

Social Class and Stratification in the Edwardian Era as Portrayed in Forster's *A Room With A View*

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Abstract—This study aimed to investigate the representation of class and social stratification in Edwardian England as shown in E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View*, using Peter Saunders' theory of class and social stratification as its analytical framework. The methodology involved a literary analysis of the novel, focusing on character portrayal and social interactions to examine how class divisions were showed and critiqued. The results showed that the novel intricately portrayed the layered nature of social stratification. Furthermore, the working class, represented by Mr. Emerson, was economically and socially marginalized. The middle class, exemplified by the Honeychurch family, navigated the tension between societal expectations and personal aspirations, particularly through Lucy's inner conflict. The upper class was personified in Cecil Vyse, who embodied aristocratic entitlement and exclusivity. These stratifications manifested in social norms such as marriage, functioning to preserve or elevate social status, and in class exclusivity, evident in Cecil's elitism. In addition, class snobbery appeared in patronizing attitudes toward the lower class, framing kindness as condescension rather than equality. Through these representations, Forster critiqued rigid class hierarchies and promoted ideals of authenticity, equality, and personal freedom.

Index Terms—social class, social stratification, Edwardian Era, *A Room with a View*, E.M. Forster

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has long served as an important medium for preserving human experiences, emotions, and cultural values across generations. Its significance lies in shaping individuals and society through a diverse range of genres, namely short stories, poems, novels, plays, and songs, each offering unique insights into the human condition. According to

Arafah (2018, p. 26), literature provides essential knowledge that guides readers and scholars through its varied forms, with each genre reflecting different facets of human life. On a broad scale, literature is believed to support life within the context of social reality and to show what happens in society (Arafah et al., 2024; Arafah et al., 2023). Some literary works are known for the ability to change people's way of thinking through the language used and the contents (Lestari et al., 2025; Jusdalyana et al., 2024). Writers often express their thoughts and perspectives through simple, accessible language to avoid reader confusion, making literature a mirror of both the individual and society (Hasanah et al., 2021).

Sunardi et al. (2018) defined literature as a culturally significant text that encapsulates a society's collective experiences, emotions, and values. In addition to artistic expression, literature offers insights into societal structures and individual struggles, thereby fostering a shared cultural understanding and contributing to intellectual and emotional growth.

E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908) exemplified the function by portraying social class dynamics of Edwardian England, a time marked by both entrenched class divisions and emerging ideas of individualism. The novel explored how rigid social structures shaped personal relationships, behaviors, and expectations. Lucy Honeychurch, the protagonist from a respectable middle-class family, experienced internal conflict as a result of interactions with the Emersons, a socially inferior family, challenging societal norms and personal values. The shifting affections from the aristocratic Cecil Vyse to socially unconventional George Emerson reflect broader tensions between tradition and change.

According to Arafah and Kaharuddin (2019, p. 45), literature can be viewed as both written and oral artistic compositions that express individual creativity and cultural critique. It can also serve as a tool for creating public awareness of recent and past events (Yudith et al., 2023). Moreover, literature can be associated with various elements (Arafah et al., 2024), such as the academic field (Arifuddin et al., 2024), gender equality (Asri et al., 2023), and environmental issues (Manugeran et al., 2023). Wellek and Warren (1956, p. 39) further defined literary theory as the study of literature's principles, categories, and criteria, tools essential for analyzing how social structures were reflected in texts. The interconnectedness between literary works and social life lies in the way writers narrate the surrounding phenomena (Sunyoto et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2025). Since it reflects the human record of life, literature also captures the essence of specific eras and regions (Yudith et al., 2024a; Yudith et al., 2024b).

Regarding social life aspects, literature is inseparable from culture, as there is a close relationship between the two (Arafah et al., 2023; Takwa et al., 2024). In Indonesia, specifically, the diversity in culture, ethnicity, religion, and local language, with several local terms understood only by local communities (Mofu et al., 2024), can be portrayed through literary works (Takwa et al., 2024). Incorporating local terms, wisdom, and social characteristics into literary works helps preserve cultural heritage (Arafah et al., 2025; Arifin et al., 2022). The positive values gained by readers contribute to preparing a generation with strong characters for the future (Takwa et al., 2025), rather than a generation overly dependent on social media (Arafah et al., 2023). It has been noted that most Indonesian social media users spend a significant amount of time surfing the internet (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023a; Arafah et al., 2025). However, from an optimistic perspective (Arafah et al., 2024), technology-based media such as digital platforms can produce positive results when used appropriately (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023). In education, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and online materials has proven beneficial (Kaharuddin et al., 2024). Even literary works and learning materials are currently available as e-books on interactive platforms (Arafah et al., 2025). By integrating cultural aspects through literature in the learning process, students' outcomes may be either positive or negative depending on the level of comprehension (Karamoy et al., 2024; Arnawa & Arafah, 2023). In addition, literature relies greatly on the use of stylistic language to create an aesthetic piece of work (Baa et al., 2023), as well as the use of symbols to convey deeper meanings within texts.

