

The Novel as Philosophical Practice: Oneness, Isolation, and the Question of Being in D. H. Lawrence and E. M. Forster

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Abstract: This paper explores how the novel transforms fiction into a site of philosophical reflection on being, authenticity, and ethical renewal. It examines the intersection of literature and philosophy through D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915) and E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910) who employ narrative as a medium to reflect on metaphysical questions. Drawing on Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* and C. G. Jung's theories of archetypes and individuation, the study argues that Lawrence and Forster present literature as a mode of practicing philosophy rather than merely illustrating it. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence reclaims the unity of spirit and matter through Tom Brangwen's experience of oneness, a metaphysical awakening that aligns with Heidegger's concept of Dasein. In *Howards End*, Forster dramatizes the ethical and existential fragmentation of modern England, proposing reconnection and isolation as pathways to restore meaning. Both authors respond to the crisis of modernity by returning to the inner self and to nature, portraying isolation not as despair but as a space of reflection and regeneration. By situating these novels within a philosophical tradition that unites Eastern and Western metaphysical thought, the paper reveals literature's capacity to enact rather than theorize human understanding. It affirms that in Lawrence and Forster, the novel becomes a philosophical practice, an art of living and thinking that redefines the relation between knowledge, ethics, and being.

Key-words: Being, Heidegger, Oneness, Social Isolation, Philosophy and Literature

Résumé : Cette recherche explore comment le roman transforme la fiction en un lieu de réflexion philosophique sur l'être, l'authenticité et la régénération éthique. Elle examine l'intersection entre littérature et philosophie à travers *The Rainbow* (1915) de D. H. Lawrence et *Howards End* (1910) d'E. M. Forster, qui utilisent le récit comme un moyen de réflexion sur des questions métaphysiques. S'appuyant sur *Être et Temps* de Martin Heidegger et sur la théorie de l'individuation de C. G. Jung, l'étude soutient que Lawrence et Forster présentent la littérature comme une manière de pratiquer la philosophie plutôt que de simplement l'illustrer. Dans *The Rainbow*, Lawrence réaffirme l'unité de l'esprit et de la matière à travers l'expérience d'unité de Tom Brangwen, un éveil métaphysique qui s'aligne sur le concept heideggérien de *Dasein*. Dans *Howards End*, Forster dramatise la fragmentation éthique et existentielle de l'Angleterre moderne, proposant la reconnexion et l'isolement comme voies pour restaurer le sens. Les deux auteurs répondent à la crise de la modernité en revenant vers le soi intérieur et vers la nature, représentant l'isolement non pas comme un désespoir mais comme un espace de réflexion et de régénération. En situant ces romans dans une tradition philosophique qui unit la pensée métaphysique orientale et occidentale, l'étude révèle la capacité de la littérature à agir plutôt qu'à théoriser la compréhension humaine. Elle affirme que, chez Lawrence et Forster, le roman devient une pratique philosophique, un art de vivre et de penser qui redéfinit la relation entre connaissance, éthique et être.

Mots-clés : l'Être, Heidegger, Unité, Isolement social, Philosophie et Littérature

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the pursuit of authenticity and the realization of Being in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915) and E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910). It problematizes that both authors explore the tension between modern alienation and spiritual wholeness, albeit through distinct narrative strategies and philosophical frameworks. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence dramatizes the existential and phenomenological journey of Tom Brangwen, whose self-realization emerges through curiosity, engagement with the foreign, and communion with nature. His trajectory reflects a synthesis of Western introspective thought and Eastern spiritual principles, emphasizing

the interrelation of the self, others, and the natural world. Conversely, Forster's novel, *Howards End*, depicts spiritual and psychological dislocation under industrial modernity, exemplified by the Wilcox family's severed connection from the land. Through archetypal figures such as Mrs. Wilcox, Forster emphasizes the necessity of social and environmental rootedness for individuation and authentic Being. By juxtaposing these texts, this study demonstrates how both authors explore modernity's threats to human essence while affirming pathways to the spiritual and existential fulfillment of the Being. Both narratives are ideal sites of exploration to examine literature as a medium of philosophical reflection converging on the concepts of oneness, isolation, and the realization of Being.

Literature, Philosophy, and the Question of Being

"But what 'is' above all is Being. Thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man."¹ In *Letter on Humanism* Martin Heidegger attempts to theorize that the essence of man is accomplished only in relation with thinking. What exists already reaches the fullness of its essence and Being through language. "According to this essence language is the house of Being which comes to pass from Being and is pervaded by Being."² Therefore, the dimension of human existence is defined through thought, which constructs the very dwelling of Being. Humanity attains the truth of Being only by inhabiting language.

