

and the 1980s, when Forster's novels were adapted and faced new readers and acclaims.

To conclude, Richard Canning's biography juxtaposes, from a well-documented standpoint, the writer's public persona as a member of the English literary establishment with his tormenting anxieties and joyous moments. In addition, Canning's biography not only is detailed, but also covers the main issues, such as: family, education, friendship and influences, personal remarks, cultural activity and prophecy. The biography is worth reading as it complements known biographies (Furbank, Stallybrass), interweaving details from the writer's correspondence edited by Jeffrey Heath (*The Creator as Critic*) and his activity at BBC, edited by Mary Lago, Linda K. Hughes and Elizabeth Maclead Walls (*The BBC Talks of E. M. Forster, 1929–1960*), both published in 2008. In a nutshell, it is a perfect choice for any student, researcher or individual interested in Forster's complex life and writings.

Frank Kermode, 2009.
Concerning E. M. Forster
(London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

Jason Finch

Åbo Akademi University

Introduction

Literary modernism was one of Frank Kermode's many fields of expertise. After making his name as a scholar of Shakespeare's era and Romanticism, Kermode wrote on Yeats and T. S. Eliot in his most influential book, *The Sense of an Ending* (1967), and produced the "Fontana Modern Masters" volume on D. H. Lawrence in 1973. In the words of Stefan Collini (2014), Kermode was "pre-eminent among the English-language literary critics who came to maturity in the second half of the twentieth century". *Concerning E. M. Forster* was his last book, appearing a year before his death. In it, twenty-first

century Forster scholars will re-encounter some distinctive and powerful twentieth-century hypotheses. They will also gain some flashes of insight indicating future directions for Forster studies.

Like Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, *Concerning E. M. Forster* originates as the Clark Lectures given at Trinity College, Cambridge. But whereas Forster gave eight lectures, Kermode gave only three, under the overarching title "Some Lesser-Known Aspects of E. M. Forster" (Trinity College 2007). To expand these into a book, he chose an unusual two-part structure. The three lectures appear first, followed by what Kermode calls a "causerie". That term he glosses as something looser than a lecture, let alone an article for a peer-reviewed journal:

a free, rambling stream of more or less directly relevant comment, not organized on one basic principle of reading, like Sainte-Beuve's intense biographical stare, but aspiring more simply to what the Oxford Dictionary defines as "informal talk or discussion, esp. on literary topics"—having a remote kinship with the loosely linked gossip column; or a set of discussions animated by shared interests and always having, somewhere near the centre, the enigmatic figure of Forster (2).

Within the essayistic causerie Kermode is able to range around his subject, introducing contemporaries of Forster and earlier writers who influenced him. Here too, Kermode announces at the outset, Forster is "occasionally scolded for not being the kind of author I should have preferred him to be" (2).

Kermode's great contribution to English literary studies in the 1960s was to champion the theoretical developments then coming from continental Europe and above all from France. Until about 1970 these were not so much opposed in Britain as simply ignored. He also explored the doctrine of impersonality standing behind Eliot's modernist poetry. But Kermode was also interested in the prevalence of secrecy across different forms of literature, or, in other words, in the deeply personal. And as Kermode's allusion to "the gossip column" indicates, much of *Concerning E. M. Forster* operates in a personal mode.

As such, it is justifiable to compare Forster and Kermode. Both men, slightly unexpectedly, found a home at King's College, Cambridge, later in life. For Forster this was in his sixties, after the death of his mother and the loss

of a house in Surrey. Kermode, meanwhile, was appointed King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at Cambridge University in 1974, aged 55, having no previous connections there. In *Concerning E. M. Forster* he tells as a personal anecdote how relieved he was when King's offered him a Fellowship in connection with this chair. The contrast is just as strong, though. Kermode portrays himself as an outsider at Cambridge; Forster is often thought of (not entirely accurately) as the quintessential insider at King's. And, while Kermode came to Cambridge as a distinguished senior academic, Forster, very much formed there as a young undergraduate, returned there as a famous writer without scholarly credentials, who took on no duties pedagogic or administrative, and carried out no research.

