

opinion his turning away from the conventions of fictional realism was not radical enough. By quoting from Forster's own criticism of other writers Medalie concedes that the author preserved "a sceptical attitude towards modern taste ... and a recognition that there is always the co-existence of forward and backward movements" (189). He wishes to ascribe to Forster's "version of modernism" the "uncomfortable confluence of the old and the new" (191). Medalie therefore supports the call for a broader redefinition and a replacement of "modernism" by "modernisms", which was uttered before. To expand the views on modernism and to evince the multiplicity of components—liberal humanism, romanticism, and the different strands of form—in Forster's works is conclusively once more identified by Medalie as the aim of his study. He admits a liminality in Forster's brand of modernism, which is accounted for by his "sense of dual allegiances" (194) resulting from the context in which his work developed. Forster is not a modernist iconoclast, yet his own criticism of iconoclastic modernists is milder and more temperate than vice versa.

Krzysztof Fordoński, 2005.
The Shaping of the Double Vision.
The Symbolic Systems of the Italian Novels
of Edward Morgan Forster
(Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Publication Group)

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At first sight the book by Krzysztof Fordoński is yet another publication on the well-known works of E. M. Forster. Its title ostensibly allocates it among the rich array of texts devoted to Forster and his literary oeuvre. However, at closer scrutiny, it turns out that Fordoński's monograph differs at least in one respect. While other studies on the topic of symbolism in the works

of Forster tend to be gossipy in style and many a time gliding on the surface of things by resorting to generalizations, his book is characterized by the economy of words and an unswerving flow of ideas. What follows, the whole body of the book is devoid of digressions, which perhaps inspire a more lively reading but nevertheless tend to complicate the analysis. Thus, the study by Fordoński is marked by a simple, clear style of writing and theme-focused narration, which in turn facilitates the otherwise daunting task of understanding the multi-layered symbolism of the discussed novels. The logic and clarity of Fordoński's literary divagations along with the well-selected (and well-balanced in number) fragments for illustration and explanation of the specific notions make the Author's intentions quite transparent. Moreover, the economical and precise manner of handling the issues combined with the steady and consistent course of ideas ensures a gratifying reading experience, a fact which should not be undervalued in scientific publications.

The Shaping... is a noteworthy attempt to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of repetitive symbolic patterns in the so-called Italian novels of Forster, that is *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with a View* (1908), as well as in a selection of short stories. The short stories, also dealing with Italian subject matters, were written within the first two decades of the 20th century. The texts include: "Albergo Empedocle" (1903), "The Story of a Panic" (1904), "The Road from Colonus" (1904), "The Curate's Friend" (1907), "Other Kingdom" (1909), "The Story of the Siren" (1920) and "Ansell" (1975).⁵ The narrowing of the scope of material submitted for the analysis to these very works is justified by the fact that, as Fordoński argues, Forster's Italian oeuvre has been forgotten for quite a time by both the critics and the English literature scholars. Most of them seem to concentrate on the two other novels by Forster, i.e. *Howards End* and *Passage to India*, which are regarded as the writer's masterpieces.

Fordoński's book consist of an introduction, three chapters, and conclusions. Chapter 1 is a theoretical study related to the state of research into the matter of symbols and the systems of symbols encountered in the literary pieces of Forster. As he emphasizes, Forster's symbolism has been investigated by many. However, among the variety of publications, both original and mere-

⁵ The short story "Ansell" comes form 1903, but it was published as late as 1975, after Forster's death.

ly reproductive, there are two which need special attention, namely the review of *A Room with a View* by C. F. G. Masterman entitled "The Half-hidden Life" (1908) and the essay by Virginia Woolf, i.e. "The Novels of E. M. Forster" (1927). According to Fordoński, it was specifically the publication by Woolf which captured the nature of Forster's symbolism. For it is in that very essay where the phrase "the double vision" appeared. The term was applied to illustrate the dual character of Forster's prose which draws from the tradition of both Symbolism and Realism, but which cannot be unambiguously ascribed to any of the genres. Further, Fordoński rightly notices that Forsterian symbolism is hard to compare with the symbolism of any other writer or poet who was Forster's contemporary, like William Butler Yeats or D. H. Lawrence. The systems of symbols used by Forster in his novels and short stories elude the structures and rules that constituted the symbolism of European literature of the second part of the 19th century. Unlike the "typical" symbolism of the epoch, Forster's symbolism is more "commonsensical", refraining from suggesting something unclear, something elusive, or something unknown.