Heidegger employs the word *Dasein* to refer to *presence* or *Being there*.³ *Dasein* is the form of being that is aware of its personhood in

¹ Adams, Hazard & Leroy, Seale, *Critical Theory Since Plato*, INC, US, 2004, p. 1053

² Ibid, p. 1060

³ Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag 1953

relation to other persons yet being ultimately alone with oneself. This particular type of being is the Being of human beings because of its unique capacity to *disclose* or *clear* its being. Dasein is the only being whose personhood is concerned with its own self. Heidegger labels the Dasein's way of being *Authenticity* and analyses it phenomenologically. His ontological framework allows him to discuss the most intimate details of Being in relation to other beings maintaining its own eventually. Dasein is interpreted as care as well. "Its being, [Dasein], reveals itself as care."⁴ The state of mind of the Being is necessary for its disclosure and the understanding of its current situation.

D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* is an account on Being itself. It has no normative or prescriptive approach that guides the character or the reader to reach authenticity. However, Tom Brangwen's existence correlates with that of his relations, their thoughts, and their language. In this context, Lawrence's narrative can be read as a literary enactment of Heidegger's *Dasein*. Whereas Heidegger articulates "Being-there" in philosophical abstraction, Lawrence translates it into lived human drama. Tom's awareness of himself in relation to others, his sensitivity to care, and his eventual self-realization through relational authenticity illustrate how fiction can perform phenomenology. This paper argues that through Lawrence, *Dasein* becomes embodied rather than conceptual, a being who loves, feels, and acts in the world.

T. S. Eliot wrote to Stephen Spender in 1935, "You don't really criticize any author to whom you have never surrendered yourself...you have

⁴ Ibid, 182

to give yourself up, and then recover yourself.”⁵ This surrender-and-recovery process resonates in Lawrence, whose characters achieve fuller awareness of themselves and the world through total engagement with experience. Eliot emphasizes that philosophy and devotional reading require the application of the whole being, a notion paralleling the Eastern idea of Dasein or self-realization: authentic understanding involves complete participation of the self, not merely intellect or emotion.

Eliot’s engagement with Indic philosophy, evident in his use of Sanskrit terms, finds literary reflection in Lawrence. Tom Brangwen embodies the principle of surrender and recovery, becoming a complete being capable of fully understanding and interpreting experiences through immersion in life. Hindu thought, particularly the concept of Oneness and Manyness, underscores this process: as Diana L. Eck notes, “Oneness and manyness are not seen as true opposites...Singularity or uniqueness is not the sole mark of significance.”⁶ In Lawrence, Tom’s godlike traits manifest relationally, his individuality, together with Lydia’s and Anna’s, forms a complex whole. This reflects authentic Being: realized not in isolation, but through engagement with others. Gandhi similarly frames oneness as the sacred interrelation of all life,⁷ highlighting the ethical and spiritual dimension of authenticity.

Through these convergences, Lawrence is not the only one to extend Eliot’s ideas of spiritual surrender into a modern narrative of self-realization, E. M. Forster similarly explores this movement in *Howards End*, where

⁵ Kearns, C. M., *T. S. Eliot and Indic Traditions: A Study in Poetry and Belief*, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 3

⁶ Eck, Diana L., *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banara*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2003, p. 60

⁷ Gandhi, M. K., *The Essence of Hinduism*. Ahmedabad, The Navajivan Trust, 1987, p. 28

characters achieve individuation and authentic being through reconnection with nature, symbolic spaces, and selective social isolation. The authors' willing characters achieve *Dasein* by integrating personal awareness with relational and cosmic interconnections. *Howards End* portrays how by the end of the 19th century, industrialization had transformed England's natural and social landscapes, creating artificial communities and a new type of individual. In the narrative, characters endure the loss of contact with nature, a condition Forster dramatizes through archetypes. Jung defines archetypes as "conscious representations...that can vary in detail without losing their basic pattern."⁸ The conscious mind perceives these invisible notions, giving them concrete form; for example, the absent mother is represented through her belongings or a maternal figure. This embodiment is central to Forster's narrative, where the house Howards End itself becomes a living manifestation of the maternal archetype.

Jung identifies the psyche as composed of the ego, shadow, and anima/animus, whose balance allows individuation or self-actualization, often requiring isolation.⁹ Forster's Wilcoxes and Schlegels dramatize this struggle: their social interactions mirror conflicts between ego and shadow, intellect and instinct, materialism and spirituality. The psyche transforms unconscious archetypes into symbols, which convey meaning while converting lower drives into higher forms.

