

WESTERN SENSIBILITIES IN ROMAN CHAOS:

THE ITALIAN CHARACTERS OF JAMES, FORSTER, AND LAWRENCE

By

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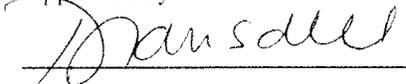
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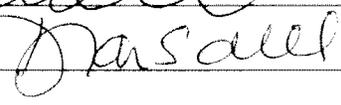
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Abstract

The American and British have actively traveled to Italy since the late 17th century. The Grand Tours popularized by the British Upper Class in the 18th Century were fictionalized by many authors and led to a fascination with Italian culture. The novels that emerged about this country by authors such as E.M. Forster, Henry James and D.H. Lawrence focused on characters that were often hesitant to explore Italian culture. Three particular archetypes stand out in their writing: the corrupted foreigner, the female foreigner and the rare culturally engaged foreigner. This study explores each of these archetypes and their specific influence on this canon of literature. These works are still relevant to modern society and the continued difficulty of understanding people unlike ourselves.

Introduction

“[Man] is constantly in the position of interacting with strangers so he must take the next step and begin to transcend his culture. This cannot be done in an armchair.”¹

– *Beyond Culture*, Edward Hall

A foreigner arriving in a new land is an idea as ancient as the Old Testament itself. “I have been a stranger in a strange land,” is profoundly announced in Exodus and from that point onward literature gained one of its most prominent and important themes. Upper Class British and Americans took this biblical theme to heart during the 18th and 19th centuries found themselves on explorations across Europe. Particularly, many British found their homeland “uninhabitable” and took to the vast country sides and mythic landmarks of Italy². A strange place in the most beautiful of regards, Italy has historically stood for invention and revitalization since the days of ancient Rome when emperors and senators charted the paths of Italy’s citizens. Because of this history that is ripe with global importance it is no wonder that so many prolific characters of early 20th century literature found a similar awakening in this particular land. Foreigners to this country become especially transformed and peculiarly touched. There are a multitude of ways that the travelers to Italy can be categorized, but it to narrow these characters into three basic types that are touched upon multiple times in the works of E.M. Forster, Henry James and D.H. Lawrence. According to these authors the three main archetypes of British and American travelers may be: the corrupted male, the over-sexualized female, and in a glimmer of hope, the stranger who eventually embraces the culture. These three archetypes are prevalent throughout these works and each author exposes them in with a distinctive flair. Exploration of these characters can lead to a better understanding of why humanity often reacts with hesitancy and confusion to foreign cultures.

¹ Edward Hall, *Beyond Culture* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1977), 44.

² Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 15.

At the very tip of the twentieth century there was little travel “due to the war effort”³. People did not start enjoying their escapes in Europe nor using them for educational means until several years later. After World War I Britain in particular was a place of turmoil and many people were looking for a literal and metaphorical escape. Forster, James and Lawrence’s novels reflect a new and popular fashion that captivated the imagination of the European during this period and for people who could not afford to travel literature would have provided a similar escape. The idea of Europe, and particularly Italy, had caught the imagination of people unfamiliar with its landscape. These authors, too, were swept up in the beauty and fantasy of the foreign land of Italy and focused significant portions of each of their literary catalogues to this country. Novelists told something about the country through their characters rather than writing researched-based examinations. Even in the case of Lawrence whose *Twilight in Italy* is a non-fiction book, his interpretations and analyses are character-based. The real life people he meets in each of his locations inform his entire interpretation of Italy and this is not so different in the novels of Forster and James whose characters create a distinct interpretation of Italy all their own.

The three categorizes of characters are exemplified through different works by each of the authors. The corrupted foreigner is most clearly seen through the works of Henry James. The unnamed narrator in “The Aspern Papers” shows how completely ill-intent can take over not only a man but also his environment. This corruption is reproduced similarly in *Roderick Hudson* not only through the title character but also through the narrator, Rowland. Despite how badly both of these gentlemen wish to integrate into the Italian landscape their betrayal of one another and the women in their lives leads them into despair. The female characters show a new aspect

³ Fussell, *Abroad*, 10.

of corruption by revealing the lengths to which sexuality can be used for manipulation. James's Daisy Miller and Christina Light from *Roderick Hudson* also find themselves in tragedy but it is due to their own social climbing. Forster's Lucy Honeychurch is the antithesis of these two women and she embraces Italy with her soul rather than for the monetary value. Lawrence's own self-interpretation provides a lens to see how real life individuals react to the same landscape that James and Forster's creations roam. All these characters can owe some of their creation to similar archetypes from Forster's foremost creation, *A Passage to India*. Just like in the world of the Bible or in the modern day similar characters interact with each other to create the themes that are still today touched upon.