Criticism, Music and the Patterning of Fiction

There are three lectures, in the book given the titles "Aspects of Aspects", "Beethoven, Wagner, Vinteuil", and "Krishna". As their titles indicate, they are studies of Forster the critic, Forster the music lover, and Forster the mystic, the visionary or spiritual thinker. The first lecture considers Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, based on his Clark Lectures, in relation to some contemporaries who reflected on literary art, and some alternative ways of viewing literature from Forster's. The contemporaries are F. R. Leavis, Henry James, H. G. Wells, Percy Lubbock, Ford Madox Ford and, briefly, Edwin Muir. The alternative is narratology, developed "Since about 1969" (Kermode's words), the year before Forster's death, or in other words a post-Forster discipline (12). Kermode demonstrates the method of narratology via a reading of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* by Muriel Spark, a writer Kermode holds up for comparison with Forster (14–17). Forster, Kermode says, "makes it sound simple" when it comes to narrative (12). But "the narratologists have shown that it is not": thanks to them "[t]he distinction between text and the story" derived from Russian Formalism "has been subjected to extraordinary refinements, with particular reference to the distortions of the chronological order of events", refinements that are nowhere to be found in Forster's *Aspects*.

Forster seems lacking, then. And yet, from the start, Kermode is appreciative of Forster. He thinks about what Forster would have done. Writing a story like James's *The Ambassadors*, he insists, Forster "would have favoured a much less oblique approach" than that of James, who insisted that a narrative

be focalized around a single character. Forster, Kermode synthesizes, “affirmed the author’s right to express his opinions, his right, if he chose, to explain to the reader directly how, in his view, the matter appeared when looked at not in relation to [James’s characters] Strether or Maisie but to such other characters as he chose to use, or simply to the universe” (11). Forster, Kermode insists, “regarded himself as an artist” (5), he “claimed to be an artist” (12), while “dismissing James on the art of the novel and even denying that such a thing existed”. Almost unforgivably, Kermode thinks, Forster submitted to his “distaste for the pattern, and the prose, and the sacrifice of realistic character” he found in James. This led him “to disparage the force and beauty of James’s art” and take the side of Wells, who saw the novelist as in essence a reporter, over James, for whom the novelist was an artist, in a famous quarrel between the two not long before James’s 1916 death. Kermode’s use of “regarded himself as” and “claimed to be” query Forster’s status as literary artist. In the three lectures, he is most of all concerned with Forster the technician. He traces Forster’s skill in novel-writing at winding theme and pattern into plot, most masterly when he seems to be writing accessible comedy of manners.

The exploration of Forster’s changing view of various composers in Chapter 2 leads Kermode towards an illuminating discussion of the Proustian patterning of *A Passage to India*. Kermode points out the scarcity of recorded music in Forster’s lifetime (“Of course Forster knew nothing of the CD or the DVD”, 34), reminding a twenty-first century audience that musical knowledge before the 1950s was hard-won and prestigious. More than once at the beginning of this lecture-chapter, Kermode implies that Forster was less musically proficient or knowledgeable than admirers and biased friends including composer Benjamin Britten admitted (28–29).

In this chapter Kermode explores two passages from Forster’s earlier fiction on which he takes diametrically opposed positions. Kermode objects to what he calls Forster’s “familiar retreat into drollery” (36), or put another way his sophisticated light-heartedness, about music. Reading his response as a personal one, it could seem to be dislike of a smug social superior who has never had to work for his music, as Kermode has. Kermode dislikes Forster’s tendency to see composers, particularly Beethoven, “conjuring up shipwrecks and elephants and goblins”: Kermode calls this “an enemy of the music” (36). The offending scene is that which opens Chapter 5 of *Howards End*: a performance of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony at the Queen’s Hall in London,

which brings the clerk Leonard Bast into contact with the privileged Schlegel siblings Margaret, Helen, and Tibby. At this point, recalling the discussion of authorial intervention in how readers see characters and situations which arose in Chapter 1 contrast between Forster and James, Kermode objects to the “recurrent sermonizing” which, for him, “rather disfigures” *Howards End* (36).