In *A Room with a View*, Italy symbolizes liberation from England's restrictive class codes. A journey of self-discovery leads Lucy to question these constraints and typically reject societal expectations. The relationship with George, a man of lower status, subverts Edwardian class ideals, while Cecil Vyse, with elitist attitudes, embodies the rigid and patronizing upper-class mindset that Forster critiques.

By situating characters within the stratified society of Edwardian England, Forster emphasizes how class boundaries limit personal freedom and foster exclusion, contrasts the decorum-driven interactions of the elite with the emotional honesty of lower-status characters, and highlights the artificiality of social hierarchy. This mirrors literature's broader role as both a reflection and critique of cultural and political forces.

Several previous studies have explored *A Room with a View* from diverse perspectives, each contributing valuable insights into the novel's thematic depth. Kala (2017) examined the novel through the lens of liberal humanism, emphasizing how Forster shifts from a comic narrative to a philosophical type that fostered emotional freedom, authenticity, and personal growth. This study showed the contrast between the repressive English society and the liberating Italian setting but did not engage deeply with issues of social class. O'Hagan (2018) offered a multimodal ethnohistorical analysis of Edwardian book inscriptions, showing how class distinctions shaped cultural practices and identity in early 20th-century Britain, but specifically focused on material culture rather than literature. Marafante (2020) explored the Italian setting and cinematic adaptations of the novel, shedding light on the cultural backdrop and character development but ignored the role of social class in shaping the characters' decisions. Prorokova-Konrad (2020) focused on the symbolic role of nature in the novel, interpreting it as a metaphor for emotional liberation and individualism but

did not address class-related themes. Lastly, Pierini (2023) read the novel through contemporary romance scholarship, exploring changing patterns of courtship and partner selection but did not investigate how social class influenced romantic relationships. Although these studies showed various dimensions of Forster's work, none fully addressed how social class dynamics shaped the characters' behaviors and relationships. Therefore, the current study aimed to fill this gap by examining the novel's portrayal of social class and the role in Forster's broader critique of Edwardian society.

The study further analyzed how social class and stratification in Edwardian society shaped the behaviors, relationships, and identities of characters in Forster's novel. The title, *Social Class and Stratification in the Edwardian Era as Portrayed in Forster's A Room with a View*, reflects this focus. The literary portrayal of Edwardian values and the constraints imposed on individuals were examined using Peter Saunders' theory of social class and stratification.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The sociology of literature provides a comprehensive framework for examining the dynamic relationship between literature and society. One of the foundational contributions came from H. A. Taine, who introduced a systematic sociological perspective to literary criticism by emphasizing the influence of race, milieu, and moment on literary production (Jadhav, 2012). This foundation was expanded by scholars such as Lucien Goldmann (1980), Lukacs (1981), Lowenthal (1984), and Swingewood and Laurenson (1972), who argued that literary texts were deeply embedded in historical and social contexts. According to Lukacs, authentic literary expression arose when authors synthesized personal experience and imagination with their role as social beings, while Goldmann stated that understanding literature required connecting it with the historical and collective consciousness of time.

Wellek and Warren (1956) offered a more structured categorization of the sociology of literature, identifying three main perspectives, namely the sociology of the study expert, examining how the author's or critic's social background influenced literary production or analysis; the sociology of the literary work, exploring how texts reflected or responded to the prevailing social conditions; and the sociology of the reader, considering how audiences, situated within specific social environments, interpreted literary texts. These perspectives emphasize that literature is not produced or consumed in a vacuum but is deeply informed by its socio-cultural environment.

Central to sociological analysis is the concept of social class and stratification. Stratification refers to the hierarchical organization of society into distinct social layers based on factors such as wealth, education, and occupational prestige (Delukman et al., 2022). This hierarchical structure leads to unequal access to resources and opportunities, thereby reinforcing systemic inequality and reducing the tendency of upward mobility, particularly for those in lower social classes (Nur & Arafah, 2020). Johnson (2020) emphasized that class influenced all aspects of human experience, from education and health to political power and psychological outcomes. Similarly, Wright (2019) showed how social class shaped access to privilege and life trajectories, further entrenching social disparities.