The Origin of the "Spoilt Westerner": *A Passage to India*

"Friends again, yet aware they could meet no more" – A Passage to India, EM Forster⁴

India and Italy have just as much in common as the array of characters from these 20th century novels. In *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster characters grapple with the idea of identity in a place that is foreign to them. In one pivotal scene a character attempts to grasp what may make India so different from their native home of England: "'You never used to judge people like this at home.' 'India isn't home'"⁵. This novel is important to any study of travel because it deals with the fundamentality of an identity when that individual journeys to someplace new. It also bends traditional trope by having the foreigner be the member of society that is most changed by the British travelers rather than the other way around. This novel iconized the "spoilt Westerner" while also exacting an understanding of the foreigner who is having his homeland

⁴ E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (New York: Harcourt, 1924), 316.

⁵ Forster, *A Passage to India*, 33.

invaded by people who lack a complete understanding of his culture⁶. Forster's writing is ideal for examination of this topic because he understands the reality of these foreign places. Rather than lecturing or providing morals, Forster suits his characters with difficult situations through which they can learn something about themselves. Specifically, the characters of Aziz, Mrs. Moore and Adela are pushed against the foreign elements of India how they react explains not only something about what it means to be a stranger but also what it means to be human.

Forster holds a mirror to their innermost tendencies by allowing his characters to interact with strangers that are similar and dissimilar to themselves in fascinating ways. In the case of Mrs. Moore and Adela it is their transplantation to a new environment that allows them to contact these foreigners. This novel in particular is interesting because it also shines a light on the opposite side of the relationship by closely following Aziz. Aziz can be read as a sympathetic character whose unsavory characteristics can be redeemed. Universal truths of human existence such as love, longing and self-identity come to light more clearly for the characters of Forster, James and D.H. Lawrence when they enter the mysterious land of Italy then when they remain on their native soil. These authors teach us that while the human experience remains universal it can be defined differently through the lens of a different culture. The human experience can sometimes be best understood in a country where the language is foreign and the customs indistinguishable then the true self is able to be revealed.

Forster's British characters are allowed the opportunity to interact with the citizens of India while also letting them roam in an environment in which they can also experiment with close personal friends. While his European characters often remain selfish in their interpretations of worlds unlike their own it is clear that the author himself had a fondness for the strange and

⁶ Forster, *A Passage to India*, 77.

different: “It was the artist's opinion that there is no essential difference between beauty and ugliness; that they overlap and intermingle in a quite inextricable manner; that there is no saying where one begins and the other ends...”⁷. Forster brings a fundamental respect for the countries he is portraying in his work. One of the most spectacular aspects of *A Passage to India* is the detailed descriptions of the Indian mosques and beautiful caves. Even while Forster may point out these elements as a way of highlighting what his self-absorbed characters may be missing about their world it is also a way of paying homage to the location which he has fictionalized.

In *A Passage to India*, Forster introduces us to a variety of characters that are affected by the strange landscape. The archetypal characters he introduces in this novel can be used as a layout for all future understanding of characters throughout his novels as well as the works of James and Lawrence. Within this novel there is: the corrupted foreigner, the misguided female foreigner and the foreigner that attempts assimilation or at least learns about the culture. The ending pauses on a contemplation of friendship and how relationships have been changed by the experience in this foreign place but even so they are still distinctly aligned to their individual character traits. The characters that change the least in this novel are the youngest of the group. Adela Quested is hesitant to foreigners from the beginning of the novel and remains so up until the ending and even her eventual marriage to Mr. Cyril Fielding. Initially Adela is distasteful of the Indian people: “He can go where he likes as long as he doesn't come near me. They give me the creeps.”⁸ Forster pushes the boundaries of what is acceptable within a human being in his characterization of Adela. When she allows Aziz to be persecuted for the misunderstanding in the caves it becomes clear that she lacks any change from the beginning of the novel up until the

⁷ Henry James, *Roderick Hudson* (Amazon, 1875), 60.

⁸ Forster, *A Passage to India*, 27.

ending. Forster teases at the possibility of change during Adela and Ronny's carriage ride this self-realization is shattered when the couple gets into an accident. Adela is meant to portray the Western that Aziz loathes and time and again her choices only enforce his harsh perspective.

Mr. Cyril Fielding, doctor and the resident explorer of the group, has significantly little change throughout the course of the novel aside from what Aziz might refer to as a digression in romancing Adela. From the beginning, Cyril is an inquisitive foreigner and he appears to have a genuine fascination with the culture of India. He is an altogether amiable character but as Aziz points out while he is "warm-hearted" and "unconventional" he is not altogether "wise"⁹. Though Fielding is a likable character his participation in this foreign country does little to change him. He may seem inviting and congenial but his choice to wed Adela proves that he would rather stick with his own kind. Fielding is never openly hostile but his interiority reveals his discomfort with this new culture, "He always got on with Englishmen in England, all his best friends were English, so why was it not the same out here?"¹⁰ This lack of transformation marks him as more similar to Adela than the other characters in the novel and ultimately less receptive to the changes of a foreign culture.

