

**Gloria Lauri-Lucente, Francesco Marroni,
Tania Zulli (eds.), 2015
E. M. Forster Revisited
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The XXIV issue of *Merope*, entirely devoted to E. M. Forster, collects a series of nine papers focusing on diverse aspects of the author and his works, ranging from his ideology and homosexuality to his Italian influence and film adaptations. In the editors' words, the volume aims to explore "the status of theory and method in contemporary Forsterian criticism" (5).

The collection opens with an essay by Francesco Marroni, whose title ("Troping the Heart: E. M. Forster's Homoerotic Greenwood") anticipates the focus of the essay itself, that is, the analysis of 'Forster's greenwood' – defined as "a mental space which testifies to his strong attraction to a notion of innocence and goodness" (10) – in relation to his homoeroticism. To this aim, Marroni explores the implications of Forster's idea of the "undeveloped heart" (14), identifying in southern English counties the place for a "hypothesis of cultural regeneration" (17). Along with this theme, Neval Berber, the author of the second paper, illustrates how Forster's homosexuality influenced his literary production. This is especially evident in his representation of "Ruritania", an imaginary land between East and West "[that] becomes for Forster an ideal place for constructing homosexual identity, using the model of the masculine and virile man, rather than the effeminate" (164).

Gloria Lauri-Lucente analyses the construction of Englishness and Italianness in film adaptations of *A Room with a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, by dwelling on the themes of nostalgia and nostophobia. The essay also offers a thorough overview of criticism on Forster's cinematic transpositions, including the influential studies by Martin A. Hipsky and Andrew Higson. Forster's idea of Englishness is also at the heart of Raffaella Antinucci's contribution, which gives an account of Forster's neglected *Artic Summer* and, more specifically, of "the problems posed by the literary representation of the gentleman"

(117) staged in Forster's unfinished novel. By examining the two halves of the book, the Italian and the English ones, Antinucci demonstrates how this depiction varies and evolves through the lives and conduct of different male characters.

Spatial concepts and images of "house", "property" and "nation" in Forster's *Howards End* are discussed by Anna Enrichetta Soccio, who maintains that in this novel "the representation of domestic space, furniture and objects is functional to render the picture of society at large" (63). Taking an anthropological perspective, Stefania Michelucci considers the topic of place and space and their representation in Forster's "The Story of a Panic", demonstrating the hidden complexities behind this apparently simple fictional work.

Tania Zulli examines the political implications of *A Passage to India*, "in order to show to which extent [they] contribut[e] to the apparent support and concrete denigration of the imperial ideology, and simultaneously to the tentative consolidation and final deflection of the liberal creed" (74). Her contribution looks at the theme of political and moral betrayal starting from an analysis of Forster's ideology, which appears intrinsically related to his personal experience, thus calling upon the importance of man's ethical mission.

The role of Italy in Forster's fiction is further explored by James Corby, moving from the analysis of the term "muddle", that indicates "a confusion, disorder or bewilderment" (177). He considers this concept fundamental, since the idea of "absence of clearness" it provides is essential to understand Forster's experience in Italy. Ivan Callus concludes this collection with his article "Friend or Country?: Narratives of Impossible Choice in Sophocles, E. M. Forster, and Beyond". Starting from the statement that everyone has to make "a dreadful choice" between friend and country, family and principle, or others "at least once in a lifetime", he proposes an investigation of "episodes variously drawn from literature, theatre, philosophy, theory, film, television, politics, private and public life, and popular culture" (195) dealing with this pick.

With its richness of approaches, this volume represents a stimulating and creditable addition to Forsterian criticism, providing a multifaceted reconsideration of aspects and topics of Forster's work from novel perspectives that result to be a key aid for the researchers of this field.