

Howards End and A Passage to India, the two best known novels by E.M. Forster are quite different in theme and setting, but they have an important aspect in common. Both novels take place in a strictly divided society and they both deal with the insularity and narrow-mindedness of separate communities and their inability to reach beyond their own environment and experience. "Only connect ...", an epigraph from Howards End, introduces one of the central themes of Forster's writing.

E. M. Forster strongly believed in the importance of personal relationships and in living a full, undivided life. That is, a life in which spiritual, physical, emotional and rational aspects are all in harmony. <sup>1</sup> In order to reach the desired harmony, one needs to establish connections not only between the spiritual and material life, but also on the level of personal relations. Forster is concerned with an individual's search for harmony, but also with finding harmony and overcoming fragmentation in the whole society. To reach such harmony, both within the self and within the society, is what the characters of his novels strive for. Forster disregarded religion already during his university years<sup>2</sup> and this may have led him to consider personal relationships of primary importance. His belief in personal relations is also expressed in his essay "What I Believe", published in 1939. Personal relations enable us to find some order in the chaotic world<sup>3</sup> and thus they are the first step to reach harmony. Apart from his non-religious attitude, Forster's thinking was also influenced by the liberal tradition and by some romantic ideas.