"A Room with a view" is Forster's first attempt at writing a novel. The first draft of the novel written in October, 1901 was entitled "Lucy". It was the result of Forster's experience in Florence where he had stayed with his mother in a pension. Then in December 1903 he wrote the second draft "New Lucy" in which he contrasts the English and the Italian attitudes towards life. Lucy and George elope on bicycles and George dies. But Forster laid it aside to write Where Angels Fear to Tread and The Longest Journey. In June 1907 he returned to "New Lucy" and rewrote it into A Room With a View. It has been claimed as the sunniest novel of the author, and Forster himself calls it his 'nicest book' (1)

Forster's Italian novels are studies of English middle-class stupidity and hypocrisy. The author makes fun of the English rigid conventions and admires the natural and instinctual life of the Italians. The journey to Italy exposes the conventional English people and shocks them into self-realisation. J.S. Martin emphasises the salutary effect of the travels on the English People:

All of these travellers visit places that yield them a new order of experience—an experience, that is to say, that lies beyond their normal range of activity and expectation. Their fundamental problem is to assimilate the new and accommodate it to their accustomed world. 2.
The story begins with Lucy Honeychurch and Miss Bartlett arriving at a pension in Florence. Lucy is dissatisfied because they have not been allotted rooms having a "VIEW". Forster's mother Lily also was very keen on having rooms having an Arno View. (Forster's letter to Dent. October 30, 1901) Mr. Emerson an old Englishman, and his son George offer their rooms to Lucy and Bartlett. Miss Bartlett is shocked because she does not know them. The kind offer from unknown Emersons is termed as 'brutal' by her, a woman of conventions. Mr. Beebe a clergyman who is to take over his charge of the parish of summer street, where the Honeychurches live, is consulted and the offer is accepted. But Miss Bartlett, makes sure that Lucy does not get the room of the young George for the fear foreseen. She tells Lucy "I am a woman of the world, in my small way, and I know where things lead to." (3)

Lionel Trilling calls her "... an artist in precension" She is prepared to take the room even if it had no "VIEW". The characters in the novel are judged in view of their responses to the "VIEWS". A person possessing a "view" is able to transcend the narrow social conventions and propriety and is able to relate the finite and the infinite.
In the first part of the two incidents take place which are crucial for Lucy. During a visit to Piazza Signoria, Lucy sees two Italians quarrelling. One of them is stabbed and he looks to Lucy before falling on the ground. Blood from his mouth is splashed on the photograph bought by Lucy. The 'Live' blood stains her 'dead' art-prints and makes her aware of the reality of life. The spilling of blood appears to be connected with the initiation into reality for Forster. Worters in "Other Kingdom" cuts his hand and returns to reality, Kuno gets the 'vision of reality when his 'Blood suprts over his mother's hands'. The incident throws her into the arms of George with the river Arno roaring "some imexpected melody to her ears" (RV p. 51), She "had crossed some spiritual boundary". It is significant that whenever Lucy comes across a significant experience, the roar of the river is indicated by Forster. This is one of the "rhythms" that the author speaks of in *Aspects of the Novel*. According to Forster rhythm's function is to "stitch" the book "internally". And help a book 'hang together' by giving it a sense of unity of construction:

There are times when it means nothing and is forgotten, and this seems to me the function of rhythm in fiction, not to be there all the time like a pattern, but by its lovely waxing and waning to fill us with surprise and freshness and hope. 

(4)
The Arno river, or the use of the word 'VIEW', recurs at intervals to suggest the state of mind of different characters at different times. Flaubert for example uses the relentless march of the seasons and the blind beggar's song about summer and love in *Madam Bovary* to show us the ebb and flow of feelings.

