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Through the Postcolonial Lens: The Point of View in the Television Series Adaptation of E. M. Forster's *Howards End*

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Abstract. The 2017 BBC television series *Howards End* not only constitutes another 'retelling' of E. M. Forster's well-known story, but also illustrates how the perception of 'reality' portrayed in the narrative changes in the new version. As the article will argue, the representation of the British Empire becomes altered on the move from the novel to the series, largely as a result of the modifications in the point of view. Referring to the concept of 'the point of view as attitude' described by Edward Branigan and Seymour Chatman, the paper will examine the changes observable in the adaptation that result from the embracing of a more contemporary outlook on English society. Through highlighting the problems of imperialism as well as reflecting the post-colonial, multicultural character of England, the television series can be claimed to convey the critical attitude towards the British colonialism more explicitly than its source text.

Key words: point of view, attitude, *Howards End*, adaptation, colonialism, imperialism

Introduction

The point of view is usually one of the first issues one pays attention to when conducting an analysis of a literary text. The significance of this narrative aspect for understanding a work is underlined by David Lodge when he writes that "[t]he choice of the point(s) of view from which the story is told is arguably the most important decision that the novelist has to make" (2011, 26). The critic explains that its vital role derives from the influence it inserts on "the way readers will respond, emotionally and morally, to the fictional characters and their actions" (Lodge 2011, 26). Although in the passages from *The Art of Fiction* quoted above Lodge refers to literature, his views could be equally true about cinematic works, especially since in contemporary theory the transmedial character of the narrative is commonly accepted and narration and point of view are considered "independent of medium" (Branigan 1984, 91). Lodge's analysis of

the point of view relies mostly on the traditional definition of the point of view as "the way a story gets told – the mode (or modes) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting, and events which constitute the *narrative* in a work of fiction" (Abrams and Harpham 2015, 300). This most widespread understanding of the point of view focuses on the position of the narrator who 'mediates' the story to the reader. Whether one distinguishes the homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration, as does Gérard Genette (Fludernik 2009, 31), or, more specifically, the first-person, omniscient and limited one (Abrams and Harpham 2015, 301–3), the prominence is generally given to the main 'speaker', 'through whose eyes' the audience perceives the story and through whose consciousness the events are filtered.

Nevertheless, Lodge's definition also emphasises the reader's reaction or disposition towards the presented characters and events. The importance of the connection between the perspective from which the story is presented and the reader's disposition to the narrative seems to comply with the understanding of the point of view as attitude, presented by Edward Branigan in his *Point of View in the Cinema* in reference to such critics as André Bazin, Jean Mitry, Wayne Booth or Dudley Andrew (1984, 7–8). Branigan does not adopt this approach himself and treats the cinematic point of view primarily as "a four-term relation among character, camera, object and narrator/viewer" (Branigan 1984, 52), to a large degree relying on the distinct or overlapping optical perspectives of the character and the audience. Subjectivity for him is a specific level of narration in which it is the protagonist who serves as the origin of perception – the "beginning or source of the space from which the representation derives" (Branigan 1984, 57). In other words, according to Branigan, in subjective representation the audience is 'put in the position' of the character, who shares his or her way of seeing with the viewers. Although this approach is undoubtedly useful in the analysis of characters and their subjective perspectives expressed in the cinematic 'language', it seems to disregard the potential of films to make the viewer look at the narrative and the problems presented in it from a certain broader perspective – influenced by that of the adaptor – and to encourage the audience to assume a particular attitude towards the story. This potential of cinematic works, however, may be to a large extent embraced by the understanding of the point of view as attitude.