Critical perspectives question the assumption by functionalist theorists like Davis and Moore (1945), stating that social stratification serves a necessary role in motivating individuals to occupy important societal positions. Reimer (2001), for instance, critiqued stratification for perpetuating inequality and fostering resentment and social alienation among disadvantaged groups. The critiques challenge the idea that inequality is justified or beneficial and instead frame it as a barrier to social cohesion and justice. In contrast, Saunders (1990) presented a meritocratic interpretation of social stratification, suggesting that modern capitalist societies enabled social mobility through individual talent, effort, and economic contribution. The study further argued that inequality was not only inevitable but also desirable to foster ambition, competition, and innovation. Saunders criticized redistributive policies for undermining motivation and contended that rewarding productivity and self-reliance could strengthen society. Peter's empirical study in Britain showed that individuals from both middle- and working-class backgrounds could improve their socioeconomic status through education and employment opportunities, and also emphasized the importance of homeownership as a marker of economic stability and social advancement, viewing it as a central component of upward mobility.

Understanding the implications of social stratification requires historical contextualization. The Edwardian era (1901–1910s) was marked by profound social transformations, with rising tensions between rigid class structures and growing aspirations for equality and mobility. Literature from this period often reflects the values, conflicts, and social constraints of Edwardian society, providing insight into the ways individuals negotiated their place within a hierarchical system. The themes explored in Edwardian novels served as valuable sources for analyzing how literature mirrored and critiqued social norms and structures of its time.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative method to investigate and analyze the representation of social class and stratification in E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View*. Applying the Sociology of Literature method, Peter Saunders' theory of social class and stratification was integrated to examine how the novel reflected the socio-economic divisions and class dynamics of the Edwardian era. This qualitative method allowed for an in-depth interpretation of the characters' behaviors, motivations, and interactions, while also uncovering the broader societal implications of class distinctions during the early twentieth century. Through this method, the aim was to construct a rich, contextual understanding of the novel as a reflection of its historical and social setting.

Primary and secondary data were analyzed to achieve a comprehensive analysis, this study uses. The primary data were obtained from E.M. Forster's novel *A Room with a View*, first published by Edward Arnold Publishers in 1908. Spanning 321 pages, the novel provided the core material for analyzing the portrayal of class and stratification during the Edwardian period. In addition, supporting data included scholarly sources such as journal articles, literary criticism, historical accounts, and theoretical texts that enriched the analysis. These secondary sources offered essential context on the Edwardian era and provided insights into theories of social class and stratification, particularly those formulated by Peter Saunders. Academic commentaries and interpretations of *A Room with a View* were also consulted to support and contrast the results obtained from the primary text.

The analysis followed a structured procedure to interpret the text within its sociological and historical framework. First, the study expert undertook a close reading of *A Room with a View*, identifying narrative elements, dialogue, and character interactions that reflected issues of social class and stratification. This step involved careful attention to how the elements showed the constraints and expectations of Edwardian society. To contextualize the novel, the socio-historical background of the Edwardian period was examined. Subsequently, Saunders's theory of social class and stratification was applied to analyze how Forster's novel articulated the tensions between meritocratic ideals and inherited class privilege. This step evaluated how characters' mobility, aspirations, and societal positions reflected broader class dynamics and whether the narrative supports or critiques the legitimacy of social inequality. Finally, recurring themes related to social class, namely social mobility, individual freedom versus societal expectations, and conflict between tradition and change, were interpreted. These themes were evaluated through the lens of the sociological and theoretical frameworks to draw conclusions about the novel's critique or reinforcement of class structures.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. How *A Room With a View* Reflects the Literary Representation of Social Class and Stratification in Edwardian Era

E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* offered a complex representation of class structures in Edwardian England, notably through the depiction of the working class, middle class, and upper class. The portrayals formed a critical lens through which Forster examined and critiqued the rigid stratifications of society and the shifting attitudes toward class, individual agency, and social expectations.

