

Adaptation, Inspiration, Dialogue: E.M. Forster and His Oeuvre in Contemporary Culture

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Abstract

The article aims at charting the position of Edward Morgan Forster and his works in contemporary English language culture. It presents various forms of adaptations of or responses to the works of Forster, concentrating on those which have been created since the writer's death in 1970. The discussed material consists of approximately one hundred instances of various works of art related in a number of ways to Forster's oeuvre and biography: adaptations, works inspired by Forster's oeuvre or biography, and, finally, works which enter into a dialogue with Forster and his views. Radio plays, operas, plays, movies, musicals, comic books, concept albums, etc. have been included as well. The paper also touches upon Forster's reception among scholars and in political journalism. The paper is supplemented with lists of various adaptations.

Keywords: E.M. Forster, culture, literature, opera, musical, television, film, theatre, adaptation, adaptation studies

The works of E.M. Forster have played an important role in the English-speaking world and beyond it¹ ever since his position was first generally recognised after the publication of *Howards End* in 1910.² Forster's presence was originally felt the most clearly through his literary works, namely novels and short stories. Yet, with the passage of time, he began to exert influence also as a reviewer, an essayist, and a radio broadcaster. Artists – at first fellow novelists but gradually also playwrights, composers, graphic artists, and others – found in Forster's oeuvre and life a greatly various source of creative inspiration which continues to be fruitful fifty years after the writer's death. Some adapt the original material to other media – the theatre, TV, movies, operas, musicals, etc. – others prefer to respond in fully original works to what Forster has to say or to his life experiences. The inheritance of Forster, if I may allude to one of the works I intend to present further on, has been divided among many and returned surprisingly hefty profits.

The aim of this paper is to present the picture as broadly as possible, including all the instances – almost one hundred of them – where Forster's influence can be traced in a period of over a century with the main focus on the last fifty years. The purpose is to chart a largely unknown territory, although the degree of this ignorance varies greatly as the growing popularity of adaptation studies means that also adaptations of Forster (predominantly the movies though) have already been the subject of numerous scholarly studies. A rather unfortunate side-effect of this approach is that such a presentation must be rather general, leaving room for more detailed and specific analyses of selected spheres of influence or selected works of art to be carried out at a later date.

The scope of the presentation below is inversely proportional to the already existing academic response. Consequently, two sections which have so far been the subject of the most active scholarly attention – literature and the movies – are sketched quite briefly, directing the reader to the existing body of scholarship, wherever it is available, and concentrating on those instances which might have been overlooked or are very recent. The presentation in other sections will be more detailed, although here the scarcity of scholarly attention often combines with the scarcity of available material that could be analysed.

¹ The international reception of Forster's oeuvre will be the topic of the paper: Krzysztof Fordoński, "From the English of E.M. Forster – An Overview of a Century of Forsterian Translations" (in progress).

² Soon after Forster's death David Lodge placed him among the top three English writers of the 20th century, below Lawrence but above Virginia Woolf (Lodge 1973, 473). Lodge uses the term "native English," excluding thus from his top three the Irishman Joyce, the American James, and the Pole Conrad.

The outcome of Forsterian influences can be divided into three categories – adaptation, inspiration, and dialogue. As for adaptation, I see it as the most direct and clearly visible presence of Forster’s source material in the works of other artists. It is represented mostly through a variety of renderings of Forsterian plots and storylines, most often into other media ranging from literary fiction (including comic books) and the theatre, through radio-plays, movies, opera, musical, as well as other musical forms. When it comes to inspiration, it is more subtle, and takes place when other artists resort to motifs, places, and characters which bring to mind the works of Forster. It is the most often visible in the works of other writers. Ultimately, dialogue takes place when authors approach Forster’s works in a creative way, responding to the ideas of the writer rather than adapting them. Dialogue can take place in works of art but also in political or academic writing.

Boundaries between these three categories are rather blurry and in numerous cases two or even all three of them may overlap. Adaptation or influence is hardly ever possible without at least some element of dialogue with the source material. Consequently, the following paper, which aims at a presentation of Forster’s presence in the contemporary world of English-language culture, will be structured according to the genres and media in which this presence can be detected. The sequence of the following sections is chronological, based on the earliest instances within a given sphere.