Since the 21st-century adaptations of older works more and more frequently engage in a 'dialogue' with the source texts and the reality they present rather than simply recast them into the form of another medium, it appears reasonable that the study of these 'new' narratives should try to identify the adaptations' specific attitudes towards their 'interlocutors'. This could result in a better understanding of the goals that the new versions seem to aim to achieve – the goals which, due to the temporal and cultural distance dividing the works, might differ from the messages conveyed in the source texts. As the following analysis will attempt to show, the adopting of the broader definition of the point of view, encompassing the notion of point of view as attitude, may provide valuable insights into the ways contemporary cinematic adaptations often change the perspective from which the 'original' story is presented and provide a commentary on certain social and political phenomena depicted in the narrative. Taking E. M. Forster's *Howards End* and its 2017 television series adaptation as an example, the study will examine the means by which the creators of the new version seem to extend the novelistic point of view to embrace a contemporary perspective on the English society

and its past. Arguably, by analysing the revisions introduced in the series in such areas as the dialogues, visual and aural representation as well as casting choices, one may infer the adaptors' attitude to some aspects of the world presented in the novel and to the socio-political problems significantly valid today. This implied authorial attitude, in turn, will very likely influence or even induce the viewer's particular disposition towards these issues.

The discussion of the adaptation, however, will be preceded by a more detailed examination of the notion of point of view as attitude and the ways through which it can be conveyed in a cinematic work.

The Point of View as Attitude

The point of view as attitude depends on the relation between the audience and the narrative and may be defined as the "viewer's disposition toward narrative and character" (Branigan 1984, 7), to a large extent determined by "the beliefs and moral values of 'stand-ins' for the viewer as well as the attitudes of those 'speaking to' the viewer" (Branigan 1984, 8). Therefore, the "viewer's attitude becomes a composite of various hypothetical observers, characters, narrators, implied narrators, and the author" (Branigan 1984, 8). It seems that according to this approach, the work contains the expressions of certain attitudes to its represented objects and invites the viewers to form their own disposition on the basis of the attitudes conveyed by the text. These can include, for instance, the views expressed by the fictional characters or in-text narrators or the attitude communicated through the work as a whole: its subject matter and the manner of representation, which together, in some sense, 'create' the disposition the audience is encouraged to take. As Branigan states, the overarching attitude signalled in the narrative might be the attitude of the author (1984, 8). Such authorial subjectivity can take the form of extreme subjectivity, distinguishable in highly stylized, 'personal' works, or, in a more subtle version, may be limited to "the implied commentary or 'tone' of a work" (Branigan 1984, 8). A similar concept of point of view was proposed by Seymour Chatman (1990) in reference to the narrator's manner of representing the story. Distinguishing between various types of point of view 'belonging to' different narrative agents, he introduced the term 'slant' to name the perspective of the narrator, which is essentially comprised of "attitudes and other mental nuances appropriate to the report function of discourse" (Chatman 1990, 143). Slant refers to "the psychological, sociological, and ideological ramifications of the narrator's attitudes", which can be explicitly manifested or conveyed implicitly (Chatman 1990, 143). While Chatman apparently uses the term 'slant' in reference to narratorial rather than authorial attitudes, such a conceptualization of the point of view seems particularly relevant for the discussion of adaptations and the attitudes of their authors implied in the texts. Although nowadays the discussion of 'authorial' intentions or attitudes is probably not very popular among scholars and might be considered an invalid type of criticism, in the case of adaptations it does seem necessary to examine the signs of the adaptors' 'interference' visible in the 'new' narratives. Such stance is supported by the arguments of Booth, who, when discussing the distinction between the apparently objective, impersonal *showing* and the subjective, authorial *telling* mode of narration in fiction, argues that in fact "the author's judgement is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look

for it" (Booth 1983, 20). He claims that regardless of the manner in which a narrative is written and of how many "disguises" the author chooses to adopt, "he can never … disappear", as the narrative always conveys the 'voice' of its author, even through the "very choice of what he tells" (Booth 1983, 20). Booth's discussion concentrates on literary fiction, but his statements seem equally true in reference to films and television series, which – though apparently constituting the epitome of the showing mode of narration – are just as much narratives perceived as constructed and presented by some 'author' or 'authors' as works of literature.

The adoption of the broader understanding of the subjective point of view, not only as the character 'perceptual subjectivity', but also as the expression of a certain attitude, seems very productive in the analysis of many contemporary cinematic adaptations of literary works, as it could provide valuable insights into the ways the new versions of familiar texts change the message conveyed in the stories. The author's 'voice' appears particularly noticeable in the new versions of 'classic' works, as the adaptors frequently look at certain elements of the older story from a different perspective than the writer of the source text and, as a result, modify the narrative according to their own vision and interpretation (McFarlane 1996, 10–11). Since the adaptor is also one of the "emissaries of a culture" (Bryant 2005, 100) in which the new version is created, the point of view expressed in the cinematic work is not only an attitude of a single person, but usually encompasses the values and opinions of larger communities living in a particular place at a particular time (McFarlane 1996, 21).