The psyche is, in fact, the only immediate experience we can have and the sine qua non of the subjective reality of the world. The symbols it creates are always grounded in the unconscious archetype, but their manifest forms are moulded by the ideas acquired

⁸ Jung, C. G. *Man and his Symbols*, NY, Anchor Press, 1964, p. 67

⁹ Ibid, p. 96-99

by the conscious mind.¹⁰

Thus, every symbol, gesture, spatial movement, or emotional rupture in Forster's prose externalizes unconscious states.

A symbol is a manifestation of its unconscious archetype that "works by suggestion; that is to say, it carries conviction and at the same time expresses the content of that conviction."¹¹ A key archetype is the collective unconscious, acting as a shared psychic identity, encompassing ideals and experiences across generations, living organisms, and objects. In this sense, Jung's notion of the "bush soul"¹² suggests humans share psychic identities with animals or trees extending their own existence beyond its natural embodiment. Forster uses this concept to frame individual alienation as part of a broader cultural malaise: the characters' disconnection from nature reflects modernity's rupture from ancestral and spiritual roots. Yet, Mrs. Wilcox restores a sense of continuity and rootedness, embodying the archetype of the Earth Mother whose presence anchors the household and offers a model of wholeness that guides others toward self-realization and authentic being.

Authenticity and the Essence of Being in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*

Reading Lawrence's poetry prior to his fiction allows for a more profound comprehension of his philosophical vision. In poems such as "The Primal Passion," Lawrence articulates the metaphysical foundation of Oneness and the authenticity of Being that also animate his novels, offering an essential framework for interpreting *The Rainbow* and its characters'

¹⁰ Jung, C.G. *Symbols of Transformation*, NY, The Bollingen Foundation. 1956, p. 232

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Jung, C. G. *Man and his Symbols*, NY, Anchor Press, 1964, p. 45

spiritual evolution. In “The Primal Passion,” Lawrence exhorts the reader to “go down into yourself, under your surface personality.”¹³ For him, only through such introspective descent can life be apprehended at its most authentic and unmediated source. He suggests that true understanding and immediate contact with the divine, or any higher form of spirituality, could be reached then. Yet, as Lawrence observes, modern existence is obscured by layers of falsehood that distance humanity from its primal truth. Restoration of this truth becomes possible only through renewed communion with nature.

The idea of renewal is dramatized through Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, who has lost the organic connection to the land that once united his ancestors. His alienation is resolved and becomes isolation when he encounters the foreigner Lydia Lensky, whose presence reawakens in him a deeper, more spiritual awareness of the land’s significance. This reveals Lawrence’s metaphysical insistence that the journey inward is inseparable from the journey outward toward nature. His injunction to “go down into yourself” not only resonates with Romantic introspection in a modernist era but also prefigures modern existentialist thought that situates authenticity in the confrontation with the self. It is a notion of “oneness” that may be seen as a bridge between the pantheistic unity of Wordsworth and the phenomenological awakening of Heidegger where both celebrate the return to a “primal,” uncorrupted life-force.

Lawrence westernized Eastern spiritual ideas to create metaphysical equilibrium, aligning human passion with universal order. By reclaiming this spiritual interconnection that recalls Hindu and Buddhist cosmologies, where

¹³ Lawrence, D. H., *Complete Poems by Lawrence: Easyread Large Edition*, 2008, p. 339

karma and reincarnation bind human life to the rhythms of the cosmos, Lawrence reimagines modern man's alienation as a call for reintegration into nature and a social isolation. This synthesis between Western poetic sensibility and Eastern metaphysical insight suggests Lawrence's attempt to reconstruct a holistic worldview lost to industrial modernity. The synthesis of Eastern cyclicity and Western individualism produces a distinctly modern spiritual narrative. It dramatizes the modern yearning for immediacy and total experience by condensing the cycle of reincarnation into a single lifetime. Tom's enlightened being thus becomes a phenomenological artistic metaphor for the collapse of time into revelation, a temporal oneness mirroring spiritual unity. Foucault's analysis of self-cultivation offers an additional useful framework for interpreting Tom Brangwen's development. Just as the ancients engaged in reflective exercises to transform themselves into ethical subjects, Tom's journey in *The Rainbow* embodies an existential "care of the self."¹⁴ However, where Foucault's ethics are social and discursive, Lawrence's are organic and spiritual rooted in an elemental bond with land, love, and body. This juxtaposition reveals Lawrence's rebellion against mechanistic modernity, reclaiming self-care as communion rather than self-discipline.

