



Winter 4-23-2018

# E.M Forster: Discovering Connection in “Mr. Andrews”

Janelle A. Benny

Brigham Young University, [j.a.benny66@gmail.com](mailto:j.a.benny66@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/mssp>



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Benny, Janelle A., "E.M Forster: Discovering Connection in “Mr. Andrews”" (2018). *Modernist Short Story Project*. 1.  
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/mssp/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Modernist Short Story Project by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

Janelle Benny

Dr. Jerica Watts

ENGL. 376

23 April 2018

### E.M Forster: Discovering Connection in “Mr. Andrews”

E.M. Forster was well accomplished in his career for his novels and their accomplishments. His writing career started early in life and found great success, yet, often his short stories went unnoticed. Dominic Head explains that critics found his stories to be “lack luster” in comparison to his novels (Head 77). However, this exact quality is what makes Forster’s stories memorable. Head argues that Forster’s short stories approach modernism different from his novels and other writers of the time (77).

One such forgotten story is called “Mr. Andrews.” Found in the illustrated magazine *The Open Window*, Forster’s short story was publication in 1911 and since, has gone unrecognized. The original editor of the magazine, John Locke Ellis, included works in volumes of *The Open Window* that would give young writers a platform to showcase their work. *The Open Window* chose stories created from experience and offered style that the reader could become immersed in (*Index of Modernist Magazines*).

When I discovered “Mr. Andrews” in *The Open Window* I found that Forster spoke to this theme of experience. Also with distinct style, I realized there was more to this story than what I single read provides. Published around the same time Forster traveled through the India and Macedonia area, “Mr. Andrews” draws upon Forster’s experiences with different cultures and provide a basis of plot. These themes add to our overall reading of the story and

demonstrate how this short story explores that in religion there is a lack of connection between the patrons of heaven and God.

Published alongside authors such as Katherine Mansfield and Jack B. Yeats, “Mr. Andrews” joins voices that pull on themes of social class and religious interaction. The two central characters of the story meet and early on discuss who they are to each other. Mr. Andrews asks his companion “are you not Christian?” to which he gets the response, “no. I am a Believer” (Forster). This brief conversation shows both men, while not of the same religious denomination, as “believers.” As scholars come to look at his story they can compare reactions the characters have to Heaven and what it means to be worthy. There is a “personal dissolution” from “personal salvation” that shows how Forster highlights the world's view of Heaven (Head 89). The characters of Mr. Andrews and his companion the Turk compare their previous lives to how they live as spirits.

These thoughts come amid the despair and turmoil of the multiple faiths seen in Heaven as Mr. Andrews and the Turk seek entry. Forster comments on how two different men come together with their own beliefs to determine if their worth can save them. It would seem that through Mr. Andrews' interactions with his companion the Turk and an angelic messenger in Heaven, Forster is commenting on the constructs of religion. In the modern world, there is no unifying factor between religions, yet here among Mr. Andrews and the Turk, religion is set aside and instead the men focus on the “world soul” to better each other and those left behind. (Forster).

Forster presents this conflict of perspective just as he was offered a conflict of perspective in his youth. From public school to college education, personal experience influences the way that Forster approaches his writing as a means of social commentary. This

short story was published around the same time as *Howards End*, a novel of Forster's that is known for its modernistic approach. *A Passage to India*, while published later, still works to showcase Forster's modernistic approach. Many of Forster's works can be seen as experimental and non-conformist (Mendalie 98-99). As scholars examine "Mr. Andrews," they can find insight into Forster's anti-war beliefs and his dissatisfaction with religion.

To better understand this dissatisfaction with religion in "Mr. Andrews," I will turn to Voyant Tools. This site offers digital textual analysis and allows us to make discoveries within the words of a work that would otherwise go unnoticed. "Mr. Andrews" is relatively short compared to other short stories that appeared in *The Open Window* with just over sixteen hundred words. For this story, I believe that this highlights how important diction and syntax were in creating this story. E.M. Forster uses specific details that focus on the specific journeys of Mr. Andrews and the Turk. Rather than using flourishing details to depict place, Forster focuses on the specific details of the characters and their attributes.