A good way to discern the specific perspective from which the story is presented in the adaptation is to examine the changes introduced in it, since, as John Bryant claims, "revision always reveals an intention to change meaning" and "critical and cultural meanings can be derived from the distance and direction charted by the end points of the intended revision" (Bryant 2005, 96). Thus, by analysing the areas of revision, one may identify the adaptors' point of view implied in the narrative, which often constitutes a reflection of the way their culture perceives certain phenomena.

One of the cinematic works that demonstrate the significance of the modifications for establishing the overarching point of view is the 2017 television mini-series adaptation of E. M. Forster's 1910 novel *Howards End.* The series contains a number of revisions that can be claimed to extend the point of view from which the story is observed to include a contemporary outlook on the problems of British imperialism and colonialism. The remaining part of the paper will argue that the broader, modern perspective on these issues becomes visible in the adaptation in the modifications of such narrative aspects as: dialogue, elements of setting, music and casting decisions, which will in turn be examined in the following sections, beginning with the analysis of the dialogues.

Colonialism 'Pronounced'

Forster's *Howards End* can be described as a "condition of England" novel, which includes "a sustained metaphor in which the topography of landscape, gardens and houses, as well as family relationships and interpersonal dynamics signify the state of the nation at a time of crisis and change" (Morden 2016). Characteristically for the tradition, it seems deeply rooted in the historical moment of its composition, responding "to the social context of … [its] age" (N. Page 1987, 74) and reacting to its central problems (M.

Page 1993, 71). The novel explores the social and class divisions at the turn of the century through the portrayal of three families: 'the intellectual and idealistic Schlegels, the wealthy Wilcoxes from the world of business and the working-class Basts' (Andreeva 2017). As Morden writes, the beginning of the 20th century was a crucial time in England, marked by social tensions, the disintegration of traditional values and the approach of 'modern' culture (2016). The 2017 adaptation imitates the novel in its depiction of such issues as the rapidly growing pace of life, the gap between "the urban working classes" and "those privileged to enjoy economic prosperity" (Morden 2016) as well as the divide between the practical people of business and intellectuals sensitive to human problems. The writer of the screenplay, Kenneth Lonergan says in one of the interviews on his adaptation of *Howards End* that nothing "unnatural to the novel" was added in the series, him having no intention to treat Forster's narrative "as a jumping-off point to do [his] own thing" (Kilkenny 2018). Although the series indeed does not diverge from the book in any dramatic way, following the plot and problematics of its source rather closely, it nevertheless incorporates some elements that are absent from Forster's narrative and highlights a few issues which are given less space in the literary text. One such revision is a stronger emphasis put on the problem of colonialism.

John Beer notes in his foreword to Mohammad Shaheen's *E. M. Forster and the Politics of Imperialism* that Forster is occasionally criticized for the lack of direct disapproval of British imperialism in his oeuvre (2004, x). Although the writer's non-fictional texts present his stance clearly as anti-imperialist, his novels manifest a certain ambiguity in this respect (Shaheen 2004, 4). As Shaheen observes, "Forster seems to believe that once politics enter the realm of fiction they should no longer be as explicit or straightforward as in his non-fiction" (Shaheen 2004, 4–5). The portrayal of the Empire and colonialism in *Howards End* can indeed be claimed to follow this view. Throughout the novel, the issues are usually stated as simple facts, with the words: 'Empire', 'imperialism', 'the Colonies', 'Nigeria' or 'Africa' mostly adding to the representation of the Wilcoxes as prosperous entrepreneurs doing business in foreign countries. The novelistic portrayal of the phenomena appears quite similar to the way Margaret – the major protagonist and centre of consciousness (Trilling 2012, 367) – perceives them – seldom clearly and critically, as the description of her state during the visit to Mr Wilcox's workplace might show: "The following morning . . . she presented herself at the offices of the Imperial and West African Rubber Company. She was glad to go there, for Henry had implied his business rather than described it, and the formlessness and vagueness that one associates with Africa itself had hitherto brooded over the main sources of his wealth" (Forster 2012, 204). Just like Henry Wilcox, the narrator of *Howards End* usually only hints at the actual practices of the colonizers, without any deeper analysis of either the practical characteristics or the ethical aspects of the 'business' abroad. The references to colonial proceedings in the novel are rarely accompanied by explicit unfavourable commentary. Most passages that concern the Empire provide the criticism in a subtle manner, largely operating by tone and elements of description suggesting certain problems. The critique – if intended – is to a great degree left for the reader to infer on his or her own by reading between the lines and attributing the ironic tone and subversive intentions to the apparently simple, straightforward statements.