The second incident is the expedition to Fiesole. As in *The story of a Panic*, the characters go on an expedition. Expedition in Forster's novel is as important as picnics in Jane Austen's books. The action is set within a framework of classical mythology. The young Italian coachman is described as Phaeton and his girl as Persephone. Mr. Edgar, who pretends to love the open air and people is upset when the coachman puts his hand round his beloved. They are parted at his objection. But Emerson protests and declares that "... the lovers must on no account be separated." He pats them on the back "to signify his approval" (*RV* p. 69)

Quoting Lorenzo de' Medici he says "Don't go fighting against the spring" (*RV* p. 70)

The classical allusions to the young lovers as Phaeton the driver of the sun chariot, and Persephone, the embodiment of returning spring, might appear to be a whimsy on the part of Forster. But they are assimilated in the serio-comic structure of the book. Referring to the use of this
symbolism of Phaeton and Persephone, J. B. Beer thinks that the significance of it might be lost on the readers as it is not as obvious as the use of "VIEWS" and "ROOMS":

The symbolism of rooms and views is easy to grasp, for it lies on the surface and can act upon the reader's mind without his even being conscious of it. When the reader comes to the coachman, on the other hand, he would probably pass over Forster's description of him as phaeton as being light-hearted a swift classical reference with strictly local purpose. (6)

At the Fiesole also, Phaeton directs Lucy to George Emerson, thus helping her realise her subconscious desire. Spring season also influences her. The description of 'VIEW' and the 'river' as the background is significant. "The view was forming at last; She could discern the river the golden plain, other hills." (7)

In the most romantic setting of violets running down into rivulets, and streams and cataracts, spots of azure foam, Lucy is kissed by George. The blissful moment is broken by Miss Bartlett's voice, "The silence of life had been broken by Miss Bartlett, who stood brown against the view" (RV p. 75) Brown, black and grey are the colours signifying forces of anti-life, and anti-view.

The coachman, fulfills the message of the dying Italian that Lucy received five days before the expedition. (RV p. 76)
Forster comments: "Pan had been amongst them - not the great god pan, who has been buried these two thousand years, but the little god pan, who presides over social contretemps and unsuccessful picnics." (RV p. 76) Forster, the Jane Austenite, packs a great deal of meaning and significance in the scenes of domestic comedy.

For Lucy it was a symbolic moment offered by George. If she accepts it by returning his love she fulfills her desire and can live in peace. But she rejects the symbolic moment and finds security in the embrace of Bartlett, which "gave Lucy the sensation of a fog" (RV p. 18) But Lucy turns to this "prematurely aged martyr" (RV p. 84) for help, thus turning her back on life and reality. She joins the forces of "anti-Life" (Beer, p. 63) Forster's comments leave no one in doubt about Bartlett, "She had worked like a great artist . . . . She had been meaningless" (RV p. 86) Lucy, who still is not willing to accept the truth of her feelings for George, is muddled. "It isn't true. I can't all be true. I want not to be muddled . . . ." (RV p. 87).

Mr. Emerson asks Lucy not to get muddled and not to pretend:

You are inclined to get muddled, if I may judge from last night. Let yourself go. Pull out from the depths those thoughts that you do not understand, and spread them out in the sunlight and know the meaning of them. (8)
But Lucy, a victim of "English Puritanism", refuses to listen to the promptings of her heart and rejects Georg and flees Italy.

The action of the second part takes place in England. The first part of the book was written in 1901 followed by Where Angels Fear to Tread and The Longest Journey. After writing these novels, the author returns to A Room with a View after an interval of seven years. The pall of gloom and the psychological study of Lucy's agony in the second part resembles the tragic atmosphere of The Longest Journey.

Lucy suffers because she lies about her true feelings for George's passion. Wilfred Stone writes "The book is about a girl who lies. Lucy Honeychurch lies to others and to herself." (9)

Forster is fascinated by the problem of honesty and being truthful to oneself. In his novels the characters are given an opportunity to be true and honest to their promptings of the subconscious. Leading to their salvation or damnation Lucy, who finds it "too dreadful not to know whether she was thinking right or wrong" (RV p. 50), is in need of guardians to help her understand her dilemma. She has Miss Charlotte Bartlett, the medieval Lady, the woman of "ROOMS", and Mr. Emerson, a freethinking humanist, a man of "VIEWS". In the first part her choice is made in favour of Bartlett. The Second part is about her struggle to get
rid of her self-deceit and lies in order to accept George, the child of sunlight and passion.