Ultimately, this novel is about Aziz. This series of events goes against the formulation of Forster's other novels because the native citizen is ultimately the one who is transformed by the foreigners rather than the other way around. *A Passage to India* is different from other novels because a dramatic change does not occur within the majority of the characters. It is difficult to change within the context of a familiar setting let alone within a foreign landscape. Yet, the foreign environment often escalates the potential for change. Aziz is thrown into uncertainty

⁹ Forster, *A Passage to India*, 127.

¹⁰ Forster, *A Passage to India*, 62.

through the members of the traveling group of British and while he finds friendship through Mrs. Moore that is unable to withstand any permanence after her return to Europe. Aziz's presence in the novel provides a reminder that all people are susceptible to the influence of others and their own cultures.

The Corrupted Foreigner: “The Aspern Papers” and *Roderick Hudson*
 “...if Roman life doesn't do something substantial to make you happier, it increases tenfold your liability to moral misery.” – *Roderick Hudson*, Henry James¹¹

Henry James wrote many volumes on the plight of the foreigner in Italy. His understanding of American society juxtaposed with the ancient intricacies of Italian negotiations is so comprehensive that it serves as a cautionary tale even in this modern century. The novella “The Aspern Papers” illuminates a rapid decline into corruption that is aided by the backdrop of Venice. In *Sensuous Pessimism* by Carl Maves he celebrates “The Aspern Papers” as one of James's “most celebrated tales and perhaps the most technically perfect”¹². The unnamed narrator in “The Aspern Papers” reveals a level of obsession that is extreme in terms of foreigners and how they are affected by the landscape. An understanding of “The Aspern Papers” is perhaps most effective when it is viewed as an allegory, or a cautionary tale.

“The Aspern Papers” tells the story of the a man who journeys to Venice in order to gain access to the famous author Jeffery Aspern's papers by means of his old lover. The narrator disguises his true identity while seducing Miss Tina in order to gain access to the papers but the novella ends in tragedy. Venice, as a great city filled with history, has influenced this already corrupt man by making him a slave to a past he has never even known. The decay of Venice rubs

¹¹ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 4.

¹² Carl Maves, *Sensuous Pessimism: Italy in the Work of Henry James* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 87.

off on the narrator and feeds his obsession, turning him into a man that is capable of grand deception and willing the death of a woman.

The narrator that arrives at the estate is not an essentially cruel human being, but rather his fascination with the culture and his greed is overwhelming. He is taken on by a power he cannot control and through this influence he becomes almost inhuman in his intentions. While the doubt he displays halfway through his mission may prove that he is not essentially cruel, he is undoubtedly selfish and greedy. When his plan is formulated it is harsh and uncaring: “She would die next week, she would die to-morrow-then I could pounce on her possessions and ransack her drawers”¹³. The narrator’s desire for the Aspern papers of the title transforms him into a creature similar to that of Miss Bordereau and Miss Tina who have already been transformed by the magical influence of Venice. Indeed Maves echoes these mystical influences of Venice, “In Venice, however, past and present exist simultaneously rather than consecutively, overlapping and combining and changing places with the fluidity of water” (88)¹⁴. While the narrator may not find himself essentially corrupted by Venice he is indeed affected by the ever-changing theme of the city. Miss Bordereau and Miss Tina have taken on additional characteristics of their city such as the physicality of their own garden, “with its weeds and its wild rich tangle, its sweet characteristic Venetian shabbiness” (89). The aunt and niece certainly have this same “sweet” shabbiness and perhaps because of their insanity and also their vulnerability they are able to influence the narrator in ways that prior to his journey he had not thought possible.

¹³ Henry James, *The Aspern Papers and Other Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 75.

¹⁴ Maves, *Sensuous Pessimism*, 87.

Despite his fixation on his ultimately goal of stealing the papers the narrator becomes blindsided by the human connection he forms with Miss Tina. This narrator is influenced by this Italian woman and his experiences in Italy very much become intertwined with what takes place between the two of them. After getting to know Miss Tina on a more personal level the narrator begins to second-guess his mission; “I had brought her to the Piazza, placed her among charming influences, paid her an attention she appreciated, and now I appeared to show it all as a bribe - a bribe to make her turn in some way against her aunt”¹⁵. He is raked with moral concerns about the lengths he has taken to satisfy his greedy intent more than once after beginning to know Miss Tina; “Did she think I had made love to her even to get the papers? I hadn’t, I hadn’t...” (151)¹⁶. While the narrator recites this mantra several times throughout the ending of the story it is unclear whether he believes that he did not take advantage of Miss Tina’s insecurity and loneliness to get the papers that he so desires. This is why, at the conclusion, when Miss Bourdeau’s silhouette proclaims that she has burned the papers it is difficult to take a side. While the entirety of the story is written in first-person this narrator is not necessarily a sympathetic figure or a hero.