Lonergan's adaptation, in contrast, seems more direct in voicing some of the problems related to imperialism, most prominently in the dialogues. The British Empire

and the colonies as the source of income for the English are subjects raised in a few conversations among the members of the Schlegel family, who – just like in the novel – appear to “constitute the point of consciousness” (Trilling 2012, 367) of the narrative. The series contains, for instance, the following significant dialogue:

> [Margaret] ‘I like Mr Wilcox. He’s taking up his work, rubber. It’s a big business . . .’
> [Tibby] ‘Yes. It is the business of killing black Africans in the Congo.’ . . .
> [Margaret] ‘I am sure Mr Wilcox is not a murderer.’
> [Tibby] ‘How do you think they get the rubber out of the trees, hm? They get great gangs of natives out of the villages and put them into camps and set them about pulling the rubber out of the trees, boiling it in great vats and then they shoot them if they try to run away.’
> [Margaret] ‘Didn’t you tell me he runs the Imperial Rubber Company of West Africa or some such company, Helen? That’s not in the Congo.’
> [Helen] ‘I really don’t remember. Certainly he’s murdering someone.’
> [Tibby] ‘It is not funny, you know.’ . . .
> [Margaret] ‘. . . Mr Wilcox actually gave me his wife’s silver vinaigrette.’...
> [Tibby] ‘I suppose the silver doesn’t come from an African silver mine.’
> [Helen] ‘I’m sure somebody died mining it.’ (MacDonald 2017)

As the fragment above shows, dialogues such as this openly discuss the English as profiting from the exploitation of the natives in the colonies. They also portray the varying attitudes towards the issue. Tibby Schlegel, for example, is aware of the injustice and cruelty, and strongly criticises the Wilcoxes. Margaret, on the other hand, though conscious that such practices exist, doubts that they concern Mr Wilcox and attempts to exculpate her friend from blame. Helen, in turn, seems to assume a somewhat light-hearted attitude to the conversation between her siblings, apparently acknowledging that the exploitation in the colonies takes place but accepting it as a fact and even talking about it in a slightly joking manner. In Forster’s narrative, in contrast, these issues rarely receive so much textual space and are never discussed in such a straightforward, strong language. In the novel, the conversation concerning the vinaigrette limits the portrayal of imperial issues to the short passage describing Mr Wilcox’s company in quite general terms: “I [Margaret] like Mr Wilcox. He is taking up his work – rubber – it is a big business. I gather he is launching out rather. Charles is in it, too” (Forster 2012, 110). As can be seen, the fragment does not provide any commentary on colonial practices, whether in the form of directly expressed opinions or specific information about the exploitation of the natives – the elements added in the adaptation. On the contrary, it appears to focus on Mr Wilcox as a successful entrepreneur rather than devote particular attention to the more general issue of colonial economic expansion.

In another scene, in episode 3 of the series, we can see Aunt Juley, the elderly relative of the Schlegels, whose behaviour on learning that she has shares in imperial companies could be read as the illustration of ‘convenient ignorance and stagnation’, as the following dialogue might show:

> [Tibby] ‘Mr Wilcox is in rubber. African rubber.’ . . .