Apart from a detailed enumeration and explanation of the aspects which make Forster's symbolic meanings so distinctively different, Fordoński explores the sources underlying the writer's symbolic codes. For instance, he draws our attention to the fact that they frequently nod to the writings of Jane Austen and the literary style of Thomas Carlyle and Samuel Butler. Additionally, Forster's symbolic systems include the themes and issues related to art and aestheticism, to society and morality. All these aspects are evidenced with frequent quotations, taken not only from the literary works of the novelist but also from his non-literary writings and from the publications focusing on Forster's oeuvre. Step by step, the presented examples substantiate and demonstrate the complexity and uniqueness of Forster's symbolism.

Chapter 1 also acquaints the reader with the perspective that will be used later in the book while conducting the analysis proper. Thus, these are the intertextual ideas of Michael Riffaterre as well as the uses of symbols commonly accepted by the specialists in literature and culture. According to Fordoński, only this combinatory approach allows for a comprehensive, in-depth presentation of the intricate nature of Forsterian symbolism in the context of specific literary texts. However, he does not aim at creating yet another theoretical system of symbols. Rather, on the grounds of the already existing concepts and methods, Fordoński's objective is to develop a convenient tool for the analysis of Forster's artistic works.

Chapter 2 is entirely devoted to a practical consideration of Forster's texts. This section is divided into several sub-chapters, each dealing with a separate symbol or a group of symbols. First, Fordoński examines the symbolism related to water, blood, wine and milk. Then, he moves on to a discussion of the figures of a child and a baby and the symbolic meanings related to them. The next part focuses on the symbolic code based on contrast between light and darkness. This is followed by a consideration of nakedness and clothing and the analysis of the role of colour in the works of Forster. The ultimate parts are devoted, respectively, to the symbolism of kiss and kissing, small objects, and nature. Also, thanks to the cultural references made during the analysis related to the debated issue, the chapter reads as an interesting source of information about social conventions, mentality, and cultural/artistic life of the middle and upper middle class representatives of Edwardian/Victorian England. At any rate, the chapter offers a variety of examples which, in effect, enable readers to conceive a concise (and culturally rich) picture of the symbolic world modelled in the novels and short stories by Forster. Furthermore, Fordoński manages to demonstrate how "traditional" symbols change into Forsterian ones, how they undergo modifications and acquire new meanings.

In the next section, i.e. Chapter 3, the matter of space and its symbolic network in Forster's Italian fictional texts is addressed. Fordoński once more looks at the formerly quoted fragments from the Italian novels and short stories, but this time he applies (predominantly) the binary system proposed by Jurij Lotman in 1977. To be more precise, he first divides the space into "open" (for example "the view") and "closed" (for instance "the room"), then defines the roles assigned to the respective spaces and seeks meanings corresponding to the phrases allocated in both groups. Finally, he demonstrates how the different types of space function in the symbolic system developed by the writer.

In the closing part of the book, Fordoński gives a brief summary and concludes that symbolic systems in the so-called Italian works of Forster are not merely a tool for constructing an aesthetic dimension but they serve as a vehicle for communicating certain values as well, like for example liberty and equality. For that reason the two aspects, namely aesthetic and moral, should not be treated as two separate structures requiring two separate analyses. These elements overlap, interlace, and diffuse, thus complementing each other. Such symbiosis results in a more profound picture of the symbol and, in turn, leads to a better understanding of both the world of Forsterian

characters and the world of Forster, the author. Forster's double vision is composed, therefore, of "[t]he subtexts and the syllepsis [which] are at the same time a decoration and an element of construction and only when simultaneously perceived do they reveal their full value" (127). Forster's symbolic vision resembles a well-composed painting in a well-matched frame; the two elements constitute a unity and due to that they should be analyzed in unison. Last, but not least, the book by Fordoński can be appreciated by both the established researchers and those who just begin their scientific adventure with the works of Forster. While on the one hand it neatly sums up Forster's approach related to the construction of symbol and the use of symbolic patterns, on the other it offers a genuine springboard and a tool for those who would like to concentrate on pursuing further either certain symbols or patterns of symbolic meanings, looking for intricate connections, for instance, within a particular collection of short stories. Following one thread may lead to new or simply still unveiled symbolic patterns. Only connect.

Jeffrey M. Heath (ed.), 2008.
'The Creator as Critic' and Other Writings
 by E. M. Forster.
 (Toronto: Dundurn Press)

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The book edited by Jeffrey M. Heath contains E. M. Forster's own talks and writings on a variety of subjects. It is worth reviewing as an original source which compiles Forster's writings and discourses. Besides being a novelist, Forster is also a literary critic and a travel writer. Moreover, his sensitivity to the problems of his age is reflected in his own words, not from the perspective of a critic, in the book. Hence, the present book review aims to reveal these aspects about Forster which could be considered innovative. The book containing four chapters: "Talks and Lectures", "Essays", "Other Memoirs