We begin with literature and Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* (1915), proceed to radio adaptations (Forster made his first radio appearance in 1927 and his short story was read on the air for the first time in 1931, but the first radio play was produced only in 1942), theatre adaptations (the first of which was staged in February 1950), TV productions (which started in 1958), movies (beginning with David Lean’s *A Passage to India* from 1984) followed for convenience by shorts (the earliest dates back to 1998), followed in turn by musical adaptations (operas from 1992, although the first performance of *Billy Budd* was broadcasted in 1952, two musicals since 2012, and two concept albums since 2016), finishing with very brief notes on journalistic and academic response first to Forster’s original works and then to their adaptations.

A remark must be made at this point that this division, handy as it may be, is often quite artificial, especially when it comes to the early period of adaptations, as they used to be repeatedly recycled in various media. Santha Rama Rau’s stage adaptation of *A Passage to India* from 1960 can serve as a perfect example of such a case. It was first staged in Oxford (and almost immediately transferred to the West End) and soon premiered on Broadway as well. It was then adapted for TV by John Maynard and broadcasted by the BBC in 1965. In

December 1968, the BBC Radio 4 broadcasted the adaptation of Maynard again, this time as a radio-play. Surprisingly enough, Zia Mohyeddin played Dr Aziz in each of these four instances. Rau's play was ultimately used as the original basis for the script of David Lean's movie released in 1984, although only some material from the play was included in the final version of the script written by Lean himself. The fortunes of Elizabeth Hart's adaptation of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* were largely similar – it was staged in 1963, adapted for two TV movies, one in 1963 and another in 1966, and, finally, a radio-play in 1968.

The present paper is supplemented with lists of all known works in all the groups mentioned above arranged chronologically. It must be noted, however, that although the material presented here is the result of years of meticulous research in various sources, these lists must still be treated as work in progress due to the elusive character of the majority of the artistic endeavours they include. Stage adaptations leave little trace once they go off stage, only very few plays adapted from novels are ever published (four in our case), radio-plays and TV adaptations disappear almost without a trace after they are broadcasted (only five of the former and three of the latter are available commercially), shorts are most often available during film festivals, and only a fraction of their number ends up in generally accessible services such as YouTube or Vimeo, or is released commercially. All the published literary works discussed in the paper have been included in the reference section along with scholarly studies.³ The choice of the latter is intended rather to present the most recent publications than to offer a complete overview of the existing body of scholarship as this would not be possible bearing in mind the number and variety of the discussed works.

Literature

Interactions with Forster and his oeuvre form a sizeable part of the list of important works of English literature of the 20th and the early 21st century. They are greatly varied in the directness and degree to which these influences can be traced. Their list begins with

³ For the sake of clarity neither the present text nor the bibliography section include references to information taken from the Internet Movie Database (movies, TV programmes, and recorded opera performances), The Playwrights Database Doollee (plays and theatrical adaptations), BBC Genome Project (radio broadcasts and adaptations), and the online bookstore Amazon.

The Voyage Out (1915), the first novel of Virginia Woolf, inspired by *A Room with a View*, and ends (at least at the moment) with *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith (2005) and *Stranger's Child* by Alan Hollinghurst (2011) (Puschmann-Nalenz 2021).

Among the writers influenced by Forster one can certainly point out his personal acquaintance D.H. Lawrence – his *Women in Love* (1920) has been compared to *Howards End* (Mensch 2005/2006) and the influence of *Maurice* upon *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) discussed in detail (Delaveny 1971; King 1982). Among those less known novels we might include here *The Enchanted April* by Forster's one time employer Elizabeth von Arnim (1922), *The Hotel* by Elizabeth Bowen (1927) (Ridge 2017), *A Treasonable Growth* by Ronald Blythe (1960), *The Italian Lesson* by Janice Elliott (1985), or *The Closed Circle* by Jonathan Coe (2004). Somewhat outside the established body of literary works there are the numerous fanfictional sequels of *Maurice* (Monk 2020). The New York based publishing house Farrar, Straus & Giroux plans to publish in June 2021 *Alec*, a sequel to *Maurice*, a debut novel written by William di Canzio.

The Italian Lesson, probably the least known of the above, is a skilful retelling of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* with elements of *A Room with a View* (e.g. the action takes place in Fiesole and Florence, rather than San Gimignano, Monteriggioni, or Montepulciano which Forster blended together to create his Monteriano) and Forster's own biography. It is set in the 1970s in Italy torn by extreme left-wing terrorism. Elliott employs elements of Forster's plots, characters, and locations, but she tells a very different story with a far larger number of greatly varied characters. In some way her novel predates Smith's *On Beauty* published twenty years later which transferred *Howards End* to a new location in the US East Coast, expanding the range of problems discussed in the novel to include the race issue.