[Aunt Juley] ‘I don’t think I should feel comfortable owning shares in rubber. One feels so badly for the natives.’
[Helen] ‘But you have got shares in rubber, Aunt Juley. We all have.’
[Aunt Juley] ‘Do we? Well, I hadn’t the smallest notion.’
[Helen] ‘You can write to your broker if you want to sell them.’
[Aunt Juley] ‘I, I don’t know.’ (MacDonald 2017)

In contrast to the state of affairs in the novel, where Aunt Juley is strongly set against the investments in “Foreign Things, which always smash” (Forster 2012, 12) and has shares only in “Home Rails” (Forster 2012, 12), the above conversation reveals that in the television series the lady actually owns shares in companies operating abroad. Moreover, the reasons for her opposition disclosed in the two works seem to be based on dissimilar grounds. In the novel, Mrs Munt’s insistence on keeping her money in “the old safe investments” (Forster 2012, 12) and unwillingness to put it “into Foreign Things” (Forster 2012, 12) is dictated simply by her apparent preference for the ‘English’ and the familiar as well as her unsubstantiated fear of financial loss abroad. In the adaptation, on the other hand, Aunt Juley’s disapproval of foreign investments is motivated not by the possibility of failure, but by the immoral character of the proceedings of rubber companies. Yet, though apparently disturbed on hearing that she in fact participates in the colonial practices, Aunt Juley seems hesitant to change the place where her money is allocated and very soon forgets about the issue.

Taking Mrs Munt as a ‘model’, the scene may be argued to reflect the more general lack of awareness or honest acknowledgement of the true nature of the sources of much of the English wealth in the past centuries. The repetition of the subject raised in the previous dialogue between the siblings seems to emphasise the largely straightforward, critical approach of the series to the problems of British colonialism and imperialism. In addition, as the conversations indicate, the critique of the Empire in the adaptation appears to be motivated by the inherent injustice and cruelty of exploitation of the native inhabitants of the colonies rather than by the fear of cosmopolitanism connected with the expanding Empire and the resultant “cultural greyness” and “modern life ‘melted down all over the world’” (Trilling 2012, 381) that the novel seems to emphasise. The portrayal of the beliefs of the Schlegels’ father (Forster 2012, 27–29) shows that imperialism is criticised in Forster’s narrative primarily for its materialist, practical ‘values’, which kill imagination and damage culture and the personal, thus failing to “rekindle the life within” (Forster 2012, 29). In contrast, what the series foregrounds is the relationship of England to the colonized lands and the unfair treatment of their people. The apparent focus of the novel on the influence of the Empire on the society and culture of the “Mother country” becomes shifted to the destructive impact of the imperial powers on the colonies. In addition, as the section concerning the casting decisions will attempt to show, the adaptation, in fact, may be said to embrace and promote rather than criticise the multicultural character of the contemporary English society caused, among other factors, by Britain’s imperial past.

As the analysis of the dialogues from the series and their comparison to the novel’s treatment colonialism might show, Lonergan’s adaptation of *Howards End* approaches the issues related to the British Empire more openly than the source text. All of the negative comments related to imperialism can be seen as a critique more ‘pronounced’ than Forster’s subtle, at times equivocal, implied criticism. Though not necessarily more

powerful in terms of the effect on the modern audience than the novel's portrayal, the representation of colonialism in the series seems to a large extent in agreement with what the issue is usually perceived to have been like – overtly unjust and destructive. The attitude to colonialism expressed in the dialogues of Lonergan's adaptation appears quite similar to that conveyed in the words of Joseph McQuade, who emphatically states that colonialism was "a humanitarian disaster", which "[i]n the overwhelming majority of cases . . . inflicted grave political, psychological and economic harms on the colonized" (McQuade 2017).