So far, so negative. But then Kermode uses music brilliantly to get to the heart of *A Room with a View*. He shows that this novel, commonly considered Forster’s lightest, contains all of the novelist’s most important interests and techniques, worked out in a seemingly artless manner which makes it among the most skilfully executed of all his productions. Lucy Honeychurch has the guts to play Beethoven for an audience at the small, conservative hotel for English visitors to Florence where she is staying; Mr Beebe the clergyman, listening, remarks that “If Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting—both for us and for her” (cited Kermode, 39). Kermode himself displays the utmost skill in showing how Beebe’s prediction is the whole point of the scene. Both it and the musical performance, he shows, are structurally linked to the following scene, when Lucy witnesses a fatal stabbing in a Florence street and is then seen “across the spot where the man had been” by the man she will eventually love (40), George Emerson (who recognizes that “something tremendous has happened”). Music has a plot function in that the full and potentially dangerous embrace of art could potentially release a young person like Lucy from the constrained and small-minded social environment in which she has been raised. Equally, Kermode shows how Forster’s subtle verbal patterning around words like “exciting”, “across”, and “happened” builds these connections across the book in a fashion Kermode identifies as musical but which clearly also has affinities with the modernist quest for “spatial form” identified by Joseph Frank (1963). Kermode spends the remainder of the second lecture concentrating on comparable patterns in *A Passage to India* and *The Longest Journey*.

Lecture to Causerie: Spirituality, Sex, Social Class

In the third lecture, “Krishna”, Kermode continues his investigation of the verbal patterning of *A Passage to India*. This develops from an analysis

of the concept of “greatness” built around “the problems of life in an ambiguous universe, and [...] a particular idea of salvation or the refusal of salvation” (61–62). This notion of greatness was expressed earlier by Forster in *The Longest Journey* associated with a response to the notoriously swift death of a character “broken up” while playing football. Kermode’s point (66) is that Forster in both novels suggests, in a manner paralleling the experiences of Lucy and George in Florence, that to experience and overcome an act of violence, which is also an encounter with some sort of supernatural, leads a person to greater understanding and communion – often sexual – with others.

Kermode in this chapter gets close to Forster’s particular sort of spirituality. This quality aligns Forster with Lawrence rather than with Virginia Woolf or James Joyce. It is brought out in discussions of Forster’s sense that the Maharaja of Dewas Senior, whose private secretary he was in 1921–1922, had uncanny qualities, and his sense for Hindu deities, not just Krishna, but the goddess figure used in the title of his non-fiction book on his experiences in India, *The Hill of Devi*. With statements like “Forster wanted something to happen that was both sexual and obscurely ugly”, and with his patient tracing of the use of the word “extraordinary” (68) in *A Passage to India* – including Forster’s insertion of it into one passage between manuscript and publication – Kermode shows his low-key mastery of close reading. He states that Forster removed God from the Marabar Caves by removing the architectural decorations of their real-life originals at Barabar in his fictional reworking of them. As such, Kermode reinvents Forster as a religious writer for a post-God age. He importantly disagrees with critics who think that the temple and cave aspect of *A Passage to India* does not matter very much (71–72). It has been tempting since the 1970s to read this as a novel which matters for its expression of problems in our own materialistic universe, above all problems in gender and ethnic identity. This is what reading with critics such as Jameson and Said at one’s elbow would do with Forster’s novel; Kermode reminds us that if it is this, it is also something else.

In the lectures, Kermode works well with what he calls the “enigmatic” nature of Forster as both writer and literary personality (2). He means that Forster is characteristically elusive. His insightful accounts of Forster’s criticism and fiction make skilful use of the available evidence (in the archive at King’s) to talk about changes Forster made between manuscript and publication which reveal things about his vision for the books. And yet the feeling lingers that Kermode would rather be talking about Ford Maddox Ford, or Arnold Bennett,

or Henry Green (all three examined earlier by him in 1983's *The Art of Telling* and returned to appreciatively here) than about Forster.

But there is an exception to this, namely the fiction which Forster kept and circulated among friends but did not publish in his lifetime: his homosexual writings. *Maurice* is mentioned discreetly in the third lecture as "unpublishable" when written, immediately before the First World War, but as having had some impact on the treatment of sexual boundaries in *A Passage to India*. In the causerie, Kermode dismisses it as "inferior" (80) and finds Forster's own fondness for writing what he calls "risqué stories" (127) containing fantasy elements and also "gay relationships, sometimes happy" (144) baffling. When *Maurice* and the stories collected as *The Life to Come* were first published in the early 1970s, not long after Forster's death, they met with a hostile response, seeming to embarrass (non-gay) reviewers to diminish Forster's reputation rather than to enhance it (e.g. Mitchell [1971]). But things look very different in the twenty-first century. In the wake of novelists such as Alan Hollinghurst, these writings are central to Forster's position as a foundational figure in a canon of gay writers. As such, Kermode the twentieth-century critic misses an important part of Forster's twenty-first century importance.

