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Document A

E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924), London: Penguin, 2005 (5-7)

5 Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. There are no bathing-

10 steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. The streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest. Chandrapore was never large or beautiful, but two

15 hundred years ago it lay on the road between Upper India, then imperial, and the sea, and the fine houses date from that period. The zest for decoration stopped in the eighteenth century, nor was it ever democratic. In the bazaars there is no painting and scarcely any carving. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving. So abased, so monotonous is everything that meets the eye, that when the Ganges comes down it might be expected to wash the excrescence back into the soil. Houses do fall, people are drowned and left rotting, but the general outline of the town persists, swelling here, shrinking there, like some low but indestructible form of life.

20 Inland, the prospect alters. There is an oval maidan, and a long sallow hospital. Houses belonging to Eurasians stand on the high ground by the railway station. Beyond the railway—which runs parallel to the river—the land sinks, then rises again rather steeply. On this second rise is laid out the little Civil Station, and viewed hence Chandrapore appears to be a totally different place. It is a city of gardens. It is no city, but a forest sparsely scattered with

25 huts. It is a tropical pleasance, washed by a noble river. The toddy palms and neem trees and mangoes and peepul that were hidden behind the bazaars now become visible and in their turn hide the bazaars. They rise from the gardens whose ancient tanks nourish them, they burst out of stifling purlieus and unconsidered temples. Seeking light and air, and endowed with more strength

30 than man or his works, they soar above the lower deposit to greet one another with branches and beckoning leaves, and to build a city for the birds. Especially

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after the rains do they screen what passes below, but at all times, even when scorched or leafless, they glorify the city to the English people who inhabit the rise, so that newcomers cannot believe it to be as meagre as it is described, and
35 have to be driven down to acquire disillusionment. As for the Civil Station itself, it provokes no emotion. It charms not, neither does it repel. It is sensibly planned, with a red-brick Club on its brow, and further back a grocer's and a cemetery, and the bungalows are disposed along roads that intersect at right angles. It has nothing hideous in it, and only the view is beautiful; it shares
40 nothing with the city except the overarching sky.

The sky too has its changes, but they are less marked than those of the vegetation and the river. Clouds map it up at times, but it is normally a dome of blending tints, and the main tint blue. By day the blue will pale down into white where it touches the white of the land, after sunset it has a new
45 circumference—orange, melting upwards into tenderest purple. But the core of blue persists, and so it is by night. Then the stars hang like lamps from the immense vault. The distance between the earth and them is as nothing to the distance behind them; and that further distance, though beyond colour, last freed itself from blue.

The sky settles everything—not only climates and seasons, but when the earth shall be beautiful. By herself she can do little—only feeble outbursts of flowers. But when the sky chooses, glory can rain into the Chandrapore bazaars, or a benediction pass from horizon to horizon. The sky can do this because it is so strong and so enormous. Strength comes from the sun, infused
50 in it daily, size from the prostrate earth. No mountains infringe on the curve. League after league the earth lies flat, heaves a little, is flat again. Only in the south, where a group of fists and fingers are thrust up through the soil, is the endless expanse interrupted. These fists and fingers are the Marabar Hills, containing the extraordinary caves.

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Document B

Peter Ackroyd, *Albion – The Origins of the English Imagination* (2002), London: Vintage, 2004 (448-449)

And so the English imagination takes the form of an endless enchanted circle, or shining ring, moving backwards as well as forwards. I return again to Ford Madox Ford—returning being one of the central images of this book—who wrote that ‘my private and particular image of English history in these matters is
5 one of waving lines. I see tendencies rise to the surface of the people. I see them fall again and rise again.’ These ‘lines’ of force or influence connect the present with the past. We draw half our strength and inspiration from the writers of the past. From their example we learn that the history of the English imagination is the history of adaptation and assimilation. Englishness is the principle of
10 diversity itself. In English literature, music and painting, heterogeneity becomes the form and type of art. This condition reflects both a mixed language comprised of many different elements and a mixed culture comprised of many different races. That is why there is also, in the products of the English imagination, a characteristic mixing or blurring of forms; in these pages, I have
15 traced the conflation of biography, or history, and the novel.

The English have in that sense always been a practical and pragmatic race; the history of English philosophy, for example, has been the history of empiricism and of scientific experiment. There are no works of speculative theology, but there are many manuals of religious instruction. This native
20 aptitude has in turn led to disaffection from, or dissatisfaction with, all abstract speculation. The true emphasis rests upon the qualities of individual experience, which are manifest in the English art of portraiture and in the English novel of character. The English imagination is also syncretic and additive—one episode leading to another episode—rather than formal or theoretical.

25 So there are many striking continuities in English culture, ranging from the presence of alliteration in English native poetry for the last two thousand years to the shape and size of the ordinary English house. But the most powerful impulse can be found in what I have called the territorial imperative, by means of which a local area can influence or guide all those who inhabit it. The
30 example of London has often been adduced. But the territorial imperative can also be transposed to include the nation itself. English writers and artists, English composers and folk-singers, have been haunted by this sense of place, in which the echoic simplicities of past use and past tradition sanctify a certain spot of ground. These forces are no doubt to be found in other regions and countries of
35 the earth; but in England the reverence for the past and the affinity with the

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natural landscape join together in a mutual embrace. So we owe much to the ground on which we dwell. It is the landscape and the dreamscape. It encourages a sense of longing and belonging. It is Albion.

Document C
David Hockney, *A Closer Grand Canyon*, oil on 60 canvases, total 81 x 291 in., 1998



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