Colonialism Illustrated

The series also draws the viewer's attention to the issue of colonialism by means of visual representation. This may be noticed in the scene of Margaret's visit to the offices of Mr Wilcox's Imperial Rubber Company of West Africa. The shots seem to have been purposefully constructed in such a way as to draw the viewer's attention to the maps of the continent where the company operates, which become a meaningful background for Margaret. The camera does not focus specifically on the woman, but lingers for quite a long time in such a 'position' that the audience is able to observe and examine the maps visible on the wall. In the sequence, Margeret in fact becomes an 'element' of the wider picture of the maps rather than the main figure in the scenes. One could argue that this shot composition reflects a certain outlook on the relationship of her country to its colonies. While apparently standing in the foreground, England is actually only a component of the larger system, strongly dependent on the countries it has colonized, which constitute a crucial source of its wealth. What may support such interpretation of the composition is the gold color of Africa's outline that could be seen as a pronounced allusion to the profits gained from the exploitation of the land, serving also as a visual equivalent of Forster's description: "though the map over the fireplace did depict a helping of West Africa it was a very ordinary map. Another map hung opposite, on which the whole continent appeared, looking like a whale marked out for blubber" (Forster 2012, 204). The use of the color gold might be similarly meaningful for the viewer but more easily comprehensible than the complex symbol of the whale. Whereas Forster's elaborate description of the map succeeds in merging the view of the profits drawn from the continent by the English and Africa's misery resulting from the exploitation in a very sophisticated manner – the "blubber" for which the whale is marked out (by the colonizers) signifying both 'fat' and 'sob' – the gold of the maps in the adaptation can be seen as less complex, yet equally ironic. Serving as a 'superficial' decoration in the imperial company's offices, it signals that the wealth associated with the color, though attributed to Africa, actually belongs to its colonizer. In the context of the previous conversations, the viewers may conclude that the prolonged shots of the maps serve as a visual complement of the dialogues that are supposed to draw their attention to imperialism. The time provided for the contemplation of the maps allows the audience to observe the specificities of the representations of the continent: their size, color and function in the series and meditate on the company's practices as well as England's relation to the colonies, possibly assuming a critical attitude towards these proceedings.

Visual representation, however, is not the only method employed in MacDonald's series to illustrate the engagement of the English in colonial expansion. The specific

classical music, too, seems to serve as a commentary on the questionable foreign policies. The above-mentioned conversation between Helen, Tibby and Aunt Juley concerning "shares in rubber" (MacDonald 2017) ends with the following exchange:

> [Tibby] 'I suppose we shall have to have Caruso.'
> [Helen] 'Oh, Tibby, can't we have something a bit more jolly?' (MacDonald 2017)

Despite Helen's opposition, Tibby starts to play the recording of Paolo Tosti's "Luna d'estate" performed by Enrico Caruso. The reference to Caruso in this context does not seem accidental. For one thing, Caruso is never mentioned in the novel, so the insertion of his music into the series must have been a purposeful decision on the part of the adaptors. Moreover, the specific phrasing Tibby uses to inform Helen they are going to listen to Caruso, implying necessity, suggests that 'the most admired Italian operatic tenor of the early 20th century' ("Enrico Caruso" 2006) is in some way related to the topic of the preceding dialogue. The viewer familiar with Werner Herzog's film *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), which discusses the colonization of South America, can immediately make a link between the movie and this particular scene in *Howards End.* The protagonist of *Fitzcarraldo* is "an opera-obsessed rubber baron who paddles for thousands of kilometres down the Amazon from Iquitos in Peru to Manaus, to watch a performance by the celebrated tenor Enrico Caruso" (Ramm 2017). The concert referred to in the film may be based on real events, since Manaus is indeed home to a well-known opera house, the Teatro Amazonas, the first performance at which "featured Caruso in Ponchielli's opera La Gioconda" (Ramm 2017). Benjamin Ramm states that the Teatro Amazonas, inaugurated in December 1896, is a "[t]estament to the wealth of Manaus at the height of its rubber boom" (Ramm 2017), its construction constituting "a curious attempt to replicate European cultural taste in the heart of the tropical rainforest" (Ramm 2017). Whether through the intertextual connection with herzog's film or by direct association with historical events, the adaptation of *Howards End* can be seen as not only indicating the similarity between Mr Wilcox and the rubber barons of South America, but also expanding the work's commentary on English imperialism in more general terms. The creators of the adaptation seem to point to the fact that colonization concerned not only Africa and India mentioned in Forster's novel, but also lands in other parts of the world. Furthermore, the reference to Caruso can remind the audience that the imperial policies did not affect the colonized countries solely in economical terms, but that they often included elements of cultural imposition or, in Ramm's terms, the replication of "European cultural taste" (Ramm 2017) in nations considered 'primitive'. What the allusion also appears to highlight is a significant source of money – the exploitation of foreign lands and peoples – that, at least in part, allowed the English, both at home and abroad, to produce and enjoy works of culture. Therefore, the use of Caruso's singing in this scene makes manifest the complexity of the characters' situation represented in the narrative. While music is one of the main 'attributes' of the artistic, liberal-minded Schlegels, here it points to the unjust and cruel colonial practices and the English culture's dependence on them. In a similarly ambiguous way, such a grand event as the concert of Caruso in Manaus can be perceived as a symbol of the Empire's power, welfare and cultural development on the one hand, but also its greed and arrogance on the other.