The Plot of the book concerns itself with Lucy's gradual escape from her Sawstonian confinement based on lies into Emersonian freedom and truth. Forster introduces some new characters who influence Lucy's choice. They are Cecil Vyse, Mrs. Honeychurch and Lucy's brother Freddy, a medical student. Like Miss Bartlett Cecil is medieval. He is:

Like a Gothic statue tall and refined.... he remained in the grip of a certain devil whom the modern world knows as self-consciousness, and whom the medieval, with dimmer vision, worshipped as asceticism. A Gothic statue implies fruition.... {10}

According to Forster's division of characters into "round" and "flat", Cecil seems to be flat but becomes "round" in the end. He is a "goat" but shows the capacity to become a "sheep" as the novel comes to the end. Miss Bartlett too is a "flat" one in the first part, but in the end, she acquires some rotundity by surprising George and Lucy through her kind gesture which enables Mr. Emerson to persuade Lucy to accept George.

Throughout the book one comes across the sets of contrasts between the Medieval and the classical, ascetic and pagan, lies, light and darkness, views and rooms. These terms serve as Forsterian rhythms through "repetition and variation" (AN p. 169)
Cecil Vyse lives in London and visits the Honeychirches. He has already proposed himself to Lucy three times but Lucy is yet to make up her mind. Following George Emerson's kiss in Italy, and as a result of her muddle she accepts his proposal.

Cecil Vyse is one of the interesting characters in Forster's novels. Outworldly a nice and well-mannered fellow, he lacks the vital quality of humaneness and affection for others. Like Mr. Bons in Forster's short story, "The celestial Omnibus" Philip Heseldon in Where Angels Fear to Tread, Cecil makes the wrong use of culture and art. He tries to show off his acquisition of culture and looks down the simple but affectionate people of Summer street. During one of Forster's visits to Italy, he had carried an introduction from his friend Dent to an art scholar R.H. Cust. He used to keep open his house on every Sunday for people to come and admire his art-collection. Forster drew upon his futile aestheticism to portray Cecil Vyse. Who uses culture to bolster his superiority. (E.M. Forster: A Life, p. 85 & p. 173)

Freddy is not happy and relaxed in his company because "Cecil made one talk in his own way instead of getting one talk in one's own way" (RV p. 91)

Misanthropy, according to Cecil, was a trait of every thoughtful and refined person (RV p. 100). He dislikes the country gentleman and the country Labour and prefers to live in foggy London. He has the bookish knowledge of
A ROOM WITH A VIEW is a tightly controlled book and has an "aesthetically compact" plot Forster talks about in Aspects of the Novel. The use of the symbolism of "VIEWS" is one of the methods for internally stitching the book. Key characters are measured by their ability to respond to kinds of views. The views that Lucy responds to in Florence and from the terrace of Windy corner are vital and natural. Cecil responds to art. He looks upon Lucy as an object of art in his mind against a Leonardo-like background of flower-clad mountains and shadowy rocks. (RV p. 95) Lucy connects George Emerson with the view from Fiesole, but she connects Cecil with a viewless drawing room. Charlotte Bartless, who gives Lucy the "Sensation of a fog" responds to no views at all. Entering her room in the pension she immediately fastens the shutters (RV, p. 18) and when she visits Lucy at windy corner she begs to be given "a room with no view" (RV p. 151).

The characters of the first part of the book gradually converge on the Summer street. Cecil Vyse, who wants to tease and humiliate the Emersons, persuades Mr. Harry to take them as tenants. He had met them earlier in London at the National Gallery and Winced when Mr. Emerson mispronounced the names of the great painters. Mr. Beebe, a clergyman, also finds them hard to understand.
He tells Lucy that "It is so difficult, at least I find it difficult - to understand people speak the truth". (13)

People like Beebe and Edgar and all the "goats" in Forster's fiction have no tolerance for "truth", whereas others, like Mr. Emerson, are apparently in permanent possession of it. They possess the true" VIEWS" and serve as touchstones of reality for others. Their truth is akin to a humanistic religion. Forster seemed to have Samuel Butler in mind when he wrote the novel. Both Butler and Emerson share a love for Italy and music and a loathing of hypocrisy and cant.