According to Maves the narrator is not a man to be pitied, he “feels only a single obsessive desire that leads him backward into an ever-retreating past”¹⁷. While the narrator arrived in Italy with many of his vices already intact at the end it is hard to say whether this circumstance has brought him to a deeper understanding of what it takes to be a better person or whether the power of Italy has only further corrupted him to make him more susceptible to further evils. There is proof that the narrator is a better person in the time that he invests with

¹⁵ James, *The Aspern Papers*, 127.

¹⁶ James, *The Aspern Papers*, 151.

¹⁷ Maves, *Sensuous Pessimism*, 90.

Miss Tina and even telling her about his true intent with the papers. He may be susceptible to the sabotage because Miss Tina ultimately finds reason to burn the papers “one by one” at the end of the story¹⁸.

Henry James’s *Roderick Hudson* is a definitive example of an American foreigner corrupted by the landscape and people of Italy. Rowland leads his friend Roderick into the land of Italy in order to help him become more sophisticated. In many ways Rowland represents the ultimate foreigner, similar to Dr. Fielding in *A Passage to India*. Eager to learn and ready to adapt to the situations Rowland is still essentially American. Rowland is not the titular character of the novel because he is already jaded. He and the eccentric Christina Light, a young lady they meet through the social scene of Rome, expose Roderick to the world of Italy and ultimately lead him to his death. He has learned the ways of the world and while there is much more heartbreak he will experience in his future it is the story of Roderick that is the essential one of corruption. Rowland is described as having “been brought up to think much more intently of the duties of this life than of its privileges and pleasures”¹⁹. At the beginning of the novel Roderick is all-American and pure; “He undertook constantly to believe that all women were fair, all men were brave, and the world was a delightful place of sojourn, until the contrary had been distinctly proved”²⁰. By the end of the novel all of these beliefs which he holds dear have been proven incorrect. Christina Light has been shown to be least fair of all women, Rowland is a coward of the worst sort and the world is unfortunately not a delightful place but rather one in which an innocent artist will be killed in the prime of his life.

¹⁸ James, *The Aspern Papers*, 156.

¹⁹ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 5.

²⁰ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 8.

Even while Rowland is a coward he too is not able to escape from the corruption that takes place in Italy. While Roderick becomes corrupt in regards to greedy entities of the flesh Rowland has already had experience in the world and comes to realize that even while he knows the differences between right and wrong he wants to defy them regardless. Rowland's pursuit of Miss Garland symbolizes a deterioration of a friendship. Rowland is a self-described idle man, "I have the misfortune to be a rather idle man," he says about himself, "and in Europe the burden of idleness is less heavy than here."²¹ Yet even in Europe Rowland finds himself preoccupied with his intentions with his friend's fiancée.

Toward the end of the novel Rowland finds every reason possible to engage in interaction with Miss Garland while she is in Italy. They have a conversation that is key to the book, "Well, what do you think of Europe?" he asked, smiling. 'I think it's horrible!' she said abruptly. 'Horrible?' 'I feel so strangely - I could almost cry.'²² Miss Garland's instant distaste for Europe could be the first clue that she is one of the only chaste and moralistic characters of the novel. As a symbol and a metaphor Italy represents the allure of temptation in James's writing. Because Roderick eventually falls to this temptation he must be punished with death and likewise Rowland is forced to live out the rest of his life with this tragedy. In Alwyn Berland's critical examination of James's work he notes the peculiarity of Rowland's character; "One recognizes in both the delineation of a common type: the hero-as-passive-sensibility, the protagonist who serves passively in two roles - hero as observer and hero as sufferer"²³. Yet, it is arguable whether Rowland is actually the hero he is made out to be by this interpretation. Both

²¹ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 42.

²² James, *Roderick Hudson*, 192.

²³ Alwyn Berland, *Culture and Conduct in the Novels of Henry James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 68.

Rowland's observations as well as his suffering are self-inflicted and ultimately lead to his corruption.

While Roderick is the quintessential character of the foreigner corrupted by the influences of Italy, Rowland is a more intricate character that is affected by the influence of Italy a little bit differently. Yet both of their own personal interactions with the country are complimented in the woman that they share affection for, Miss Garland. She is the only character who can see the corruption of Italy and notices the chaos that takes place within its borders. The way that Rowland and Roderick interact with Miss Garland is in opposite to the way that they both react to the seductive charms of Italy itself. This may be because Miss Garland is the opposite of Italy. Mary is logical where the Italians are passionate and sensitive where the Italians are vigorous and full of life. Roderick chooses to ignore Miss Garland's control and never truly sees her for the strong and powerful woman that she is. Meanwhile, Rowland is fascinated by her unique beauty and he cannot be allowed to ignore her despite the implications that it could ruin his companionship with Roderick. Mary Garland in fact asks Rowland, "Is this what you call life?" and this simple questioning can be applied to both Roderick and Rowland's intoxicated by Italy²⁴. Rowland and Roderick are alike and different and when compared to a female their intricacies can be seen more clearly. James's female characters are strong-willed and they provide parallels to the men that allow for self-realizations that would not typically be able to be interpreted without these parallel female characters.