Jonathan Coe begins *The Closed Circle* with a letter from Claire to her sister Miriam, in the manner of *Howards End*, but as we soon learn the story of Claire is meant rather as a variation on the plot of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Claire also abandons her child (following a divorce, not the death of her husband) and leaves for Italy where she has a love affair with a dashing Italian. The affair, however, fizzles out and Claire returns to England only to start another affair, this time with a modern counterpart of Henry Wilcox. Several other characters or locations may also remind an inquisitive reader of their counterparts from *Howards End* or *The Longest Journey* while the whole book is clearly intended as a "condition of England" novel, painting a panorama of the country in the early years of Tony Blair's Labour government.

Alan Hollinghurst is a particular example of the influence as each and every one of his novels resonates with Forsterian echoes. His *The Swimming-Pool Library* (Sroczyński 2016; Yebra 2017; Medalie 2020) teaming with allusions to Forster's biography and works, *The Spell* echoing *Howards End* with its concern with country and city life (Topolovská 2018), as well *Stranger's Child*, the first chapter of which is a delicate parody of Forster's literary style and characters (Sroczyński 2013; Puschmann-Nalenz 2021) have been scholars' favourites so far. The connection is visible even before the publication of his debut novel as Hollinghurst wrote his MLitt thesis about Forster, Firbank, and L.P. Hartley (Giudicelli 2017).

All the works referred to above can be placed somewhere between inspiration and dialogue. A work of literature which may be without a doubt classified as an adaptation to another literary medium is the graphic novel (or, less loftily, a comic). So far only *The Machine Stops* has been adapted in this way. The first version is the work of the writer Michael Lent and artist Mark Rene, it was published by Alterna Comics in 2014. The second version is a free adaptation by Jesse Hamm, Mark Rodgers, and Caitlin Like, entitled *The Blessed Machine*, and it greatly expands the plot of the short story. It was published by Cave Pictures Publishing in 2019 in six comic books but it is available only in a digital form.

The life of Forster has inspired three types of literary responses – memoirs in which the writer plays a leading role, biographies, and works of fiction based on his life. The first group was opened in 1970 with the posthumously published memoir of J.R. Ackerley, *E.M. Forster: A Portrait*. In 1993, J.H. Stape published a collection of “interviews and recollections” of Forster, a perfect starting point for anyone interested in the writer's personal life and relations. In more recent times two more memoirs were published. *Connecting with E.M. Forster: A Memoir* from 2012, written by Tim Leggatt offers an insight in the final years of the life of Forster, documenting a friendship which began when Leggatt was a student at Cambridge, and continued for over a decade. The book is particularly interesting as it is largely based on previously unpublished correspondence with Forster. In 2014, the novelist Ronald Blythe, mentioned already in this section, published a memoir entitled *The Time by the Sea: Aldeburgh 1955–1958* in which he returned to the years spent in Aldeburgh in the company of Forster, Britten, and other men of culture of the time (Blythe 2014b).

Four biographies of Forster have been published so far. The first of them is the classic work of P.N. Furbank published in 1977, *E.M. Forster: A Life*, based in part on conversations with the writer in the 1960s. It was quickly followed in 1978 by the far more relaxed

and personal *E.M. Forster* by Francis King. Nicola Beauman published her insightful *Morgan: A Biography of E.M. Forster*⁴ in 1993, while Wendy Moffat followed in 2010 with her quite controversial *E.M. Forster. A New Life*.⁵

The events which led (at least according to Nicola Beauman who was the first to suggest the connection) to the creation of *Maurice* were dramatized in Stephen Wakeham's radio play *A Dose of Fame*, broadcasted by the BBC Radio 4 in 2009. It was the first literary work of which Forster was the main hero. The South African novelist Damon Galgut concentrated in his 2014 novel *Arctic Summer* on Forster's Indian adventures, his friendship with Ross Masood, and the two voyages to the subcontinent (Cruz-Rus 2017; Booth 2020). The awarded play *A Kind of Marriage* from 2015 by Charles Leipart, which deals with Forster's relationship with Bob Buckingham and Bob's marriage to May, has so far been only presented as a rehearsed reading at the Donmar rehearsal space, London, in 2017. It is available as an extract in the *Qu*, published in January 2018. The novel *The Ballad of Syd & Morgan* by Haydn Middleton, published also in 2018, deals with a purely fictitious encounter of Forster and Syd Barrett, a member of the Pink Floyd, in 1968. Most recently, *Nonsense and Beauty* by Scott C. Sickles, another play about Forster's relationship with the Buckinghams had its official premiere at the Repertory Theatre of St Louis, Missouri, in March 2019.