Lawrence allows the reader to see that Tom's self-cultivation was genuine from its early ages. Although unhappy, he followed his mother's will, and as he grew older, his quest for a spiritual identity was his main concern. When he was young, his Being was his mother's. She "sent him forcibly away to a grammar-school in Derby when he was twelve years old."¹⁵ Tom was condemned to failure from the beginning yet remained at

¹⁴ Danziger, Kurt, *Naming the Mind: How Psychology found its Language*, London, Sage Publications, 1997, p. 24

¹⁵ Lawrence, D. H., *The Rainbow*, London, Wordsworth, 1995, p. 10

school for his mother's sake. "He knew, with a child's deep, instinctive foreknowledge of what is going to happen to him."¹⁶ His awareness of his family's will and their interdependent relation rendered him obedient in this matter. His Being was yet to be accomplished. However, though young, he thought "as if he were guilty of his own nature, as if his being were wrong, and his mother's conception right."¹⁷ Tom's alienation within the school system also mirrors the dehumanizing structures of early industrial England. Lawrence uses education as a symbol of mechanization, contrasting institutional conformity with organic growth. This draws attention to the broader social critique at the heart of the novel: authenticity cannot thrive where life is regimented. Tom's resistance becomes not merely personal but emblematic of the modern individual's rebellion against the machine of modernity.

However, Tom's resistance is not without fear. He encounters dread for the first time when the ideal of womanhood is confronted with distortion. At the age of nineteen, the ambiguity of his experience with a prostitute in a public setting profoundly unsettled him. Through this encounter, he recognized that women exist beyond the familiar forms represented by his mother and sister. The emotions it aroused, anger, disappointment, and fear, were entirely new to him, leaving him both confused and acutely aware of his own vulnerability. Heidegger discusses the issue of ambiguity in his *Being and Time* explaining that in everyday interactions, individuals encounter what is openly accessible to all, making it difficult to distinguish what is genuinely disclosed from what is merely commonly known. "This ambiguity extends not only to the world, but likewise to being-with-one-another as such, even to

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the being of Dasein toward itself.”¹⁸ Tom fell in ambiguity and “did not know how to feel.”¹⁹ The connection of his Being with women was “going to be no more than nothingness.”²⁰

Fear, however, opens possibilities towards a new perception of truth and reality. Heidegger further argues that “everything looks as if it were genuinely understood, grasped, and spoken whereas basically it is not.”²¹ Tom faced the reality of that prostitute and experienced it within its own environment. This was a Being in itself that interrelated with his in order to allow him to develop his Dasein further. In Heideggerian terms, Tom’s fear mirrors *Angst*—a profound existential anxiety that reveals the nothingness underlying all beings. This “fear” is not paralysis but disclosure: a stripping away of illusions that opens the self to truth. Lawrence thus aligns emotional intensity with philosophical awakening, transforming dread into a portal to authenticity.

In *The Rainbow*, the portal to authenticity is found in curiosity. Tom’s curiosity was triggered when seeing the foreign and strange Mrs. Lensky. He found in her the other interesting Being to discover. Importantly, in order to understand a certain Being, this Being must show itself phenomenologically as Heidegger writes, “let what shows itself be seen from itself.”²² Seeing the Polish Widow, Lydia Lensky, for the first time established the unreality and falseness of the other women, mainly the prostitute. Heidegger says on curiosity, “The basic constitution of being of sight shows itself in a peculiar tendency of being which belongs to

¹⁸ Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag 1953, p. 162

¹⁹ Lawrence, D. H., *The Rainbow*, London, Wordsworth, 1995, p. 13

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag 1953, p. 162

²² Ibid, p. 30

everydayness – the tendency toward “seeing.” [This] expresses the tendency toward a peculiar way letting the world be encountered in perception.”²³ Tom used to often encounter this other woman as “the others are encountered as what they are; they *are* what they do”²⁴ observing her from afar, noticing her moves and acts, and accepting her foreignness with satisfaction. “He felt also a curious certainty about her, as if she were destined to him. It was to him a profound satisfaction that she was a foreigner.”²⁵ He realized that “[s]he belonged to somewhere else. He felt it poignantly, as something real and natural.”²⁶ Although she often seemed lost in thought, Tom knew she was of another kind of being, a higher being.