The Female Foreigner: "Daisy Miller" and Christina Light from *Roderick Hudson*

"Little American flirts were the queerest creatures in the world,"

²⁴ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 193.

– “*Daisy Miller*,” Henry James

Female travelers in James’s works fall under similar corruption as the men previously discussed but their demise is much more intricate and untimely. James has been referred to as the inventor of the “international American girl” and what it takes to create this image is perhaps the most important topic for discussion²⁵. James chooses to punish his female characters firmly for the sins of lust and passion more often than his male characters who suffer from greed and envy. Two of the most iconic of James’s American travelers to Italy are Daisy Miller from the short story of the same name and Christina Light from *Roderick Hudson*. The same literary mind crafted both of these women which explain some of their similarities but like the narrator of “The Aspern Papers” and the more intricate Rowland and Roderick of *Roderick Hudson* these women are in the same category but suffer from reasonably different illnesses. Fussell blatantly points out: “Sex is knowledge”²⁶. These women satisfy this mantra and their influence in James’s fictional world can be viewed as a metaphor for the presence of wisdom. Throughout their time in these literary works, no matter how brief, their characters constantly achieve illumination through their scandalous ways and complex motivations.

It could appear that Daisy and Christina are merely objects put into place by James to create trouble for the male protagonists: Winterbourne and Roderick. These females function in their respective stories to create hardships for the young gentleman which they come across. Yet, it is only through these hardships that the men’s characters are able to achieve a change. Winterbourne learns the misfortune that can come when one becomes involved with “uncultivated” American girls²⁷. Meanwhile, Rowland watches his companion Roderick descend

²⁵ Christof Wegelin, *The Image of Europe in Henry James*. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1958), 58.

²⁶ Fussell, *Abroad*, 146.

²⁷ Henry James, *Daisy Miller, Pandora, the Patagonia: And Other Tales*. (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1971) 16.

into madness over the affections of Christina Light: “‘I have two hearts,’ he said, ‘one for myself, one for the world. This one opposes Miss Light, the other adores her!’”²⁸ These women affect the men in their lives just as the whims of Italy do. They are essentially embodiments of the country itself, strong and powerful and often deceptive in the ways in which they receive what they want. These women are crafted to be innately likable characters but they suffer under the judgments of society and their own moral faults. In Berland’s examination of James’s works he specifically points out these women’s flaws; “Both are defeated not by a hostile world crushing goodness, but by a world that is coolly practical, hard in its pragmatic tests, indifferently finding, and acting on, the internal weaknesses of the characters themselves. A particular weakness for both women is pride.”²⁹ These women negotiate with their pride and are convinced throughout their respective stories that they will be able to overcome the forces that are naturally against them.

At the beginning of her story *Daisy Miller* is an iconic model of the stereotypical American lady in Italy. The novella “*Daisy Miller*” is told from the perspective of Winterbourne, a man that does not understand her. Due to this perspective her story is essentially perplexing as the narrator is confused by many of her actions. Initially when Winterbourne meets Daisy he is disconcerted by her nature and incapable of placing her into a proper social category; “Was she simply a pretty girl from New York State? Were they all like that, the pretty girls who had a good deal of gentlemen’s society? Or was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person?”³⁰ Even from early on in the story Winterbourne immediately begins to question whether or not this young lady he has newly encountered is “designing” or “audacious.” Similar

²⁸ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 241.

²⁹ Berland, *Culture and Conduct*, 71.

³⁰ James, *Daisy Miller*, 11.

to the narrator in “The Aspern Papers,” Daisy Miller is another one of James’s characters whose unsavory characteristics come to life most vividly in the Italian setting. Winterbourne is initially hesitant of Daisy and perhaps rightfully so, “Some people had told him that, after all, American girls were exceedingly innocent; and others had told him that, after all, they were not.”³¹

Nevertheless, curiosity and lust get the best of Winterbourne and he ends up pursuing Daisy as a love interest but ultimately he does not suffer at all from his romancing ways.