The list should also include Bethan Roberts' novel *My Policeman*, published in 2012, inspired as the author claims in her blog by the biography of E.M. Forster (Roberts n.d.). As Richard Canning wrote in his review for *The Independent*:

My Policeman was initially billed by its publisher as a novel inspired by E.M. Forster's relationship with a married constable, Bob Buckingham. Now it appears shorn of any reference to the author of *A Passage to India*, and it soon becomes clear why. Roberts's account of a polysexual ménage à trois has not simply been transposed to Brighton, but reimagined as a very different story. (Canning 2012, n.p.)

The novel consequently falls into the category of dialogue as it tells a story only some elements of which may remind one of the muddled relationship of Bob and May

⁴ It was republished in 1994 by Alfred A. Kopf of New York as *E.M. Forster: A Biography*.

⁵ It was republished in 2011 by Picador in the US as *Great Unrecorded History: A New Life of E.M. Forster*.

Buckingham, and Forster. Some elements, however, seem to be taken from the equally muddled biography of J.R. Ackerley.

Literature is by far the most varied in its approaches to Forster's oeuvre and life as a source of inspiration. Direct adaptation is hardly possible within the same medium and any indirect way of approaching Forster leads inevitably towards what I called inspiration or dialogue. Perhaps it is an inspired dialogue with the novelist that produces the best literary results.

The radio

Forster's collaboration with the BBC started in 1927 and continued through the early 1960s. He prepared and delivered radio talks or broadcasts (Heath 2008; Lago, Hughes, MacLeod Walls 2008), gave interviews, helped with adaptations of his works, reviewed books and read the reviews on the air, they were all later published in *The Listener*, weekly magazine published by the BBC (Lago 1990). His distinctive voice was well recognizable to all the British listeners with an interest in art and culture. His works were also often present on the air, ranging from short stories or excerpts read by the author himself or by an actor, to complex radio plays such as the adaptation of *Howards End* in thirteen episodes prepared by Lance Sieveking in 1963.

Forster himself made four readings of his own texts – three short stories and the “Entrance to an Unwritten Novel,” which most probably was the first chapter of *Arctic Summer* that he had read previously at Aldeburgh. At least fifteen shorter texts have been read by single actors – ten short stories and five excerpts from the novels. In addition to these broadcasts five novels were abridged and presented in instalments; however, still each read by a single actor. Although technically speaking, all of them qualify as adaptations, at the very least from written text to sound, I would like to concentrate here⁶ on the most complex form of adaptation: radio plays.

Radio is a very specific medium since it is highly intimate and of all those discussed further it is the closest to private reading. It also comes with a number of

⁶ This is only a brief presentation of a part of the materials from the work in progress: Fordoński, Krzysztof “Forster on the Air: TV and Radio Adaptations of the Works of E.M. Forster.” The first version was presented during the IEMFS conference in Ludwigsburg in 2018. Recording of the presentation is available at the IEMFS website and the original paper at academia.edu.

constraints – a typical radio station broadcasts news “every hour on the hour,” leaving no more than about 50 minutes for a programme. However, there is no need to fill all this time with a single programme, while it is possible to divide longer programmes into episodes. The intimacy, but also practical constraints such as the size of the studio, means that the number of voices that can be heard in a single programme should be limited. These conditions resulted, especially in the early decades, in a selection of Forster’s texts for adaptation remarkably different from that in any other medium because of the significant presence of short stories. Four out of five plays produced in the 1940s were adaptations of short stories, and one, *Mr. and Mrs. Abbey’s Difficulties*, is an adaptation of a biographical essay about the life of John Keats. The presence of adaptations of short stories, a rarity in other spheres (except for the ubiquitous *The Machine Stops*) continued also later on.