(a). Working Class

In *A Room with a View*, E. M. Forster contrasted the straightforward nature of working-class individuals with the rigid social conventions of the upper and middle classes. Characters from this class often showed honesty and practicality, unburdened by the performative politeness expected in higher circles. This contrast is evident in the following passage:

He has the merit, when it is one, of saying exactly what he means. He has rooms he does not value, and he thinks you would value them. He no more thought of putting you under an obligation than he thought of being polite. It is so difficult, at least, I find it difficult, to understand people who speak the truth. (Forster, 1908, p. 8)

The quote reflects the unpretentious nature of the working class, as embodied by Mr. Emerson, whose sincerity and lack of concern for formal etiquette set apart from the performative social norms of the middle and upper classes.

Forster further explored how rigid class distinctions influenced behavior and acceptance. Miss Bartlett's concern about social obligations, for example, emphasized the discomfort the middle class felt when interacting with those beneath:

I am, as it were," she concluded, "the chaperon of my young cousin, Lucy, and it would be a serious thing if I put her under an obligation to people of whom we know nothing. His manner was somewhat unfortunate. I hope I acted for the best. (Forster, 1908, p. 7)

The phrase "somewhat unfortunate" is a subtle but showing indication of how Emerson's straightforwardness is perceived as inappropriate, suggesting lower social status and the prejudices incurred.

The interaction between Mr. Emerson and Lucy further shows the warmth and practicality associated with working-class values:

"My dear," said the old man gently, "I think that you are repeating what you have heard older people say. You are pretending to be touchy; but you are not really. Stop being very tiresome, and tell me instead what part of the church you want to see. To take you to it will be a real pleasure". (Forster, 1908, p. 25)

Here, Mr. Emerson's direct and caring method reflects a sincere character and contrasts with the more guarded and formal speech expected in higher social circles.

The novel also emphasizes the way class distinctions are perceived through outward appearance and behavior. Miss Bartlett quickly judges Mr. Emerson as "ill-bred" based solely on demeanor and attire:

Miss Bartlett was startled. Generally, at a pension people looked them over for a day or two before speaking, and often did not find out that they would 'do' till they had gone. She knew that the intruder was ill-bred, even before she glanced at him. He was an old man, of heavy build, with a fair, shaven face and large eyes. There was something childish in those eyes, though it was not the childishness of senility. What exactly it was Miss Bartlett did not stop to consider, for her glance passed on to his clothes. (Forster, 1908, p. 2)

This moment vividly shows the rigidity of Edwardian class prejudices and how quickly individuals are judged by superficial standards. Mr. Emerson's behavior, deemed inappropriate for the setting, becomes a marker of class, exposing the inherent biases held by the upper and middle classes.

(b). *Middle Class*

Forster also painted a nuanced portrait of the middle class, particularly through the Honeychurch family and their associates. The conversation between Miss Lavish and Lucy shows a blend of progressive ideals and lingering class consciousness:

"Buon giorno! Take the word of an old woman, Miss Lucy: you will never repent of a little civility to your inferiors. That is the true democracy. Though I am a real Radical as well. There, now you're shocked."

"Indeed, I'm not!" exclaimed Lucy. "We are Radicals, too, out and out. My father always voted for Mr. Gladstone, until he was very dreadful about Ireland". (Forster, 1908, p. 19)

Here, Forster emphasizes the middle-class tension between political liberalism and paternalistic attitudes. The statement about civility to inferiors as "true democracy" suggests an internalized hierarchy, despite radical leanings.

Middle-class preoccupations with respectability and propriety are further confirmed by Miss Bartlett's dissatisfaction with their hotel accommodations:

"The Signora had no business to do it," said Miss Bartlett, "no business at all. She promised us south rooms with a view close together, instead of which here are north rooms, looking into a courtyard, and a long way apart. Oh, Lucy!" (Forster, 1908, p. 1)

This complaint shows a typical middle-class concern with status, comfort, and perceived fairness, specifically values tied closely to their sense of identity and social placement. The expectations, even in trivial matters like room location, show the deep connection between material conditions and self-worth.

The middle-class affinity for cultural appreciation and aesthetic experience is also central to Lucy's enjoyment of Florence:

It was pleasant to wake up in Florence, to open the eyes upon a bright bare room, with a floor of red tiles which look clean though they are not; with a painted ceiling whereon pink griffins and blue amorini sport in a forest of yellow violins and bassoons. It was pleasant, too, to fling wide the windows, pinching the fingers in unfamiliar fastenings, to lean out into sunshine with beautiful hills and trees and marble churches opposite, and close below, the Arno, gurgling against the embankment of the road. (Forster, 1908, p. 16)

This passage shows the middle-class values of travel, self-improvement, and cultural exposure. The pleasure Lucy finds in the surroundings reflects a desire not only for beauty but also for the enrichment of the soul through aesthetic experience, a hallmark of educated middle-class sensibilities.