Winterbourne is aware of Daisy’s low status and, while he does not bluntly state that he thinks she is taking advantage of men for their money, he is hesitant of her unorthodox ways. Winterbourne appears to misjudge Daisy because he has been abroad in Italy for a disproportionate amount of time: “So that his failure of judgment, too, is the result of a peculiarly American entanglement in the conflict of manners, a fact which becomes suddenly clear in the ironic end of the story.”³² Winterbourne certainly enjoys Europe but his amusements at the cities are not nearly as extreme as Daisy’s ecstasy over Rome. Her mother comments on her love for the city saying, “Oh, she thinks there’s nothing like Rome. Of course, it’s a great deal pleasanter for a young lady if she knows plenty of gentlemen.”³³ As Venice was tied completely to the narrators relentless pursuit of the Aspern papers and later to his relationship with Miss Tina, Daisy associates her European travels almost exclusively with the large array of men she courts. Daisy’s troubles occur in Italy but they are not caused solely by Italians. Much of Daisy’s undoing occurs because of her own relentless social climbing and disregard for the rules of Italian society: “described as ‘the eternal question of American snobbishness abroad,’ and the moral issue inherent in it is the death of the individual responsibility at the hands of

³¹ James, *Daisy Miller*, 12.

³² Wegelin, *The Image of Europe*, 62.

³³ James, *Daisy Miller*, 32.

convention.”³⁴ Daisy’s death is tragic but James does not write his character’s demise as essentially sad. The novel ends bluntly: “A week after this the poor girl died,” and it would appear that no pity should be given to this creature that actively pranced outside her own social limitations.³⁵

The female experience in Italy is different from the male experience in that society is often differently responsive to the women. The Italy that James conceives of in his writing is on some level is innately more inviting to women than to men though what it is often inviting the women to partake in is a great deal more scandalous. “The slow-moving, idly-gazing Roman crowd bestowed much attention upon the extremely pretty young foreign lady who was passing through it upon his arm,” Winterbourne notes as he takes Daisy on a stroll.³⁶ His perception of the Italian appreciation of his date is at first well-received but he quickly reexamines the staring eyes of the Italians, “and then he came back to the question whether this was, in a fact, a nice girl.”³⁷ Once again it is important to question whether Daisy has always been corrupt or whether it is this brush with international experience that has sabotaged her naturally delicate demeanor and it would appear that the landscape will not be able fully change her personality but rather only enhance what is already present. The customs she partakes in during her stay in Italy are ones which she has exported from home. As Winterbourne explains to her toward the end of the story; “Flirting is a purely American custom; it doesn't exist here.”³⁸ Winterbourne later points out; “little American flirts were the queerest creatures in the world,” and to that respect it seems

³⁴ Wegelin, *The Image of Europe*, 63.

³⁵ James, *Daisy Miller*, 57.

³⁶ James, *Daisy Miller*, 35.

³⁷ James, *Daisy Miller*, 37.

³⁸ James, *Daisy Miller*, 43.

true in regards to Daisy's complexities.³⁹ These women are unable to conform to the societal rules of Europe which in many ways contradict the lightheartedness of Italy itself. Daisy's story ends in tragedy and it most likely James's punishment for her stepping outside the boundaries of her societal and economic means.

Christina Light in *Roderick Hudson* is similar to Daisy Miller in many ways though she is arguably wiser about her controversial choices. Christina is fortunate in that she has more page length to develop a fuller character that is richer with intricacies than her counterpart from the novella. Christina stands as her own definitive character because many of her actions are at first excusable because of her extraordinary beauty. Rowland notes that, "if [Mrs. Light's] daughter were less of a beauty, her transparent ambition would be very ridiculous," yet because her incredulous appearance men are fascinated and women are forced to turn the other way when it comes to her eccentricities.⁴⁰ James states explicitly that Italy has contributed to the person Christina has become; "Our American girls are accused of being more knowing than any others, and Miss Light is nominally an American. But it has taken twenty years of Europe to make her what she is."⁴¹ This is evidence that Christina was indeed turned into a different version of herself upon entering into the world of Italy. It is Christina herself that is so enthralling. While Italy helps to amplify her character as a woman she would be enchanting regardless of her situation. Italy provides her with an idyllic backdrop but it does not mean that this is the only place in which she could achieve greatness.

In Christof Wegelin's essay on "The American as a Young Lady" he expands upon what it is that makes Christina such a particular literary character. In this essay the point is made that

³⁹ James, *Daisy Miller*, 46.

⁴⁰ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 93.

⁴¹ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 106.

travel to Europe often means a loss of innocence. The Grand Tours of Europe that often took place after primary schooling are naturally associated with a gaining of knowledge and a imparting from naivety. Christina learns to work the Italian culture and the American culture simultaneously much better than any of the men in James's stories. She succeeds in achieving her own personal interests of marrying into a wealthy lineage while also having Roderick sculpt her likeness into a bust and stealing his heart as well. What makes these females characters more important and more interesting is that James often works to make them inherently likable as well. More so than the unnamed narrator it is for Miss Tina that truly sympathy lies with; "What matters more than life or death is the grounds on which James arouses our sympathy for the American girl, the causes of her ordeal as well as the fortitude with which she meets it"⁴² (59). It is possible to see ourselves within the American girl and this is what keeps audiences returning to these stories decades after their publication.