George Emerson, because he is simple, straightforward and honest, wins the affection of Mr. Honeychurch and Freddy. Freddy, like George, lives and thinks straight. (RV, p. 205) Freddy, George and Mr. Beebe go swimming in the "Sacred Lake". When Mrs. Honeychurch, Lucy and Cecil come their way, George comes out almost naked to greet her. Lucy is shocked, but Mrs. Honeychurch bows to him. Cecil takes away the Lady to protect them from what he thinks uncivilized behaviour. The bathing episode acts as a baptism into brotherhood for Freddy, George and Mr. Beebe. In the cancelled "Fantasy-chapter" of The Longest Journey, Stephen bathes naked in a river by the Roman Conensing. In Forrest Reid's novel The Garden God, the school boys bathe naked. The bathing
scene in A Room With a View carries connotations of homosexuality and it is natural for Lucy to remain unaffected. Cecil doesn't approve of their behaviour because he lacks passion. His kiss on Lucy's cheek is quite formal and passionless, like the kiss of Henry Wilcox in Howards End. He is Gothic and not Greek in his attitude towards passion. Mr. Beebe knows about it when he tells Freddy after Lucy's betrothal with Cecil, "Mr. Vyse is an ideal bachelor. Oh, he's like me - better detached." (RF p. 91)

George persuade Lucy to break off the engagement with Cecil. "He is for society and cultivated talk. He should know no one intimately, least of a woman." (RF, p. 177)

Georges's denunciation of Cecil is genuine: "That is the man all over - playing tricks on people, on the most sacred from of life... (14)

Lucy is not prepared to accept the truth. "She never gazed inwards" is Forster's comment. Her psychological state is described by the author mingling it with the symbolism of seasons.
She was aware of autumn. Summer was ending and the evening brought her odours of decay, the more pathetic because they were reminiscent of spring... The earth was hastening to re-enter darkness and the shadows of those trees to creep over whidy corner.

When Cecil refuses to play tennis with Freddy and George, Lucy realises his shortcomings. He is self-centred and not helpful and affectionate. "The scales fell from Lucy's eyes" is the cryptic comment of the author. She can see clearly now. But she still suppresses her real feelings for George, though subconsciously Lucy still loves him. At the party at Cecil's house, Lucy plays Schumann. Cecil requests her to play some Beethoven, the music of grandeur and joy. But she refuses to oblige him. The choice of music reflects her inner state. Similarly, Lucy chooses to play Gluck's 'Armide' which is not enjoyed by the audience. Cecil asks her to play "Parisişral". Lucy doesn't oblige him. But when George enters the room, Lucy turns to piano and plays" Parcifal ". Music plays an important role in her life. In this she foreshadows the schlegel sisters of Howards End.

Following her decision to break off her engagement, Lucy decides to go away from England so that she doesn't have to face George and her subconscious feelings. She defeats herself by pretending to George that she loves Cecil, and to Cecil that she loves no one. " The armour
of falsehood "Forster says," hides a man... from his own soul" (RV p. 172) By rejecting his love. She joins the "armies of the benighted, who follow neither the heart nor the brain, and march to their destiny by catchwords." (RV p. 186) Forster adds: "They have sinned against Eros and against Pallan Athene." (16)

"Night received her, as it had received Miss Bartlett thirty years before" adds the author about a girl who deliberately chooses the path of unhappiness. But before leaving summer street and her cozy happy home windy corner, Bartlett most surprisingly, like a "round" character, who has the ability to surprise convincingly, arranges the meeting between Mr. Emerson and the "muddled" Lucy. He asks her to accept his son George and attain happiness. The waters roar in her ears, like the roaring of Arno river. In Florence she had heard Arno... "the river was a lion that morning in strength, voice and colour" (RV p. 53) In a gentle voice he urges her to get rid of her self-created muddle, and Lucy begins to understand her misery. "Yet as she spoke the darkness was withdrawn, veil after veil, and she saw to the bottom of her soul" (RV p. 216)

She realises her mistake and accepts "the holiness of direct desire".

Spring returns to the summer street and into her life. She marries George.
REFERENCES


7. A Room With a View, p. 75

8. ibid, p. 32


10. A Room With a View, p. 93

11. ibid, pp. 113-114


13. A Room With a View, p. 13

14. ibid, p. 177

15. ibid, p. 179

16. ibid, p. 186