unity in nationality is immediately dissolved by other differences.

Many of the characters in *Der Zauberberg* accept national and racial typing as legitimate, and employ such stereotypes in accounting for both physical and temperamental qualities, to the exclusion of all other considerations. Clawdia is described by Settembrini as having a "'tatarische Physiognomie'" (306) ["'Tartar physiognomy'"(289)], and in defending her need for "liberté" she tells Hans "c'est de ma race, peut-être" (357; 338). Joachim takes Naphta's nose and frail constitution as indication that he must be Jewish: "Und dabei hat er ja eine Judenase, sieh ihn dir doch an! So miekrig von Figur sind auch immer nur die Semiten" (407) ["And did you see the big Jewish nose he had? Nobody but Jews have such puny figures" (385)]. But physical signs may also hide nationality and race. In Naphta's experience, there are many South Americans who look more typically Jewish than he himself: "Es waren da junge Exoten, portugiesische Südamerikaner, die jüdischer aussahen als er, und so kann dieser Begriff abhanden" (469) ["There were other young exotics among the pupils, such as the Portuguese South Americans, who looked even more "Jewish" than he did, and thus the

idea did not come up" (445)].

The novel's central themes of love, disease, and death, as well as temporality in general, seem to overwhelm and obscure national differences. There are moments when the text explicitly asserts that there are important experiences which are not national, but universal. For instance, the narrator claims that Hans's experience of unrequited love is the same for all, "überall und unter allen Umständen" (244) ["the world over" (230)]. One should not overlook the fact that the principal setting of *Der Zauberberg* defies national categories. The sanatorium around which all of the action centres is explicitly international; among the clientele of the self-confessed "Internationales Sanatorium Berghof" are people from across Europe, and even the occasional guest from Asia and South America (the grief-stricken mother known as "tous les deux" from Mexico, and the Chinese Dr. Ting-Fu). As Nancy Nenno puts it, "the international atmosphere of *Der Zauberberg*, peopled with characters that serve as metonymic, albeit atypical, representatives of national cultures, thus indicates the centrality of national identity in the novel" (303). The text draws very little attention to the sanatorium's location in Swiss territory; Berghof's seclusion is almost complete, and what is distinctive about the area are the isolated mountains, rather than any cultural practices of the Swiss.

Like everyone else at the sanatorium, Hans's understanding of what constitutes a community is no longer confined to nationality. As his stay at Berghof lengthens, he comes to regard the altitude at which one lives, whether one resides in a magical mountain sanatorium as opposed to the everyday "Flachland," ["flatland"] as equally, if not more, decisive. He discovers that one's *Heimat* [home] need not be national, and it takes World

War I to reestablish his own home as Germany: "With the thunderclap that heralds the beginning of the First World War, Hans Castorp recuperates his national identity by joining up and returning to the flatland" (Nenno 317). Over the course of *Der Zauberberg* the idea that the nation represents a bond that would be superior to any other is shown to be shortsighted. The different cultural customs of the diverse guests at Berghof do not interfere in their amicable interaction. Hans himself befriends the Italian Settembrini and falls in love with the Russian Claudia; he reserves his greatest dislike for his fellow German, Frau Stöhr. Many of those who recover from their sickness return to their original *Heimat* only to feel estranged and foreign. Herr Settembrini relates to Hans the fate of Ottilie, a former patient who tried to conceal her recovery because it obliged her to leave the sanatorium: "'Was soll ich da unten?' rief sie wiederholt. 'Hier ist meine Heimat!'" (93) ["'What shall I do down there?'she kept crying. 'This is my home!'" (87)]. Hans learns of another such case, where the young man in question actually did return to his new *Heimat*, Berghof:

> Er kehrte in die 'Heimat' zurück, – Sie wissen doch, man nennt dies 'Heimat', wenn man einmal hier gelebt hat. Seiner jungen Frau war er völlig entfremdet, es fehlten ihr die 'Grundbegriffe', und sie verzichtete. Sie sah ein, daß er in der Heimat eine Genossin mit übereinstimmenden 'Grundbegriffen' finden und dableiben werde. (211)
>
> He went back, went back 'home' — you know, don't you, that they call this home when they have once lived here? He was entirely estranged from his young wife, she lacked the fundamental conception, and she gave up trying to get it. (199)

The "Grundbegriffe" of sanatorium life have superceded those of a local or national home.