The Culturally Engaged Foreigner: *Twilight in Italy* and *A Room with a View*

*"He worshipped a finer understanding and a subtler tact"*⁴³

– *Twilight in Italy*, D.H. Lawrence

The rarest of all are the travelers to Italy that are interested in not only the culture but in also learning something significant about themselves. D.H. Lawrence in his personal narrative on his travels to Italy represents the definitive model of the foreigner that is willing to learn more about a different culture. In *Twilight to Italy* Lawrence takes time to learn about many different types of people as well as himself. During his discoveries he struggles to learn the similarities and differences of the Italian people in comparison with himself. It is this willingness for self-exploration that makes Lawrence into a more modern traveler. Lucy Honeychurch executed a

⁴² Wegelin, *The Image of Europe*, 59.

⁴³ D.H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy* (New York: Viking Press, 1958), 89.

similar portrayal of this idea years in Forster's novel *A Room with a View*. Her inquisitive spirit was shown through a feminine perspective but she is still fully comparable to the questioning and ambitions of the older, male Lawrence.

In *A Room with a View* E.M. Forster creates in his main female character someone who is capable of understanding a new culture and who is also hoping to learn from it. Forster began penning *A Room with a View* long before he published *Where Angels Fear to Tread* but the work was not completed until much later. Perhaps this is due to Forster's changing thoughts on the foreigner in Italy. Lucy is a more full-formed character than her counterpart in Forster's other work; Lilia. Lucy Honeychurch can stand against Lawrence's non-fiction depiction of himself perhaps only because she is so fully formed. A major difference between these two works is that *A Room with a View* is told in the third person with the narrator observing: "one who sets the scene, commenting sometimes wryly, sometimes ruefully at what his characters do and say."⁴⁴ Lucy is very much at the mercy of the unseen narrator that watches over her but she still possesses an agency in her story. As compared to the females in James's narratives, Lucy's goals are to achieve a better understanding of self. Her actions are rarely centered on the wants of others.

Lucy differs from Lawrence in that she requires the guidance of an author and narrator while Lawrence has complete freewill. Lucy is a young girl who has not yet found her purpose and for her the world is often shrouded in confusion. It is for this reason that events such as the murder in the Piazza don't seem quite so gruesome or her ill-fated engagement to Cecil does not seem as serious – Lucy's world is not fully formed and because of that the narrative lacks a

⁴⁴ David Bradshaw, *The Cambridge companion to E.M. Forster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 141.

maturity that would be capable of comprehending such events. Unlike Daisy Miller or Christina Light, Lucy does not push and kick against the boundaries of her own social standing and limitations but instead gently tests the limits. In Judith Scherer Herz's essay on the double nature of E.M. Forster's fiction the author states: "There is always another story beneath the surface of the story he is telling"⁴⁵. On the surface *A Room with a View* has a fairly basic plotline about travel to Italy. Beneath this plot is more deeply layered contemplation on sex and gender and what it means grapple with these difficulties across cultural boundaries.

Twilight to Italy is a meditation on life as a whole as much as it is an examination of Italian culture. This work is distinct in that it is non-fiction, allowing for a specific look into the life of traveler with a focus meant for the truth of the moment and no plot to detract from the information at hand. Fussell notes Lawrence's particular attention to location as "acute, almost neurotic" referring to this peculiarity as his "signature"⁴⁶. Lawrence takes what he knows about himself as an individual and in a grand cultural experiment juxtaposes this with the extravagant amount of research he does on Italy. The title implies a complicated set of emotions and also the act of completion. Twilight occurs at the conclusion of the day, a period when everything has already been experienced and it is time for reflection. Fussell interprets the particular implications of this title categorically: "the dualisms of light and dark, mind and flesh, time and eternity"⁴⁷. It is impossible for *Twilight in Italy* to be about only one thing because Italy had such a rich depth of meaning. Perhaps if there had to be one common theme addressed, though, it would be the idea of individuality and what that means within a home and across borders.

⁴⁵ Bradshaw, *Cambridge companion*, 85.

⁴⁶ Fussell, *Abroad*, 145.

⁴⁷ Fussell, *Abroad*, 149.

Beyond Culture by anthropologist Edward T. Hall the author states how he believes Americans often regards individualism: “[In] the Western world in a deeper sense we draw a line around the individual and say this is our basic entity-the building block of all social relations and institutions.”⁴⁸ Lawrence’s main aim is to be able to use this building block in order to learn what it means in the terms of a different culture. He travels across all of Italy encountering Italians and observing them in their daily routines. Lawrence learns as much as possible about the Italians in order to examine his own way of life outside the country.