The most eminent people responsible for the early adaptations produced between 1942 and 1947 were Leonard Cottrell (who left the BBC to become a writer specializing in Ancient Egypt) and Douglas Cleverdon (the producer of Dylan Thomas’ radio drama *Under Milk Wood* in 1952), both of whom worked for the BBC Home Service. The BBC Third Programme, which took over as the cultural and intellectual programme of the corporation in September 1946, “the youngest and maybe the trickiest cherub of the air” as Forster called it in the fifth anniversary talk (Lago et al. 2008, 410), proved far less enthusiastic about Forster’s short stories and the collaboration on adaptations ended quite abruptly. Peter Fifield’s comments on Forster’s position in the Third shed light at this turn of events:

his short story “The Machine Stops” passed through the hands of a reader in the Drama Scripts Department [of the Third Programme in March 1951] [...] The very story that engages so perceptively with technology within domestic and public spheres was dubbed ‘rather Wells in barley water’. In 1953 [...] his story “The Curate’s Friend” was reviewed by script reader Mollie Greenhalgh. Her report of 23 September listed the requirements for radio drama and found Forster’s story wanting in every category: ‘Construction: Conventional. Dialogue: Quite unreal. Characterisation: Never escapes from literary. Remarks: A piece of whimsy which cannot stand dramatisation, especially of the elementary kind’. (Fifield 2016, 72–73)

The year 1948 saw the monopoly of the BBC on radio adaptations of Forster broken for the first time as radio plays began to appear on the US radio stations as well. The first American adaptation was also the first radio adaptation of a Forster’s novel. The National Broadcasting Corporation broadcasted an hour-long adaptation of *A Passage to India* by

George Lefferts, as a part of the series *NBC University Theatre*, with a commentary by Forster himself. The CBS Radio broadcasted *The Celestial Omnibus* adapted by Richard Chappick in 1957 as a part of the *CBS Radio Workshop*, a short lived programme series dedicated to adaptations of science-fiction literature. Fifty years later, in 2007, the WCPN 90.3 FM station located in Cleveland, Ohio broadcasted the radio play *The Machine Stops* originally written for the stage by Eric Coble which had its theatre premiere in 2004.

The collaboration with the BBC was revived in 1955 by the pioneer radio and TV producer Lance Sieveking for the BBC Home Service. Sieveking produced three radio-plays *Between Two Worlds: A Passage to India* (1955), *Howards End* in thirteen episodes (1964), and *A Room with a View* (1967). Two more radio plays were broadcasted in 1968 but they were both re-adaptations of the plays written by Rau and Hart. They were followed by fifteen years of relative silence (except for several re-broadcasts) which was broken by Penny Leicester's adaptation of *The Eternal Moment*, broadcasted in June 1983 by the BBC Radio 4 which has since broadcasted new radio plays based on all Forster's novels with the notable exception of *The Longest Journey*. The most recent of them was *A Passage to India* adapted by the playwright Tanika Gupta in 2019.

The radio plays (and other radio adaptations) along with his talks kept Forster popular and accessible in a period when he no longer published fiction. In a way the dramatizations paved the way for the next stage of his "adapted" career – the theatre. Once the theatre plays started to appear on the stage, the television and then the radio again gave them access to an audience that no theatre in Britain could offer.

The theatre

Forster's own attempts at writing for the stage were, to say the least, less than successful. His only completed play, *The Heart of Bosnia* written in 1911, was neither staged nor published, other attempts such as a play about St Bridget were abandoned (Furbank 1981, 1, 200–202). He was somewhat more successful with the two pageant plays he wrote in the mid-1930s, since they were staged and published, but they have never been revived since (Fordoński 2011). And yet Forster has been constantly present on various stages in the English-speaking world for precisely seventy years. By the end of 2020 twenty-three plays have been staged or been in production. *A Room with a View* has been adapted 6 times, *Howards End* 5 times (including Lopez's *The Inheritance*), *The Machine Stops* 4 times, *A Passage to India* and *Maurice* 3 times each, and *Where Angels Fear to Tread* once.

Four adaptations were prepared and staged in Forster's lifetime. The writer himself approved of the proposals and collaborated with the playwrights⁷ and he was present at their premieres (King 1988, 105; Furbank 1981, 2, 307–308). The first play was *A Room with a View* – written by Stephen Tait and Kenneth Allot, staged in 1950 and soon published. The second play was much more successful both artistically and commercially. Santha Rama Rau's 1960 *A Passage to India: A Play* (Carmagnani 2018) was staged both in the West End and on Broadway, in both locations enjoying runs exceeding 200 performances each (King 1988, 105). Forster was satisfied with the result, he called the play "excellent and sensitive dramatic version" (Stape 1993, 138). The play also brought him an unexpected and quite sizeable income – on 30 April 1961 Forster wrote to Tim Leggatt, "My wealth is enormous, part of the comfort in the present illness is having no worry about finances. Coming on to the stage has done it" (Leggatt 2012, 74).