The 2017 version of *Howards End* uses certain visual and musical elements of the cinematic construction to provide implicit commentary on the imperial policy of England. Through both common associations – such as the gold color of the maps – and more elaborate intertextual and historical links – as in the case of Caruso's performance – the adaptation enables the audience to observe and consider the complex position of the characters and their country in relation to the colonized lands. These representation components complement and strengthen the more explicitly pronounced critical opinions about the policies of the British Empire, but also convey significant, indirectly evaluative messages of their own, thus contributing to the broadening of the narrative point of view understood as attitude.

Multiculturalism Embodied

Another essential revision in the adaptation – one that is closely connected with colonial issues – concerns the including in the cast of the actors of non-English origin. In contrast to the 1992 film version of *Howards End,* MacDonald's series focuses to a significant extent on the 'international' aspects of Forster's story, even adding a few such elements of its own. While the older Merchant-Ivory production – with its all-white cast, stress on history and family heritage, and mere hints at the colonial problems – appears to put greater emphasis on the 'traditional' England and Englishness, the 2017 adaptation highlights the modern, post-imperial and post-colonial image of the country.

Apart from mentioning "two Anglo-Indian ladies" (Forster 2012, 218) being the guests at Evie's wedding, Forster makes no remarks about the ethnicity of the characters – most probably due to the relative racial and cultural homogeneity of the English society at the time when the novel was written (Göhren 2013). The series, on the other hand, introduces and emphasises the topic of multiculturalism in England. The adaptation depicts the society as varied not only in terms of class, but also with regard to race and national origin, highlighting the diversity which in fact gained greater scope and importance only after World War II (Göhren 2013). The series includes a number of shots where non-English characters become foregrounded, both as vital figures in the scenes and as background characters. This can be observed, for instance, when the action takes place in the house of the Schlegels, where a Black girl is a servant, an Indian doctor visits the ill Tibby and Indian and Black ladies are guests at a lunch. Even when such figures appear in the background – for example the two female passers-by wearing oriental kimonos whom Tibby and Aunt Juley encounter on the way home from the concert – they are usually positioned towards the centre of the screen. As a consequence, these characters frequently catch the attention of the audience and signal that the English society actually includes people from various parts of the world, especially from the British colonies, as their appearance suggests. Thus, the picture of the nation that the source narrative provides has been modified in the adaptation according to the image of contemporary, multicultural Britain. The characters in MacDonald's version appear to reflect the changes that took place in England between the novel's publication and the production of the adaptation. The casting decisions may be argued to point to the degraded status of the inhabitants of the colonies and immigrants in the past, which becomes visible in the figures of the servant of the Schlegels, Annie or Leonard Bast's wife, Jacky. Both are secondary, lower-class characters of foreign origin, whose situation

in life does not grant them financial independence. Interestingly, the two women are the only non-English characters who appear on the screen more than once. Supported by the overall representation of the positions of men and women in the series and a few mentions of suffrage, this fact may be read as subtly indicating not only ethnic but also gender inequality belonging to England's past. Such interpretation seems reasonable especially when one takes into account the history of the suffragette movement in Britain, which was operating intensively around the time of the novel's publication (Murray 2011; "Women's Suffrage Timeline" 2018). It is possible that the creators of the series wanted to suggest a parallel between the inferior position of the colonial immigrants and that of women when depicting the story set before the important 20th-century developments in anti-discrimination policies, concerning both race ("History of Civil Rights in the UK" 2021; "A History of Human Rights in Britain" 2018) and gender (Murray 2011; "A History of Human Rights in Britain" 2018; "Women's Suffrage Timeline" 2018).