(c). *Upper Class*

In *A Room with a View*, E.M. Forster portrayed the upper class as social group marked by cultural sophistication, emotional refinement, and a distinct sense of superiority. This was evident in the appreciation for high art and music, serving as a marker of cultural capital and social distinction. In one scene, Lucy was asked to play music for an upper-class company, choosing pieces by Schumann and Beethoven, composers symbolic of refined taste. Forster wrote, *"The melody rose, unprofitably magical... and made the nerves of the audience throb"* (Forster, 1908, p. 46). The emotional response of the audience shows a shared aesthetic sensitivity, showing the upper class's cultivated appreciation for art and the expectation of intellectual engagement. Therefore, music is not merely entertainment but a tool for reinforcing class identity and emotional exclusivity.

The cultural refinement, however, is closely tied to the upper class's sense of social superiority. Forster critiqued this elitism through the transformation of Lucy Honeychurch. According to a conversation among upper-class characters, *"Lucy is becoming wonderful... she is purging off the Honeychurch taint... She is not always quoting servants, or asking one how the pudding is made"* (Forster, 1908, p. 46). The speaker's condescending tone reflects the upper class's disdain for middle-class domesticity and the rigid expectations of social behavior. In their view, refinement requires detachment from practical, daily concerns, a lifestyle marked by distance from the working class and household duties. Lucy's social ascent is praised not for personal growth, but for the increasing conformity to these upper-class norms.

The novel further explored the pressure to conform to class expectations through the belief that Lucy deserved to mingle with a more elite circle. According to Forster, *"The Honeychurches were a worthy family, but he began to realize that Lucy was of another clay... he ought to introduce her into more congenial circles"* (Forster, 1908, p. 106). Here, Lucy's potential is redefined not by virtues but by perceived capacity to embody upper-class ideals. The metaphor "another clay" implies that individuals are inherently shaped by class, and true social belonging is determined by individuals' ability to fit within the rigid frameworks. Forster critiqued this belief system, showing how social mobility was controlled not by merit but by conformity to established class markers.

Cecil Vyse, one of the clearest representations of upper-class privilege, embodied the detachment and entitlement that Forster aimed to critique, declaring, *"I have no profession... as long as I am no trouble to anyone I have a right to do as I like"* (Forster, 1908, p. 106). Cecil's indifference to work reflects the leisure class's exemption from economic responsibility. The acknowledgment of "decadence" is delivered with a casual arrogance that underscores the privilege

of existing without contributing to society. This critique is not simply aimed at idleness but at the larger social structure that rewards inherited status over individual purpose or responsibility.

Cecil's character further shows the contradiction between professed indifference to public opinion and a deep-seated desire for validation. When the efforts received lukewarm reception, Forster observed, "*Cecil... drew down his mouth... Was this the reception his action would get from the world? Of course, he despised the world... but he was sensitive to the successive particles of it which he encountered*" (Forster, 1908, p. 111). This passage shows the performative nature of upper-class refinement, a cultivated disdain for the masses combined with an acute sensitivity to individual judgment. Forster exposed the insecurity beneath this facade of superiority, suggesting that upper-class identity was often sustained through appearances rather than inner conviction.

Through the depictions, Forster not only critiqued the upper class's obsession with cultural elitism and social exclusivity but also interrogated the personal costs of adhering to such rigid ideals. The novel challenges the Edwardian-era assumption that class is destiny, offering a subtle but powerful argument for individuality, emotional authenticity, and social equality.

B. *How A Room With a View Portrays the Influence of Social Stratification of Edwardian Era*

This section explores the novel's depiction of how *A Room with a View* portrays the influence of social stratification on Edwardian-era societal norms.

(a). *Marriage Expectation*

Marriage in *A Room with a View* is portrayed as social institution used to secure and reinforce class boundaries. Lucy Honeychurch's engagement to Cecil Vyse is encouraged precisely because it aligns with societal expectations of marrying within or above a specific class. This is clearly articulated in the following passage:

He has the merit, when it is one, of saying exactly what he means. The Honeychurches were a worthy family, but he began to realize that Lucy was of another clay; and perhaps, he did not put it very definitely, he ought to introduce her into more congenial circles as soon as possible. (Forster, 1908, p. 106)

Cecil's assessment of Lucy as "of another clay" suggests the potential to move upward socially, unlike the family. The belief of introducing Lucy to more "congenial circles" reflects the Edwardian preoccupation with preserving or improving social status through marriage.