Two more plays soon followed – *Where Angels Fear to Tread: A Play in Two Acts* by Elisabeth Hart in 1963 (Cel-Mare (Avram) 2021) and *Howards End* by Lance Sieveking and Richard Cotterell, in 1967 (an adaptation of the radio play prepared by Sieveking in 1964). Neither was, apparently, as successful as Rau's *Passage*, however, they were both soon re-adapted for TV. The premiere of *A Room with a View* also by Sieveking and Cotterell (presumably a stage adaptation of the 1967 radio play by Sieveking) in 1975 was the last in over twenty years. It was probably a combination of two factors – on the one hand, most Forster's novels had been staged by then, on the other hand, the tastes of theatre-goers started to change and the Forsterian stage adaptations seemed more and more old fashioned.

The revival was quite obviously brought about by the popularity of Lean's and then Merchant and Ivory's movies at the turn of the 1990s culminating in 1992 with the Oscar (among many other awards) winning *Howards End*. Perhaps it was not merely a coincidence that another decade of adaptations opened with a new stage production of *Howards End* by Roger Parsley in 1996. By 2006 eight more plays were written and seven of them staged. Two of them, Roger Parsley's and Andy Graham's *Maurice* (1998) and Martin Sherman's *A Passage to India* (2002) deserve at least a few more words. The former proved successful enough to enjoy several revivals, most recently in February 2020 at the Corpus Playroom, Cambridge. The latter was successful enough to be

⁷ This is amply confirmed by Mary Lago's *Calendar of the Letters of E.M. Forster* where numerous letters written by Forster to the playwrights are listed e.g. 68 letters to Elizabeth Hart (Lago 1985, 102–103).

published by Methuen as last such adaptation to date, it was recently revived at the Tower Theatre, London also in February 2020. The decade ended in 2006 with the premiere of Christina Calvit's adaptation of *A Room with a View* at the Lifeline Theatre, Chicago.

The current period of Forster's stage career started in 2016, once again after a decade of relative silence, with yet another adaptation of *A Room with a View*, this time the work of Simon Reade. It was quickly followed by *The Machine Stops* by Neil Duffield (2016), the premiere of Simon Dormandy's new version of *A Passage to India* (written in 1997) which took place in January 2018, and later on new adaptations of *The Machine Stops* (2018), *A Room with a View* (2019), and *Howards End* (2019). Dormandy is also the author of *The Point of It*, a play based on three Forster's short stories, which premiered at the GBS Theatre (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) in June 2019. A new adaptation of *Maurice* by Scott Parker was supposed to premiere at the Writers Theatre, Chicago, in May 2020 but the event was postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Certainly, the most important of the dramatic works inspired by Forster is *The Inheritance* (based on *Howards End*) by Matthew Lopez. The play was staged at the Old Vic (March 28, 2018, directed by Stephen Daldry) and transferred first to the West End Noel Coward Theatre, and then in November 2019 to the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway. The New York run ended early due to Covid-19 restrictions but the play was soon published by Faber and Faber. The play received rave reviews in the British press, Matt Trueman, the reviewer of *Variety*, wrote:

The Inheritance not only picks up the mantle [of *Angels in America*], it might just measure up. Like *Angels in America*, *The Inheritance*, [...] is a vast, imperfect and unwieldy masterpiece that unpicks queer politics and neoliberal economics anew. In addressing the debt gay men owe to their forebears, it dares to ask whether the past hasn't also sold the present up short. (Trueman 2018, n.p.)

Dominic Cavendish of *The Telegraph* called it "perhaps the most important American play of the century so far" (Cavendish 2019, n.p.).

The most recent adaptation which deserves a mention was prepared at the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine, Northern Ireland by Zoe Seaton for Big Telly company in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic and, consequently, it could not be staged in a conventional way. The adaptation of *The Machine Stops* was made available to viewers on the 6th and the 7th June 2020, on the 50th anniversary of Forster's death, as a "Zoom play" performed

by locked-down cast and with access codes distributed in lieu of tickets. Consequently, it could be enjoyed by the audience in the privacy of their cells, i.e. homes, enforced by lockdown all over the globe in a poignant commentary to how contemporary and real Forster's fantastic vision has become within a mere century.