My initial reaction in reading this story was focused on how there was a blend of religions and exploration of social class. When Mr. Andrews and the Turk first meet, we know nothing of who each are. We read that as they ascend to the Gates of Heaven, "the two souls floated upwards together," they have not been separated by class or race, they only know each other's voice (Forster). This reflects how Lionel Trilling views Forster's plots, sharp, definite and able to create a flare (164). The exact manner that Forster writes with allows us to see clearly that the souls of Mr. Andrews and the Turk are "ascending towards the Judgement Seat and the Gate of Heaven" each hoping that "[God] would not deny salvation" (Forster). Here, we are given a unifying factor between our characters as they seek out their salvation. Forster's

known plot arches come into play and we can expect that eventually these men will reach their destination.

Of course, as is true in Modernist literature, this basicity will be challenged. As Levine notes, Forster had a “mistrust of pomp and religiosity,” and, having left Christianity behind in his early adulthood Forster’s works take on a critical perspective (5). Yet, Forster never truly left Christianity behind as he explores how it relates to connection and individuality in “Mr. Andrews.” Upon first coming to the Gates, Mr. Andrews is himself alive, relatively speaking, and full of hope in his journey of the afterlife. He has is an individual ready to accept his fate, “Mr. Andrews was conscious of his [righteous soul]” and was expecting salvation “after a beneficent and honorable life could not be doubtful of its results.” Because he lived in humility and was an upright and religious man, how could he expect anything else?

And then we see the Turk, a believer like Mr. Andrews, but Mr. Andrews’ reaction to the Turk’s expectation of entering Heaven is noteworthy. Initially we see that “Mr. Andrews did not speak again, for he was filled with horror at the approaching tragedy.” He found it incredulous that “This man so godless, so lawless, so cruel, so lustful, believed that he would be admitted into Heaven” (Forster). Before looking into the next line, it is worthy to understand why Forster would make the point of showing this perspective. Mr. Andrews is a man of God, so he claims, yet he cannot connect to the teaching of God and understand that perhaps the Turk could be just as worthy as himself to enter. The next line of the story goes, “But Mr. Andrews felt neither disgust nor moral indignation. He was only conscious of an immense pity, and his own virtues comforted him not at all” (Forster). Mr. Andrews begins connecting with the Turk who has become his companion and not the values and beliefs of his Christian faith.

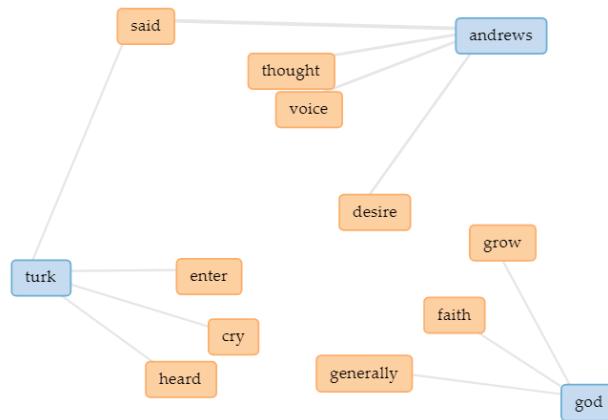
And then still we see that upon entering, Mr. Andres desires to be an advocate for the Turk to enter first, but then “the Turk uttered the same cry. For the same spirit was working in each of them” (Forster). This idea that the same spirit within the men, I believe, is not what Christians call the Spirit of God. Rather, I believe it to be a spirit of unity. This journey into the afterlife that the men are to embark on must be done with unity. Forster seems to be commenting on the fact that Mr. Andrews are one in the same. They both have their loyalties and beliefs that are distinct and different, yet they are united in desiring the other’s salvation.

In the introduction to the Everyman’s Library edition of *A Passage to India*, P.N Furbank discusses about how the British appear to Indians and Indians appear to the British. There is an abundance of misconceptions, skewed understandings, and identities what we don’t understand about others (xi-xii). As *Passage* was a leading influence to “Mr. Andrews,” I believe Furbank opens the discussion that Forster comments on the individual’s perception of others. We have the power and ability to help and strength one another, yet so rarely act on it because we do not come from a similar background.