Social role of marriage is further emphasized in another scene:

"Make Lucy one of us," she said, looking round intelligently at the end of each sentence, and straining her lips apart until she spoke again. "Lucy is becoming wonderful, wonderful." "Her music always was wonderful". (Forster, 1908, p. 9)

Here, the pressure for Lucy to adapt to upper-class standards is explicit. The statement that Lucy is "becoming one of us" implies Lucy's behavior is changing to meet the expectations of the upper class, particularly by distancing from "quoting servants" or engaging with domestic matters. These examples show how marriage functions as a vehicle for social mobility while reinforcing existing class norms.

(b). *Class Exclusivity*

The novel also addressed the theme of class exclusivity, specifically through the contrast between George Emerson's sincerity and Cecil's detachment. Directness is showed as a rare and somewhat suspect trait among the upper class. Mr. Beebe observes:

"He is rather a peculiar man." Again, he hesitated, and said gently: "I think he would not take advantage of your acceptance, nor expect you to show gratitude. He has the merit, when it is one, of saying exactly what he means". (Forster, 1908, p. 8)

The hesitance in labeling straightforwardness a "merit" emphasizes class-based skepticism toward openness. The refined class is portrayed as prizing subtlety and ambiguity over direct expression, suggesting that authenticity is more common among the lower class.

Cecil's personality further shows social elitism and intellectual detachment of Edwardian upper-class culture:

Cecil, who naturally preferred congratulations to apologies, drew down his mouth at the corners... It is almost a test of refinement. (Forster, 1908, p. 111)

Cecil's preference for praise over confrontation reflects an entitlement born of privilege. The notion that cynicism is "a test of refinement" captures the upper-class attitude that social and emotional detachment are signs of superiority. The passage shows how members of the upper class curated their image to preserve a sense of exclusivity.

(c). *Class Snobbery*

Forster offered a critique of class snobbery by emphasizing characters who perpetuated patronizing attitudes toward those of lower social standing. Gender roles are often used to justify this social hierarchy. For example, Charlotte Bartlett explained:

Charlotte had once explained to her why. It was not that ladies were inferior to men; it was that they were different. Their mission was to inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve themselves. (Forster, 1908, p. 46)

This quote showed the subtle but entrenched view that upper-class women should not seek personal accomplishment, and instead uphold societal ideals through influence and restraint. The role of women in this context reflects the broader class-based division of labor and status.

Another example of class condescension was offered by Miss Lavish:

Buon giorno! Take the word of an old woman, Miss Lucy: you will never repent of a little civility to your inferiors. That is the true democracy. (Forster, 1908, p. 19)

The suggestion that politeness to social inferiors constitutes “true democracy” is deeply ironic. Rather than promoting equality, Miss Lavish reinforced the notion that civility is an optional act of grace by the upper class. The statement underlines the contradiction between democratic ideals and the reality of social stratification.

Finally, class-based assumptions were showed through snap judgments made by characters such as Miss Bartlett:

“Miss Bartlett was startled... She knew that the intruder was ill-bred, even before she glanced at him” (Forster, 1908, p. 2).

Miss Bartlett’s immediate judgment of Mr. Emerson’s class, based solely on a sense of manner, reflects the ingrained belief that social worth can be measured through superficial behavior. This shows how class prejudices are internalized and used to maintain rigid social divisions.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results, *A Room with a View* reflects the complexity of Edwardian social stratification through its portrayal of the working, middle, and upper classes. The working class, represented by Mr. Emerson, is shown as marginalized yet morally grounded, and often dismissed by others due to lower status. The middle class, embodied by the Honeychurch family, specifically Lucy, experienced internal conflict between societal expectations and personal desires, reflecting the tensions of upward mobility. Also, the upper class, typified by Cecil Vyse, was characterized by elitism and detachment, reinforcing rigid social boundaries. The novel also showed how social norms, particularly in marriage, class exclusivity, and snobbery served to maintain hierarchical divisions. Marriage was showed as a tool for preserving or improving social status, as seen in Lucy's pressured engagement to Cecil. Class exclusivity was reflected in the preference for intellectual refinement and emotional restraint among the elite, contrasting with the sincerity of lower-status characters like George. In addition, class snobbery was showed in the patronizing attitudes toward those deemed “inferior,” with civility framed as a privilege rather than a right. Through these portrayals, Forster critiqued the moral contradictions of Edwardian society and ultimately advocated for personal authenticity and social equality.

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