Lydia’s foreignness functions as a mirror for Tom’s incompleteness. She represents the Other through whom he recognizes himself. By accepting Lydia’s difference, Tom transcends his provincial limits and moves toward a more universal understanding of Being. “But her face was lifted to another world of life: not to heaven or death: but to some place where she still lived, in spite of her body’s absence.”²⁷ The synthesis of their two selves thus becomes both erotic and ontological, a union of consciousnesses seeking mutual revelation. Seeing Lydia was insufficient to Tom, “everyday being-with-one-another, Dasein stands in *subservience* to the others. It itself *is* not; the others have taken its being away from it. The everyday possibilities of being of Dasein are the disposal of the whims of the others.”²⁸ An individual’s everyday being depends much on other beings, or as Heidegger

²³ Ibid, p. 160

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Lawrence, D. H., *The Rainbow*, London, Wordsworth, 1995, p. 24

²⁶ Ibid, p. 25

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag 1953, p. 118

labels them, the *They*.²⁹

Tom's well-being depended on Lydia's; he would accompany her if company was needed, give her what she asks for, play with her child and grant her access to his home. "He stepped aside and she at once entered the house, as if the door had been opened to admit her. That startled him. It was the custom for everybody to wait on the doorstep till asked inside. He went into the kitchen and she followed."³⁰ Their compatibility was natural and spontaneous after having recognized the being of one another. "The feeling that they had exchanged recognition possessed him like a madness, like a torment."³¹ Tom interpreted Lydia's being as complete and necessary to his. Her foreignness embodied the unknown reality that his own being required in order to realize his *Dasein*.

The newfound certainty enabled Tom to trust his emotions toward the widow. As Lawrence writes, "It was coming, he knew, his fate. The world was submitting to its transformation. He made no move: it would come, what would come."³² Her presence, though distant and unfamiliar, resonated intimately within him: "She was strange, from far off, yet so intimate. She was from far away, a presence, so close to his soul."³³ Through Lydia, the "foreign" becomes the mirror of the self, the external manifestation of the hidden dimensions of Tom's own being. Her otherness thus initiates his journey toward spiritual awakening, allowing him to experience unity through difference and to approach the authenticity that defines his *Dasein*.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 121

³⁰ Lawrence, D. H., *The Rainbow*, London, Wordsworth, 1995, p. 26

³¹ Ibid, p. 22

³² Ibid, pp. 24-25

³³ Ibid, p. 25

Lydia's limited English, shaped by her Polish origins, made her speech understandable yet difficult to interpret as uniquely her own. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes this mode of communication through the notion of "idle talk," which he defines not disparagingly but as "a positive phenomenon which constitutes the mode of being of the understanding and interpretation of everyday Dasein."³⁴ Tom Brangwen's efforts to interpret Lydia's expressions allowed him to perceive her being as profound and harmonious with his own. Language, as a social construct, ironically enabled Tom's spiritual isolation, for Lydia's speech aimed only at understanding, not social display. As Heidegger asserts, "understanding and interpretation are always already contained in what is expressed. As expression, language harbors in itself in interpretedness of the understanding of Dasein."³⁵ Lydia's reserve in language mirrored her modest behavior, she spoke and revealed herself only to her husband. When distressed, as during childbirth, her silence itself communicated her inner state. Her foreignness extended beyond speech to her consciousness, keeping Tom in a state of wonder and renewal, constantly discovering new dimensions of reality through her presence. Lawrence here offers a quiet meditation on the link between language and Being: Lydia's fractured English reduces speech to its essential function: connection rather than ornament. In her silences, Lawrence locates a more authentic existence, where presence itself becomes the truest language of Being.

Tom and Lydia discover in silence not merely an understanding of authenticity but Being itself. It is an existential union where language yields to presence, and communication becomes creation. Their union was essential

³⁴ Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag 1953, p. 157

³⁵ Ibid.

for life itself, ultimately fulfilled on their wedding day when Tom and Lydia Brangwen reached their *Dasein* together. Each became complete through the other, realizing that being requires unity of souls to attain its highest form. Their connection deepens in the childbirth scene, where Tom feels Lydia's pain as his own, their bodies and spirits joined in a sacred harmony. Their marriage embodies the *hieros gamos*, the mystical union of opposites that restores cosmic balance. Lawrence transforms this ancient archetype into a modern myth of reconciliation, portraying man and woman as microcosmic reflections of the earth and cosmos. Through this fusion, *The Rainbow* becomes not only a family chronicle but also a metaphysical allegory of creation renewed through love and an organic renewal with nature.

Connection, Continuity, and Social Isolation in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*

In contrast to the Brangwens, the Wilcoxes in E. M. Forster's *Howards End* have almost entirely lost their connection with the land, their sense of well-being bound to motor cars, material gains, and the industrialized city life. Yet, Mrs. Wilcox retains an inexplicable attachment to her house, Howards End, garden, and animals, signaling a grounding in nature absent in her family. Forster employs archetypes to dramatize the spiritual and psychological consequences of modern rootlessness, showing how social obligations and industrial modernity distance people from their origins and inner selves. Jungian psychology illuminates this interrelation of man and nature, while Adorno's critique underscores the necessity of withdrawing from society to achieve individuation. Social isolation thus becomes both exile and redemption: Forster's characters navigate between societal conformity and spiritual authenticity, and it is within this separation from the modern world that a deeper sense of emerges. Mrs. Wilcox, as the

embodiment of the Earth Mother archetype, exemplifies this rootedness and wholeness, anchoring the possibility of spiritual continuity and self-realization for those around her.