In his chapter about San Gaudenzio Lawrence begins by reflecting on life and what it means to be outside in nature. “They are little living myths that I cannot understand,” says Lawrence in regards to the plants he comes across outside of the city⁴⁹. This type of philosophizing is only the beginning of much different contemplation on the way of nature in this different part of the world. One of the most significant examinations that Lawrence comes across is of the Italian couple. Maria and Paolo are Italians whose relationship exists in an entirely different way than how most British or American couples would exist especially because they have only been married for three weeks. Lawrence writes: “Their souls were silent and detached, completely apart, and silent, quiet silent... They were both violent in desire and of strong will”⁵⁰. As compared to the American girls of James’s stories this woman is much stronger being referred to as the flint to her husband’s steel. Maria represents a much more self-assured woman who is secure in who she actually is rather than Daisy or Christina who have to parade under a mask of pride in order to achieve a status greater than themselves. Lawrence goes on further to say that Maria subscribes to a basic instinct: “she was not mean in her soul. In her

⁴⁸ Hall, *Beyond Culture*, 231.

⁴⁹ Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, 81.

⁵⁰ Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, 85.

soul she was in a state of anger because of her own closeness. It was a violation to her strong animal nature.”⁵¹ Christina and Daisy can defy their own nature but Maria must answer to what is the purest part of being human. In a way Lawrence is making a commentary that these people are closer to being human than the societal fools of America. Yet, the lifestyle of these Italians disrupts Lawrence to his core: “His life was a ritual. It was very beautiful, but it made me unhappy, the purity of his spirit was so sacred and the actual facts seemed such a sacrilege to it.”⁵² (88). It appears that Lawrence might be disturbed because he himself does not have such a “purity of spirit” which he finds in these Italians.

In a following chapter, “Italians in Exile,” Lawrence comes across a band of Italians who have been exiled to Germany and his contemplations on the nature of foreign relationships begin to expand even further past just Americans versus Italians. Lawrence’s own self-discoveries on an aspect of human relationships that is prevalent throughout the works of his contemporaries. While enjoying his time with the Italians and taking part in their good humor there is a moment of contemplation on whether or not foreigners can ever truly be friends. “He seemed to look at me, me, an Englishman, an educated man, for corroboration. But I could not corroborate him...I did not believe in infinite harmony among men.”⁵³ Lawrence does not go into detail about why he does not believe in this “infinite harmony” but after his travels it could be interpreted that he has seen too much to be able to still believe that all the people of the earth are fundamentally the same. Lawrence complicates his views by determining that the outlines of the world are obsolete: “The kingdoms of the world had no significance: what could one do but wander about?”⁵⁴ It is this lack of boundaries but difference of culture that makes ultimate reconciliation between all

⁵¹ Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, 88.

⁵² Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, 88.

⁵³ Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, 138.

⁵⁴ Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, 157.

men impossible. Lawrence's non-fiction is an elaborate example of an effort to understand the other types of humanity that exist in this world. Just because perfect harmony may not exist that does not mean that the learning and appreciation of all other cultures must fade away.

Conclusion

“Shall YOU be any different in yourself, in another place? You'll be the same there as you are here.” – Aaron's Rod, D.H.Lawrence

The Bible is not quick to forget the plight of the stranger. Continuously throughout the *Old and New Testaments* there are reminders to not forsake a brother even if they are unfamiliar. Deuteronomy 10:19 states, “You shall love the stranger, for you were once a stranger in the land of Egypt.” Luke 10:27 reads, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself,” and Romans 12:13 says, “Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.” These ideas are applicable to the works of James, Forster and Lawrence. While these authors deal with different types of characters in each of their interpretations of Italy ultimately each incarnation of an archetype is just another chance for the larger society of the novel to embrace yet another foreigner. Some of the characters, such as Lucy or Mrs. Moore, embrace this task diligently and for that they are rewarded by their author. Other characters, such as Roderick Hudson or Daisy Miller, are overwhelmed by the complications of this task and are unable to welcome the stranger into their hearts at all. The novels would not be interesting without this variety of characters and their individual reactions to this basic statute of the Christianity.

In one of the most important scenes in *Roderick Hudson* Rowland discusses the embracing of Roman life with the timid Mary Garland: “but you didn't come to Rome to keep your eyes fastened on that narrow little world. Forget it, turn your eye on it, and enjoy all

this.”⁵⁵ This quote highlights the importance of individual experience for travel. Particularly with the setting of Italy the individual experience is crucial. These characters are all struggling to achieve a personal sense of self-worth however they can. What complicates their ambitions is the fundamental need to help the stranger and how they often find themselves as this stranger in need of help. Setting is highly important in each of these works but above all it is the character that makes the stories interesting.

⁵⁵ James, *Roderick Hudson*, 192.