Like the resort hotel of *Death in Venice*, the sanatorium portrayed in *Der Zauberberg* is a site where nationalities meet and peacefully coexist, despite their supposed distinctiveness and opposition. It is only in these "extra-ordinary" contexts of holiday or sickness, experiences which diverge from usual, everyday routine, that such an "internationaler Treffpunkt"(78) ["international centre" (73)] is possible. It is not only at Berghof itself where the sickly of different nations come together, but in the local cemetery as well: "so stammten die Namen aus allen Winden und Welten, sie lauteten englisch, russisch oder doch allgemein slawisch, auch deutsch, portugiesisch und anderswie" (339) ["the inscriptions bore names from every quarter of the earth, they were in English or Russian — or other Slavic tongues — also German, Portuguese, and more" (321)]. The common experience of tuberculosis extracted these youngsters from their homes; first sickness, and then death dispell their national identity. At Berghof they are gathered among others like themselves, and when they die they are buried in cemeteries which do not enforce familial, local, or national bonds, but a universal one of premature death:

> die Daten aber trugen zartes Gepräge, ihre Spannweite war im ganzen auffallend gering, der Jahresabstand zwischen Geburt und Exitus betrug überall ungefähr zwanzig und nicht viel mehr, fast lauter Jugend und keine Tugend bevölkerte das Lager, ungefestigtes Volk, das sich aus aller Welt hier zusammengefunden hatte und zur horizontalen Daseinsform endgültig eingekehrt war. (340)
>
> the dates told their own sad story, for the time they covered was generally a

> short span indeed, the age between birth averaging not much more than twenty years. Not crabbed age, but youth peopled the spot; folk not yet settled in life, who from all corners of the earth had come together here to take up the horizontal for good and all. (321)

Der Zauberberg would not lend itself so well to a discussion of national identity and nationalism, if it were not for Lodovico Settembrini, one of its central characters. The endless discussions between this pedagogue and his Jesuit companion Leo Naphta often return to the question of which collective deserves one's loyalty, and how this allegiance is to be manifested. Each pledges himself to a particular historical model — Settembrini to the Enlightenment, and Naphta to the Middle Ages — which they would first like to modify, and then dictate to the world.

Mann's novel is an exhaustive examination of how people live socially and collectively. Settembrini himself has been greatly influenced by familial bonds; his liberal and internationalist attitudes appear to have been inspired by his father and grandfather: "Diese Ideen, Ideale und Willensstrebungen, bemerkte Settembrini, seien Familienüberlieferung in seinem Hause" (167) ["Those ideas, ideals, and efforts of the aspiring will were, Settembrini said, traditional in his family" (158)]. Settembrini is a devoted disciple of the Enlightenment tradition of progress, reason, freedom, and humanism; like many of the liberal nationalists whom Hobsbawm identifies, he rejects the current trend of isolated and competing nations and wishes to see the establishment of an "internationale Weltrepublik" ["international republic"]. The single underlying principle of Settembrini's attitude is his reverence for the human spirit; he wishes to see humanity fulfill all of its potential: "Was aber sei denn der Humanismus? Liebe zum Menschen sei

es, nichts weiter, und damit sei er auch Politik, sei er auch Rebellion gegen alles, was die Idee des Menschen besudele und entwürdigte" (167) ["But what, after all, was humanism if not love of human kind, and by that token also political activity, rebellion against all that tended to defile or degrade our conception of humanity?" (158)].