Aside from this caveat and one other, to be stated shortly, the causerie moves around Forster in an enjoyable and instructive fashion. Beyond the familiar sort of comparison with literary contemporaries, here between Forster, James, Joseph Conrad and John Galsworthy, in which Forster comes off worst (90–94), Kermode ranges widely. He covers the economic chaos of the 1930s and "proletarian" literary responses to it (106–111), Indian politics in the pre-independence era (125–127), Forster's use of the obscure thirteenth-century writer Jacopone da Todi in his famous broadcast "What I Believe" (132–136), Forster's relations with Lawrence and Woolf (138–143) and the Wagnerian side of his method (143–144). He works through Buddhism and Islam (145–152), relations with the poet and classical scholar A. E. Housman (160–163), social change post-World War Two including the emergence of a new, non-cultivated middle class (155–156), and, along the way, Forster's fondness for personal circles ranging from the Cambridge Apostolic to the covert sexuality of personal groupings in London and Nottingham.

Kermode expresses his personal opinions in a less guarded way in the causerie than in the lectures which precede it. A key section for judgement both of Forster and of Kermode's view of him is the latter's discussion of the character of Leonard Bast in *Howards End*. Leonard, the ill-starred London clerk

who meets the Schlegels by chance and becomes embroiled with them and by extension with the Wilcoxes, leading ultimately to his tragic death, has long been a controversial figure. Kermode mounts a long attack (95–106) on Forster's treatment of Bast and his class, using as ammunition Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2002). His point is that Forster did not take enough trouble to know people in a position similar to Leonard's—badly educated and financially insecure, struggling for respectability, sometimes via Arnoldian or Ruskinian "culture". As several times in the book, Kermode compares Forster with an Anglican clergyman. In the case of the handling of Leonard he becomes, negatively, "a priggish curate" (99). On *Howards End*, Kermode concludes that few in the twenty-first century will defend Forster's portrayal of Bast (94–95). I disagree. As the twenty-first century draws on, Forster's struggles to apprehend the other, and the way that Leonard functions as a totally dialogic (in Bakhtin's terms) challenge to the seeming hegemony of the English upper middle-classes, whether Schlegels or Wilcoxes, comes to seem an increasingly powerful and prescient aspect of *Howards End*.

The Non-Benign Interpreter

Kermode begins the first lecture mentioning F. R. Leavis and seeming to be taking a somewhat Leavisian stance on Forster: fiercely judgemental. He points out (4) that Forster "irritates readers", including Leavis and perhaps Kermode himself, "who nevertheless feel obliged, in the end, to do him honour". Sinuously, *Concerning E. M. Forster* replicates this move from irritation to admiration. Forster, writes Kermode (34), "believed that the practice of scholarship thwarted the passion with which reading ought to be done". Reading this we may suspect that Kermode, the scholarship boy from a working-class background in an obscure corner of the United Kingdom (Collini 2014), disliked the fact that a literary author with as much prestige (and inherited wealth) as Forster should not admire or take seriously his own profession. Kermode paints himself as an outsider in Cambridge: the product of a redbrick university and before that an island off the mainland of Great Britain, the Isle of Man. As a Manxman, according to Joseph Rosen (2011), Kermode "always felt somewhat alien in Britain". Leavis looked at Forster with a blend of awe and contempt. Kermode, somewhat comparable, speaks

in a way that seems to contain resentment at the possibility that he himself might be held in contempt by those he is addressing. But his position is more nuanced and open-minded than Leavis's ever was.

Concerning E. M. Forster represents a challenge to the latest generation of "benign interpreters" of Forster's work (124), successors of Lionel Trilling and Wilfred H. Stone: those who might be reading this review, for instance, who are researching Forster in the late 2010s. Kermode aims at iconoclasm, particularly in the lectures. He wants to query the beatified status of Forster at Cambridge. Forster remains so closely associated with the university, the city, and King's, yet his position there was always awkward; he himself felt that he did not fit, surmising that he was "distinguished yet so undistinguished" in the eyes of fellow diners at High Table ("Locked Journal" 18 October 1951; Finch 2011: 346). By raising the subject of the writers he himself considered in earlier works, the likes of Bennett, Ford and Green, Kermode asks why Forster deserves all this esteem, but also directs his Cambridge audience to his own achievements.