The TV

Oddly enough, majority of the TV adaptations⁸ of Forster's works was created in his lifetime. It was, perhaps, caused by Forster's reluctance (to say the least) towards movies while he saw television as an evolved version of the radio which he enthusiastically supported from its very beginning. Between 1958 and 2017 nine TV movies, one mini-series, and one documentary with dramatized scenes from a novel were produced. As it has already been mentioned, the early TV productions were seldom original works. They were quite likely to be re-adaptations of earlier adaptations, originally prepared for the stage or written as radio plays.

Although Forster had collaborated with the BBC since 1927, it was the recently launched TV station the ITV, the second British TV broadcaster, which produced the first TV adaptation of his work. *A Room with a View*, written and directed by Robert Tronson (later known as the director of the series *All Creatures Great and Small*), was broadcasted on 2 July 1958 as the ITV Play of the Week.

In 1959, Forster (who had already been the guest of a similar programme called *BBC Monitor* produced and broadcasted by the BBC Television in December 1958) was, as he put it in a letter to Leggatt, "televised" again, this time for the American CBS series of programmes *Camera Three*. The episode entitled *E.M. Forster and The Longest Journey* consisted of a dramatized scene from the novel (the only such attempt so far) and an interview with Forster. It was broadcasted on 24 May 1959.

The BBC Television quickly picked up the adaptation of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* prepared for the stage in 1963 by Elizabeth Hart. The first movie was directed by Glen Byam Shaw and was broadcasted on 29 October 1963. It was a shortened adaptation, only 45 minutes long. A much more complete (120 minutes) and lavish TV version

⁸ I use this umbrella term on purpose. In the early days they can be qualified as television plays or television drama and were performed live, gradually they were replaced by recorded television movies.

directed by Naomi Kapon (1921–1987, later famous for the TV series *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 1970) was broadcasted as the BBC Play of the Month on 15 February 1966.

Yet another TV re-adaptation of a play based on Forster's work, *A Passage to India* was broadcasted on 16 November 1965, directed by the Indian-British Waris Hussein and adapted for TV by John Maynard. The cast included Zia Mohyeddin and Dame Sybil Thorndike. Santha Rama Rau wrote in 1986:

Forster readily gave permission to the BBC though he knew the program would be recorded on film – or videotape. I think this was partly because he felt that the TV version would be, in essence, a film of the play, and, broadly speaking, he was right. A few scenes were included – the meeting of Mrs Moore and Aziz in the mosque, the train journey to Marabar Hills and so on – where the TV cameras gave us a wider scope than the stage allowed but largely the TV adaptation stayed very close to the play. Another factor that made the TV arrangement attractive was that Sybil Thorndike, whom he greatly admired, was to play Mrs Moore. (Stape 1993: 149)

The year 1966 saw two more TV adaptations of Forster's works. The second of them (after *Where Angels Fear to Tread* mentioned above) was *The Machine Stops* broadcasted as the opening episode in the 2nd season of the BBC TV science fiction series *Out of the Unknown*. It was directed by Philip Saville (1930–2016, *Metroland*, 1997) with the screenplay by Kenneth Cavander and Clive Donner (1926–2010, the director of *The Caretaker*, 1963). The film won the main prize at the 1967 Trieste international science fiction film festival.

The TV adaptation of *Howards End* produced in 1970 and directed by Donald McWhinnie (*Wings*, 1978; *Love in Cold Climate*, 1980) started a series of adaptations written by McWhinnie's wife, playwright and director herself, Pauline Macaulay. Two more of her adaptations were *A Room with a View* (1973), also directed by McWhinnie, and *The Obelisk* (1977) directed by Giles Forster. The 1977 adaptation was the last in thirty years, till 2007 when the ITV once more produced and broadcasted an adaptation of *A Room with a View* (Fryer 2017), this time directed by Nicholas Renton with the screenplay of Andrew Davies (famous for the scripts of the first two *Bridget Jones's Diary* movies).