The story continues after both men enter Heaven. As the two go their separate ways, Mr. Andrews is still not satisfied. We see that “Though he had all that he expected, he was conscious of no great happiness, no mystic contemplation of beauty, no mystic union with good.” This was all that Mr. Andrews expected in his life, all that his Christian upbringing taught him, he only had to reach Heaven and he would be saved. But, salvation is not what he expected. Mr. Andrews realizes that “There was nothing to compare with that moment outside the gate, when he prayed that the Turk might enter and heard the Turk uttering the same prayer for him.” Mr. Andrews sees that the connection formed with the Turk is even greater than his connection to Heaven. Even when Mr. Andrews searches Heaven, and wears what he expected to find in

Heaven he is not satisfied. All he finds are the gods of multiple religions, none of which he can connect with.

This idea of connection can be seen through Voyant. Through digital textual analysis, we see how the linking tool connects words that have been used in context with one another.



Above, we have three of the most common words used in “Mr. Andrews” in blue, “Andrews,” “Turk,” and “God.” I first noticed how God was not linked to either Mr. Andrews or the Turk. Even though both men believed in some form of God, they had no exact connection. The only real connection is seen between Mr. Andrews and the Turk via the word “said.” What fascinated me most about this I believe that this supports my thesis that Mr. Andrews and the Turk only were able to find their salvation through their direct communion with each other. They lack any sort of link to God and any of the words he is found with.

“Mr. Andrews” joins voices that pull on themes of social class and religious interaction. Forster seeks to highlight the way the misconceptions of Heaven. Rather than achieving a glorified state of being, Mr. Andrews is left with disappointment and loneliness. Satisfaction is not found among any of the proclaimed gods. I would argue that this is because of the lack of

interaction between god and the characters. Not even growth or faith, which early on Mr. Andrews hoped for are linked to him. Rather his desires, are left adrift as the linking tool shows.

Forster may have meant this to be an overarching comment on the disillusionment of Christianity man becomes swept up in. And Forster demonstrates this with how two men, both “believers,” but of different backgrounds, become united in each other rather than Christianity. Ultimately this leads them to make the decision to leave Heaven. Mr. Andrews realizes that “in that place their expectations were fulfilled, but not their hopes,” thus there is nothing left for him in Heaven. The Turk makes the same decision,

As soon as they passed the gate they felt again the pressure of the world soul. For a moment they stood hand in hand resisting it. Then they suffered it to break in upon them, and the, and all the experience they had gained, and all the love and wisdom they had generated, passed into it, and made it better. (Forster)

This disruption of form in the end of “Mr. Andrews” creates ambivalence to what salvation actually is. As he doesn’t adhere to common rules of storytelling, Forster “impose[s] shape and form and, at the same time, undermine[s] them even as they are being employed” (Medalie 98). The narrative of this short story steps away from all expectations as it explores

I found this to be how Forster comments on two different men who come together with their own beliefs to determine personal ability to enter the gates of Heaven. By doing this, I believe Forster reflects on the world view of religion and how we interact with god. Which, as the link tool displays, is not at all. In the modern world as well as the spiritual one, there is no unifying factor between religions, they merely exist. The lack of a tethered connection to god leads the characters of Mr. Andrews and his companion to leave the gates of Heaven. Instead of a romanticized view of Heaven, there is a nihilistic agenda in “Mr. Andrews.” No matter what



either Mr. Andrews and the Turk did in their lives, it wasn't enough to find joy. Instead they were content to leave the Gates of Heaven which ultimately "made [them] better" (Forster).

Works Cited

Forster, E.M. "Mr. Andrews," *The Open Window*, vol. 2, April-Sept 1911, Edited by John Locke Ellis, pp. 4-13.

Furbank, P.N. Introduction. *A Passage to India*, by E.M. Forster, 1924, Everyman's Library 1942, pp. ix-xxx.

Head, Dominic. "Forster and the Short Story." *The Cambridge Companion to E.M. Forster*, edited by David Bradshaw, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 77-91.

*Index of Modernist Magazines*. Wordpress, 16 Jun. 2016.

<http://modernistmagazines.org/british/the-open-window/> Accessed 18 April 2018.

Levine, June Perry. *Creation and Criticism: A Passage to India*. University of Nebraska Press, 1971.

Medalie, David. *E.M. Forster's Modernism*. Palgrave, 2002.

Trilling, Lionel. *E.M. Forster*. *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, Spring 1942, pp. 160-173.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4332328>