Forster invests Mrs. Ruth Wilcox with the archetypal foundations essential to the novel's structure. Though a minor character, her presence pervades the entire narrative, profoundly shaping the lives of all other characters. She embodies the novel's collective psyche, her central position conferring symbolic authority, so that the perceptions and developments of every character are, in some way, mediated through her. One of the main archetypes she embodies is earth. Power stems from her as flowers and trees from earth, "Ruth knew no more of worldly wickedness and wisdom than did the flowers in her garden, or the grass in her field."³⁶ The "worldly wickedness and wisdom" she and her garden are unaware of is industrialization. The profound transformations wrought by the Industrial Revolution disrupted both human nature and the natural world; yet Mrs. Wilcox preserved her wholeness. As long as she remained at Howards End, her Being remained intact and harmonious. Mrs. Wilcox, in fact, functions as the spiritual axis around which the novel's moral and psychological dynamics revolve. She is not simply a character but an archetypal mediator between human consciousness and the earth's vitality. Her connection with her house and garden demonstrates her deep rooting within the earth. This rootedness contrasts starkly with the Wilcoxes' mechanized mobility, revealing Forster's critique of progress that severs man from soil. The tension between Mrs. Wilcox's organic spirituality and her family's industrial pragmatism becomes the novel's moral fulcrum.

Mrs. Wilcox can also be associated with her wych-elm tree, which

³⁶ Forster, E. M., *Howards End*, Pennsylvania, An Electronic Classics Series Publication, 2007, p. 96

may be seen as an external manifestation of her bush soul. It is deeply rooted in the garden casting its shadows on Howards End. Many incidents occur under this wych-elm. Peter, the youngest Wilcox, falls in a sudden love with Helen Schlegel. He confesses his love and kisses her under the shadow of the tree. When the family knew about this, an intense atmosphere overcame the house. Nevertheless, “though neither of [Helen nor Peter] told her a word,”³⁷ Mrs. Wilcox was fully aware of the situation. The wych-elm, like Mrs. Wilcox herself, embodies and preserves the past. Her instinctive wisdom reflects the wholeness of her being. According to Jung, a self that harmoniously integrates both conscious and unconscious elements is actualized. Having achieved this individuation, Mrs. Wilcox is positioned to guide others toward their own self-realization. The tree’s presence evokes Jung’s archetypal notion of the “axis mundi,” the cosmic pillar linking heaven and earth. By aligning Mrs. Wilcox with the wych-elm, Forster mythologizes her as the guardian of continuity, an embodiment of timeless wisdom resisting modern disintegration. Moreover, the narrative’s emphasis on instinctive wisdom, “that the instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow,”³⁸ echoes Jung’s faith in inherited psychic memory, situating Mrs. Wilcox as a vessel for ancestral consciousness.

Dr. C. George Boeree points out to the Jungian “Earth Mother” concept in his article entitled “*Carl Jung*.” He writes, “The mother archetype is symbolized by the primordial mother or “earth mother” of mythology, by Eve and Mary in western traditions, and by less personal symbols such as the church, the nation, a forest, or the ocean.”³⁹ Mrs. Wilcox is the conscious representation of the mother to her family and to Margaret

³⁷ Ibid, p. 29

³⁸ Ibid, p. 24

³⁹ Boeree, George C., “Carl Jung,” accessed November 1, 2025, <https://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/jung.html>

Schlegel as well. However, when the mother died, the Wilcoxes lost the mother representation having failed to realize that the spirit of the mother is within their house, Howards End. “To them Howards End was a house: they could not know that to her it had been a spirit, for which she sought a spiritual heir, [Margaret].”⁴⁰ The other members of the family were indifferent to the will of Mrs. Wilcox who desired to pass Howards End on to Margret Schlegel. This conceptual alignment underscores how Forster translates psychological archetypes into moral forces: the maternal archetype becomes not merely nurturing but redemptive, offering spiritual restoration to those estranged from the natural order.