At the same time, the racial diversity among the actors seems to promote the equality and peaceful coexistence of people of different national backgrounds, as exemplified by the guests at the lunch organised by Margaret in honour of Mrs Wilcox. In this scene, multiculturalism is presented not as a phenomenon to be feared, as Aunt Juley's exaggerated wonder at the various people that the Schlegel sisters invite to Wickham Place ironically suggests. The series may be claimed to add people of different races to the group of "unshaven musicians, an actress even, German cousins . . . , acquaintances picked up at continental hotels" (Forster 2012, 13) whom Mrs Munt dreads, but who are always welcome guests for the Schlegels.

Thus, the 2017 *Howards End* joins other recent screen adaptations of classic novels, such as *Wuthering Heights* (2011), *Vanity Fair* (2018) or *Sanditon* (2019) in giving space to and emphasising the presence of people of various ethnic backgrounds in both English society and its texts. The casting decisions in such productions, possibly related to the current "campaign to improve the employment position of black, Asian, and minority ethnic people in the film and 53eleviseion industry" (Geraghty 2020, 169), may have considerable influence on the interpretation of the narratives. *Howards End* (2017) could be classified as one of the works that do not follow the idea of 'color-blind' casting which suggests that the ethnicity of an actor does not matter (Geraghty 2020, 169). On the contrary, the series seems to respond to the call for "a wider range of experiences to be put on screen so that stories of those from different ethnic backgrounds can be told and a wider range of voices heard in British productions" (Geraghty 2020, 169). The casting choices in *Howards End* can be argued not only to constitute an instance of 'cultural revision' of an older narrative in the contemporary multicultural environment, but also illustrate the problems resulting from colonialism and its inherent inequality – the phenomena that form a difficult, yet significant part of English history. The highlighting of those issues can in itself be read as a sign of an 'extended point of view' and an expression of a disapproving attitude that the adaptors and their contemporaries assume towards the harmful outcomes of imperialism, including unfair divisions and unjust treatment of human beings.

Conclusion: The Extended Point of View in the Adaptation

The adopting of the wider definition of the point of view, encompassing the notion of point of view as an attitude expressed in the narrative, could be beneficial in the study of many adaptations of literary texts. It may be particularly productive in the analysis of new cinematic works that introduce more or less significant revisions, which can be read as the signs of the film-maker's own interpretation of the story. John Bryant writes that "revision sites . . . are hot spots of cultural contestation, and the revision narratives we construct in speculating about what happens at these sites clarify and make transparent the dynamics by which writers and readers reproduce or resist the ideology of their culture" (Bryant 2010, 1044–45). Taking into account the above statement as well as the fact that the 'layer' of authorial interpretation and 'interference' at least partly coincides with the understanding of the point of view as attitude, the analysis of modifications introduced in the adaptation might help to establish the point of view which the adaptor apparently assumes when looking at the narrative and the world it presents. The overarching point of view established in this way may be of particular interest for the audience, since – whether purposefully or inadvertently – it can have a strong impact on the viewer's reception of the story and, in addition, it can tell a lot about the culture in which the work was created and its outlook on certain issues.

The revisions discernible in the 2017 version of *Howards End* might be seen as signs of a broader, contemporary point of view from which the story is presented. They seem to convey the reaction of the adaptors and their culture to the world depicted in the narrative – Britain at the time of its imperial expansion. This new point of view to some degree resists the ideology of the society portrayed in Forster's novel, or at least those of its opinions and practices that are considered incorrect today. Looking from the perspective of the 21st century, the creators of the series appear to acknowledge the country's past as well as present and, at times implicitly, express a critical attitude towards its policies. By bringing the subject of England's imperial past to the foreground by means of straightforward dialogue, emphasised visual portrayal and evocative music, the adaptation may be argued to demonstrate a negative attitude towards imperialism, most likely shared by the majority of viewers. The decision to extend the picture of the English society to include people of various ethnicities, in turn, can be read as both the reflection of the post-colonial, multicultural 21st-century Britain and an expression of the attitude of respect and belief in the equality of all its citizens. The latter might be observed quite clearly in the scene of lunch organised by Margaret, during which people of various ethnic origins sit together at the same table, engaged in a friendly discussion. In this context, Margaret's appeal: "Only connect" (Forster 2012, 195), following contemporary social and political attitudes, seems to refer to establishing mutual understanding not only between the members of different classes, but also between people of various cultural backgrounds and ethnicities, who in the end form one society.

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