As a literary artist, Kermode repeatedly implies, Forster was inferior to Eliot, Woolf or D. H. Lawrence. For much of the book he reads Forster as something of a trickster, using sleight of hand to maximise limited talent. He also presents Forster as a writer refusing to face the challenge of becoming a great modernist by continually compromising with the invented character whom Kermode, following Forster himself, calls "Uncle Willie" (49): the middle-class book-buying and borrowing public of the earlier twentieth-century. Is this fair? Forster, it is true, never took risks by appearing as a poet or (as James did with traumatic results) a dramatist. And yet Kermode is mean-spirited in implying that Forster just played the system cunningly, for example in cultivating the assistance of Edward Garnett (86–89). As Kermode himself cannot help but point out, recalling the sense of irritation at Forster which gives way somewhat unwillingly to a need to "do him honour" (4), there are things in Forster's writing which seem to escape interpretation. They deserve the use of the word "greatness" whether or not in the specifically Forsterian sense of crossing a personal and sexual border. Forster has a coherent yet complex view of the universe, a view which many have grasped and found not merely pleasing but helpful.

Forster himself would have been more generous. In his own Clark Lectures, he censored James, it is true, but talked about the writers who mattered to him (including James), not about those who did not. Kermode can himself

be censorious. He several times objects to the fact that, as he puts it once, “although Forster read a lot, he failed to concern himself with works that others believed or now believe to be of special importance” (110). Among these “others” is Kermode himself. Personally, I find it enlightening to discover that Forster had a different literary canon from the one which had dominated undergraduate teaching in English literature since the 1960s. Kermode was a prime-mover in this academic canon-forming process. This was not only as a highly influential judge of value among works from the Renaissance, Romanticism and Modernism, but also as an editor of the widely used *Oxford Anthology of English Literature* (1973). Kermode, Harold Bloom, John Hollander and Lionel Trilling were each co-editors of two literary periods in this anthology, Kermode sharing duties with Hollander on both “The Literature of Renaissance England” and “Modern British Literature”. The two were also the general editors of the whole project (Kermode and Hollander 1973: I.ii–iii). Clearly it was necessary for Kermode, throughout his career, “to read systematically” (111); it is much less clear that he is right to chide Forster for not doing the same.

And yet Kermode is not trying to do what Leavis said Forster had done for George Meredith (as Leavis himself aimed to drive John Milton from the canon of English literature): the “demolition work” which would expel Forster from future considerations of literary modernism (Leavis 1983: 34–35). If Ford is better than Forster, why not talk about Ford instead? The answer seems corporate, not aesthetic. King’s administers Forster’s estate and, after the huge sales in paperback and the screen adaptations of the 1980s and 1990s, makes a great deal of money out of Forster. And Forster preceded Kermode as Clark lecturer at Trinity, leading to his very widely-read work of criticism on the novel. Honouring Forster and the world of Cambridge in a slightly twisted manner, Kermode pays attention to the difficult and even unpleasant relations between Forster and Housman, a Fellow of Trinity at the time of Forster’s Clark Lectures (160–163; see also Finch 2011: 339–345).

The Leonard File

The crux of Kermode’s book is his condemnation of Forster’s attitudes to social class (95–106), using the example of Leonard Bast in *Howards End*. To a reader who has gone into depth in Forster’s correspondence and little-known

miscellaneous prose, notably reviews and broadcasts, this example seems an inadequate basis for an overall judgement. Forster had few negative attitudes towards poor people just as there was little or no racism in him. Coming from a nineteenth-century English background, in which the English poor might as well have been another species, he spent decades of the twentieth century trying to get to know them better. Forster's Achilles heel in terms of attitudes to others is, as Kermode belatedly states (142: "Forster's distaste for all but a few privileged women"), not class but gender. Moreover, Kermode reads Leonard's position in *Howards End* clumsily. Leonard in fact enacts social transition and shifts of power between classes in a way that Kermode, like Rose before him, either ignores or resists. Forster has as much praise as disparagement for Leonard. His anti-romantic words fly "like a pebble from a sling" into the lives of the cosseted Schlegels (Forster [1910]: XIV.88; Finch 2011: 205). Forster befriended a clerk he met whilst teaching at the Working Men's College, E. K. Bennett, helping Bennett prepare for admission to university. He then kept up the friendship while the two were elderly and slightly unusual fellows of Cambridge colleges in the post-war decades (Finch 2011: 204). Kermode is plainly wrong to say that *Howards End* 'makes it clear that Forster regrets Bast's education and wishes he could revert to the admirable condition of the simple farm labourer' (97).