After Mrs. Wilcox’s death, both families relocated, leaving Howards End abandoned, its significance lost to them. Removed from the house, the Wilcoxes became rootless and spiritually homeless, despite owning multiple properties. In Jungian psychology, the house represents the body of the individual, and what happens inside it represent the inner being, or the self, of the individual. The Wilcoxes’ frequent relocations render their souls unstable, leaving their selves unactualized; only a return to Howards End can restore their sense of being. The decay of the maternal archetype following Mrs. Wilcox’s death illustrates the novel’s central anxiety: without symbolic connection to the Earth Mother, modern man becomes spiritually homeless. The multiplicity of houses mirrors the fragmentation of self under industrial modernity. Forster’s novel thus implicitly dialogues with Eastern philosophy. The Taoist principle of return parallels Jung’s individuation: both processes require dissolution of ego and re-immersion in the primal source.

In Eastern philosophy, specifically Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching*, the act of returning is linked to *wu wei*, a state of non-action or yielding. Lao Tzu

⁴⁰ Forster, E. M., *Howards End*, Pennsylvania, An Electronic Classics Series Publication, 2007, p. 105

writes: “In Tao the only motion is returning; The only useful quality, weakness. For though all creatures under heaven are the products of Being, Being itself is the product of Not-Being.”⁴¹ Forster’s novel thus implicitly dialogues with Eastern philosophy. The Taoist principle of return parallels Jung’s individuation: both processes require dissolution of ego and re-immersion in the primal source. An individual must always return to their origins; to do so is to return to the self. The process of illumination may take many detours before reaching its culmination, yet the final return is often toward earthiness. Worldly pursuits are illusory, while engagement with the elemental, earth, body, and nature, reveals what is truly necessary.

When Charles Wilcox was charged with manslaughter, Henry Wilcox’s health and resolve weakened, a fragility further intensified by Margaret’s near decision to leave him. He confessed to her, sitting on the grass, “I don’t know what to do—what to do. I’m broken—I’m ended.”⁴² His weakness became the eminence that allowed him to accept to return to Howards End. Henry sat on the grass, reconnecting with his original state that binds all beings to the earth, the homeliness absent in the social and industrial world of his time. This imagery of physical descent on the grass parallels a spiritual descent into humility, suggesting that Forster’s reconciliation of opposites, mind and matter, male and female, self and other, achieves a Tao-like harmony with Being. This scene also becomes an enactment of psychic renewal. Positioned against nature, his physical proximity to the earth externalizes his moral vulnerability, marking the beginning of his individuation. Nature is the external manifestation of the inner being.

The cosmos and life represent the soul’s oneness and void respectively. The unity of the two gives a greater understanding of the self,

⁴¹ Tzu, Lao, *Tao Te Ching*, London, Wordsworth, 1997, p. 43

⁴² Forster, E. M., *Howards End*, Pennsylvania, An Electronic Classics Series Publication, 2007, p. 356

hence life. Henry's realization that nature is his ultimate remedy allowed his inner self to be emptied of previous misperceptions. The self cannot be linked to machineries and industrialization. His return to Howards End is a rebirth in itself, from not being into being. In this final movement, Forster aligns redemption not with religious salvation but with psychological and ecological wholeness. The return to Howards End signifies a symbolic homecoming to the self, a reintegration of man, nature, and spirit that counters the alienations and fragmentations of modernity. *Howards End* concludes with the image of a great hay harvest that the Wilcoxes proudly celebrate. The hay, cut and dried from Howards End's "big meadow," symbolizes the human being severed from the earth—withered and lifeless once detached, yet green and vital when rooted in its natural ground. Forster's closing image of regeneration through contact with soil crystallizes the novel's central paradox: isolation leads to reconnection, death to renewal, and social alienation to spiritual homecoming.

Margaret ultimately realizes that everything in Howards End is connected to the late Mrs. Wilcox, whose spirit continues to permeate the lives of the living. Ruth functions as more than a "mother earth" figure; she embodies a timeless, divine presence that unites past and future, transforming Howards End into a sacred center of spiritual continuity. Each character becomes a fragment of her encompassing spirit, an expression of Oneness manifesting through multiplicity. Through Ruth Wilcox, Forster gives form to Jung's archetype of the Self, the totality that transcends individual consciousness. Her lingering presence symbolizes the dissolution of the ego into a universal psyche, where all beings participate in a shared spiritual whole. Margaret inherits Ruth's spiritual sensitivity, intuitively perceiving what others cannot. Her communion with the land, most vividly in the

moment when “the hill beneath her moved as if it were alive,”⁴³ signals her full individuation. In contrast, Henry and his family’s fear of hay symbolizes their disconnection from nature and, by extension, from the self. As Margaret’s awareness deepens, she becomes Ruth’s spiritual successor, guiding Henry toward the same realization. Forster thus portrays the transmission of spiritual consciousness across generations: the feminine principle of intuition, once embodied in Mrs. Wilcox, is renewed in Margaret. This continuity mirrors both Jungian individuation and Eastern notions of enlightenment, where truth is not reasoned but awakened through inner connectedness.