Settembrini's vision of a unified, multinational republic does not genuinely oppose and counter the rhetoric of distinct and exclusive nations; it merely extends it. His *Weltrepublik* will include certain nations, but not others; it is to be made up of those countries which conform to the European principles of freedom, reason, and progress. On the one hand, Settembrini reveres technology because it promises to unite all the peoples of the world: it is "das verlässigste Mittel, die Völker einander nahe zu bringen, ihre gegenseitige Bekanntschaft zu fördern, menschlichen Ausgleich zwischen ihnen anzubahnen, ihre Vorurteile zu zerstören und endlich ihre allgemeine Vereinigung herbeizuführen" (165) ["the most reliable agent in the task of drawing together the peoples of the earth, of making them acquainted with each other, of building bridges to compromise, to destroy prejudice; of, finally bringing about the universal brotherhood of man" (155)]. On the other, however, he has no interest in any of these objectives where he perceives cultural strangeness. Settembrini disdains Hans's attraction to Claudia because she is Russian, and expounds the very stereotypes he claims to oppose. He tells Hans Castorp: "'Aber auch Ihr Verhalten zum Leiden sollte ein europäisches Verhalten sein, — nicht das des Ostens, der, weil er weich und zur Krankheit geneigt ist, diesen Ort so ausgiebig beschickt.... Mitleid und unermeßliche Geduld, das ist seine Art, dem Leiden zu begegnen. Es kann, es darf die unsrige, die Ihre, nicht sein!'" (258) ["'But your attitude

toward suffering can be a European attitude; it should not be the oriental, which in its soft abandonment inclines so readily to seek this spot. The oriental attitude toward suffering is one of pity and a boundless patience — that cannot, it ought not to be ours, to be yours!'" (244)]. He endorses the idea of separate races and cautions Hans: "'Sie sollten nicht grübeln und träumen, Ingenieur,' unterbrach in Settembrini, 'sondern sich entschlossen den Instinkten Ihrer Jahre und Rasse anvertrauen, die Sie zur Tätigkeit drängen müssen'" (404) ["'You must resolve to trust to the instincts of your youth and your blood, urging you in the direction of action'" (382)].

Conclusion

As the close of the twentieth century approaches one perceives that while other 'ism's seem to fade into the background of history, nationalism continues to inspire deadly love and hatred. Even if — and maybe precisely because — the idea of the nation is slowly being superseded by a growing sense of internationalism and globalization, the rhetoric of the proud nation persists.

As we have seen, the works of Thomas Mann and E.M. Forster are especially enlightening in their examination of the complex relationship between an individual and a national identity. "National enemies" though they may have been, Mann and Forster betray an identical interest in portraying the appeal of identifying oneself with a nation, while revealing the deception/fiction this entails. As literary figures of the first half of the present century, Mann and Forster were the inheritors of a world that had dispensed with God and created the individual and the nation as a new faith. Both writers used their literary talents to articulate a dilemma that haunted their age: the tension between identifying with a reassuring yet inevitably flawed set of national stereotypes, and embracing a more daring vision of universal humanism. Their works consistently address this question, often portraying characters who can only think of themselves and everyone around them in exclusively national terms.

Neither Mann nor Forster tries to deny that national differences exist. As a matter of fact, as this thesis has argued, they both portray the logic of national stereotypification in practice, sensitively depicting the shift from an earlier, liberal phase of national

sentiment to its later, more chauvinistic and aggressive one. But while acknowledging cultural variations, both authors dismiss as false the idea that these discrepancies should be intrinsic or meaningful. Thus, on the one hand, Mann and Forster introduce the question of home, or *Heimat*, — what does home mean, what constitutes a home? —, overtly challenging the assumption that one's sense of belonging must be defined along national lines, and, on the other one, they emphasize instances of human universality that transcend all national divisions. In this sense, they are both representative of the Western humanistic tradition.

Forster and Mann come to similar conclusions about the claims of nationalism and national identity. Both uncover instances where nationalist logic fails — the possibility of mixed parentage, the existence of wider collectives which obscure national identity — and affirm the preeminence of human universality over nationality. In this sense, their work is highly political, as relevant today as when it was written.

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