Forster's treatment of Leonard is more dialogic than this would suggest. From the perspective of a privileged, leisured person with a humanities education like Forster himself or one of the Schlegels, Leonard may indeed suffer from a "cramped little mind" (Forster [1910]: XIV.127), but his presence at the Queen's Hall and in the Schlegels' drawing room is a symptom of a social change that Forster welcomed. So Kermode really has to twist things to produce a sentence like the following, of Leonard and Helen: "His impregnating her is the next intrusion, the small-scale but shocking sack of a city". This is not the "latter-day *vers-de-société*—witty, disillusioned, with a somewhat brittle charm" for which Eliot's early poems were initially mistaken (Frank 1963: 12), in which such perceptions might be at home. Forster, instead, realises that an injunction like "only connect" goes deeper than pairing the cultured and the commercial portions of the English middle classes when Margaret Schlegel marries Henry Wilcox. The novel's most radical proposition is that only through a sort of miscegenation of class will the English race survive. This is in one sense a blood-and-soil nationalist novel. But it is one that attempts to found a new England on a new sort of melting pot

rather than on the “great mythology”, whose non-existence for this nation is noted in Chapter XXXIII by Forster’s narrator (Forster [1910]: XXXIII.262; Finch 2016: 134–52, 42).

But then Kermode surprises. Like a defence lawyer, having frankly admitted his client’s faults, he becomes a more convincing advocate. A better advocate for Forster, perhaps, than those of us who are more “benign” (perhaps anodyne, perhaps whitewashing, Kermode means). It is perhaps thanks to the combination of his age and his distinction that Kermode can dare to talk about Forster in ways that his juniors could not. This can mean chiding Forster, as has been noted and queried in this review. But it can also mean taking seriously Forster’s theory that “creative power is independent of intelligence” (131) and comparing it to Woolf’s account of how the text of *To the Lighthouse* came to her “in a great, apparently involuntary rush”. Kermode closes by saying that while clergyman-like, Forster “understood ecstasy and inspiration”, seeing true order in that rather than in the sort of order which the English of the Club in *A Passage to India* sought to impose on that country (168).

One of the best sections of the causerie concerns Forster’s “What I Believe”, a secular creed for a world threatened by totalitarianism and genocidal violence. Kermode gets to the heart of the matter in observing that in Forster “death is necessary to full expression” (136). He overcomes and transcends a view of Forster which he elsewhere favours as a writer fatally limited by his own haute-bourgeois, late Victorian background. “Despite the seriousness of the topic the essay has a prevailing tone of clerical humour, the sort that can be attributed to professional geniality while at the same time suggesting that it must not for that reason be disregarded” (137). Here is Kermode the talented critic raised in the school of Eliot and Leavis, for whom Forster’s tonality and his content are inseparable.

New Forster, New Directions

Along the winding way marked out by Kermode in the causerie come flashes of insight. From these, future Forster studies could develop. For example “More than most artists, he was willing to look back over his earlier works to discover and discern their faults” (124). There could be a study of Forster on Forster. Then there is the description of Forster’s later circle as “a sparkling

company" (158): a collective biography and full investigation of J. R. Ackerley, R. J. 'Bob' Buckingham, William Plomer, Sebastian 'Jack' Sprott in the light of new approaches and scholarship since 1990, and of their relations with more famous figures such as Britten, Christopher Isherwood – and Forster himself – is overdue. So is a deeper literary study of Forster the letter-writer. As Kermode observes, 'relatively few letters' from among the fifteen thousand plus by Forster preserved at King's have been published, and no systematic literary analysis of them exists despite not just the selected letters edited by Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank but Lago's *Calendar of the Letters of E. M. Forster* (1985). Kermode notices the significance of Forster for a literary criticism that is environmental and draws on the philosophy of place when he observes that Wiltshire in *The Longest Journey* is "not just the heart of England but the earth more generally", as part of "the spiritual geography" of the novel (167). There would be scope for further place-led investigations of Forster and his circle beyond those which I have attempted (Finch 2011: 141–154; Finch 2016: 133–152).