Theodor W. Adorno’s critical theory emphasizes isolation as a means of resisting what he terms the “culture industry.” For Adorno, a work of art attains true value only when it embodies a truth that exposes the inherent contradictions of society. The mind is, thus, no longer directed to reality resigning before the facts of life. In fact, it is “through its isolation as one ‘field’ among others, the mind aids the existing order and takes its place within it.”⁴⁴ Adorno’s observation reveals a paradox at the heart of intellectual and spiritual isolation. While isolation might appear to offer independence from societal norms, Adorno warns that when the mind withdraws too far from lived reality, it risks becoming complicit with the very order it seeks to resist. By turning inward and detaching from social engagement, thought loses its transformative potential and becomes another specialized, contained “field” within the system, neutralized rather than revolutionary.

In *Howards End*, Adorno’s insight complicates the notion of isolation as purely redemptive. Forster’s depiction of Henry’s withdrawal from social

⁴³ Ibid, p. 355

⁴⁴ Adams Hazard & Leroy Seale, *Critical Theory Since Plato*, INC, US, 2004, p. 1105

circulation parallels Adorno's assertion that truth in art, and by extension in life, emerges only through negation. Henry's seclusion, therefore, is not weakness but resistance, a necessary exile from the false totality of capitalist progress. However, his detachment from emotional and natural realities illustrates warning: his isolation reinforces, rather than challenges, the mechanized order of modern life. Conversely, Margaret's isolation leads her back to authentic connection with nature and spirit. Contrasting their mutual return to *Howards End*, Henry and Margaret show that only an isolation rooted in self-awareness, rather than withdrawal, can yield genuine insight and renewal.

Conclusion

This paper analyzed how Lawrence and Forster explored the realization of Dasein and authentic Being through relational, spiritual, and environmental engagement. It argued that both authors depict modern alienation as a challenge to human wholeness, yet offer pathways toward self-actualization, Lawrence through phenomenological immersion and relational awakening, and Forster through archetypal structures, symbolic spaces, and selective social isolation. The analysis proceeded in two sections: the first examined *The Rainbow*, focusing on Tom Brangwen's journey of self-realization, his encounters with others, and the philosophical frameworks, Heideggerian and Eastern, that inform Lawrence's portrayal of authenticity. The second section explored *Howards End*, highlighting the Wilcoxes' alienation, Mrs. Wilcox's archetypal presence, and the role of nature, archetypes, and social isolation in enabling individuation. By juxtaposing these narratives, the paper contributes to the discussion on how both authors articulate modernity's threats and the possibilities for reclaiming spiritual and existential wholeness.

In both narratives, authenticity and the realization of Being emerge as central concerns shaped by modern alienation. Lawrence portrays self-realization as a journey inward and outward, into the depths of one's own consciousness and toward the natural and social Other, culminating in the existential and spiritual union of Tom and Lydia. Forster, meanwhile, presents the dangers of disconnection from nature and archetypal continuity, showing that only through rootedness, intuitive awareness, and mindful isolation can the self be reconstituted. In both cases, connection to land, to others, and to archetypal patterns facilitates individuation, while detachment without awareness, as Adorno warns, risks complicity with the alienating forces of modernity.

Together, these works offer complementary visions of the human struggle to reclaim wholeness: Lawrence through the phenomenology of desire and spiritual encounter, Forster through the symbolic and moral recuperation of place and self. Both affirm that modern existence need not preclude authenticity; rather, it calls for deliberate engagement with the elemental, the relational, and the transcendent. E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910) and D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915) anticipated the spiritual resolution that T. S. Eliot would later evoke in *The Waste Land* (1922): "Shantih, Shantih, Shantih." All three authors recognized that the remedy for modern disintegration lies not in progress or intellect, but in the recovery of spiritual harmony.

The paper demonstrated how *The Rainbow* and *Howards End* transform fiction into a mode of philosophical practice. By engaging Lawrence's phenomenological exploration of Dasein and Forster's archetypal vision of individuation, the analysis has shown that both authors use narrative form not merely to depict experience but to *think* through it, to perform the philosophical labor of reconciling Being, spirit, and world. In bridging

Heideggerian ontology with Jungian psychology, and in drawing resonances with Eastern metaphysical thought, the paper has revealed that the novel can itself become a site of ontological inquiry, a living meditation on the conditions of authenticity, isolation, and renewal. Thus, the study affirms that for Lawrence and Forster, literature enacts philosophy: it is not commentary on Being but the very movement of Being expressed through art.

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