A twenty-first-century Forster will emerge. This figure will be built around Forster's migrant and fugitive qualities, not his Victorian liberal solidity or even his position as gay pioneer, the two planks of his late-twentieth-century eminence. A starting point for encounters with such a figure is Forster's own four-part explanation of *A Passage to India*. Forster "said it was 'about the search of the human race for a more lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the Indian earth and the Indian sky, about the horror lurking in the Marabar Cave and the release symbolized by the birth of Krishna'" (71). Or, in other terms: Forster's displaced quality, his position as a refugee from the past; humans' earthly environment understood in a sense relatable to the fourfold proposed in the later philosophy of Martin Heidegger (cf. Finch 2016: 61–62, 82–91, 199); the unconscious and the continued problem of evil; salvation whether or not religious. As a helper, there is Kermode's reading of "What I Believe" in which "the religious undertones – their registration and its rejection – are necessary" for a recognition of what humans can do faced with such a world (136). Likewise on Forster's displacement, Kermode (150) speaks of Forster as "a man caught between two epochs, one comfortable and constricted, desirable though limiting; the other an age whose changed rules fascinated him". In doing so Kermode provides another framework for future study.

Kermode's account of "What I Believe" highlights the grouping Forster advances within it, an "aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky" (138). Social class blinds Kermode to Forster's potential virtue and value. For Forster's greatest offer in a twenty-first-century world that accepts democracy but only tentatively or sceptically, that like him gives it two cheers, is that of belonging to a voluntarist elite (or "aristocracy"). As Kermode recognises, Forster was influenced towards such a notion by the radical thinker Edward Carpenter, who impressed Forster above all by living precisely as he wanted—in sandals on a South Yorkshire smallholding, de facto married to his homosexual partner (150). Forster had a gender problem, yes, but that could be overcome. Today's technology and social liberalism could make us all feel like potential members of Forsterian or Carpenterian communities of the plucky and sensitive, not trapped or faking it.

Notably, drawing on a musical term used in jazz, Kermode speaks of Forster's "fakery". By this he means a sort of "benign trickery [...] by which a novelist might bypass an awkward moment in the narrative—or plant the notes of those occult tunes, the senses under the sense that music achieves by recall, by transformations, by exploiting the relations of keys, and so on" (45). This is only one of the multiple insights into how Forster does what he does which Kermode, who initially seemed so dismissive, offers. Like Leonard Bast and like Forster himself, Kermode in the final analysis seems a transitional figure. Kermode was a man of the twentieth century who survived to give these lectures and write this causerie in the twenty-first. Forster felt bewildered but not unhappy to have survived into a post-war world in which he was surrounded by discussions of "the quickest way to get from Balham to Ealing" (156). Perhaps Krishna (or Devi) could appear on the way.

Works Cited

- Collini, Stefan. 2014. "Kermode, Sir (John) Frank (1919–2010)". In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by David Cannadine. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed October 3, 2017.
www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/102921.
- Finch, Jason. 2011. *E. M. Forster and English Place: A Literary Topography*. Turku, Finland: Åbo Akademi University Press.

- Finch, Jason. 2016. *Deep Locational Criticism: Imaginative Place in Literary Research and Teaching*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Forster, E. M. (1910) 1975. *Howards End*. Edited by Oliver Stallybrass. London: Penguin.
- Forster, E. M. (1909–67). "Locked Journal". Personal Papers of E. M. Forster, Modern Archive, King's College, University of Cambridge. MS KCC/EMF/12/8.
- Frank, Joseph. 1963. "Spatial Form in Modern Literature". In *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature*, 3–62. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Kermode, Frank, and John Hollander (eds). 1973. *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*. Two volumes. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lago, Mary. 1985. *A Calendar of the Letters of E. M. Forster*. London: Mansell.
- Leavis, F.R. (1948) 1983. *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Mitchell, Julian. (1971) 1973. "Fairy Tale" (review of Forster's *Maurice*). In *E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Philip Gardner, 439–440. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Rosen, Charles. 2011. "The Revelations of Frank Kermode". *New York Review of Books*, 9 June 2011.
www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/06/09/revelations-frank-kermode.
- Trinity College. 2017. "Past Clark Lectures". Accessed October 3, 2017.
<https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/about/public-lecture-series/clark/>.