In 1995, Forster, played by William Osborne, appeared as a character in the TV movie *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones – Treasure of the Peacock's Eye* (directed by Carl Schultz and written by Jule Selbo) produced by the US station TV Family Channel. In a brief scene set immediately after the Great War, Forster, as a specialist in the history of

Alexandria (*Alexandria: A History and a Guide* is mentioned in the dialogue), gives advice to young Indiana Jones who is looking for a diamond, once the property of Alexander the Great. Another real life character in the movie is the famous anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski.

Another decade passed after Renton and Davies' *A Room with a View* till *Howards End*, the first TV series based on Forster's novel, was broadcasted in 2017 by the BBC One and in 2018 by Starz in the US. The director was Hettie MacDonald (most recently in charge of *Normal People*) and the screenplay was written by Kenneth Lonergan (Oscar for *Manchester by the Sea* in 2016). The highly acclaimed TV series raised hopes that other Forster's novels would follow suit. In November 2017, Salman Rushdie mentioned in a private conversation an abandoned project of another such TV series, based on *A Passage to India*, for the script of which he would be responsible. The project, however, has not moved beyond the stage of introductory talks. In 2019, Francis Lee (the director of *God's Own Country*) reported that he had been provisionally attached to direct a planned TV adaptation of *Maurice*, but he was ultimately vetoed. No further details of the project have been known since.

The TV adaptations of Forster's works further established the writer's popularity. He was either extremely lucky with the selection of people in charge of these projects or he was always considered important enough for the best candidates to be assigned to their production. It is a pity, however, that except for the two adaptations produced in the 21st century, only one of the earlier TV movies, the 1966 *The Machine Stops*, is officially available.

Movies

Movie adaptations of Forster's novels are quite probably the best known and the most often discussed in scholarly studies of all the adaptations presented in this article. However, very few people in the audiences were aware of the fact that Forster himself neither liked nor appreciated the cinema as an art, and it was a conscious decision not to accept any offers from film-makers which were especially numerous after the success of Rau's stage adaptation in 1960 (Stape 1993, 131). Forster rejected such an offer even when Satyajit Ray was proposed as the prospective director (Stape 1993, 149).

After a period of a relative lull in the interest in Forster of the late 1970s, the movies introduced his works to new audiences, paving the way for a renewed interest among playwrights and composers, which soon followed. Five movies were released within

mere eight years: *A Passage to India* (dir. David Lean, 1984) (Levin 1986; Lindley 1992), *A Room with a View* (dir. James Ivory, 1985) (Fryer 2017), *Maurice* (dir. James Ivory, 1987) (Goscilo 1989), *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (dir. Charles Sturridge, 1991) (Lauri-Lucente 2015), and *Howards End* (dir. James Ivory, 1992) (Outka 2003; McCullough 2018). The interested readers will find ample amount of information about these movies – a decent introduction to the movies and additional sources may be found in Landy (2007), Ingersoll (2012)⁹, or Moczko (2014).

Hanif Kureishi's film *My Beautiful Launderette* (directed by Stephen Frears, 1985) responds to Forster's *A Passage to India* both directly and indirectly through the lens of Lean's movie (Fernandez Carbajal 2017). Similarities are, indeed, hard to miss as e.g. Kureishi's story features two main characters – one English and one Indian – who meet in circumstances which seem to say “No, not yet ... No, not there” (Forster 1978, 312) but to whom Kureishi is able to offer a happy ending. In 2019, Kureishi wrote a play based on the 1985 screenplay. It premiered on 20 September at the Curve theatre in Leicester with original music composed by Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe of the Pet Shop Boys.

Merchant and Ivory's movie *A Room with a View* is alluded to in Gilbert Adair's novella *Love and Death on Long Island* when the main hero, a middle-aged writer, the author of five novels, happens to stop by a cinema where he sees stills from “an adaptation of a novel by Forster” (Adair 1990, 20) and reminisces about his own meeting with Forster at Cambridge in the 1950s. It is obvious from the description that the movie is *A Room with a View* but the title is not mentioned. In the 1997 film adaptation, written and directed by Richard Kwietniowski, the allusion was slightly altered and *A Room with a View* was replaced with a fictitious adaptation of *Eternal Moment* with “the” missing from the original title of Forster's short story on the poster, designed very much in style of Merchant and Ivory movies, which is shown on the screen. The novella and the movie mention Forster but the plot follows that of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912).

The Longest Journey remains the only one novel which has not been shown on any screen so far (except for a dramatized scene in a TV programme in 1959). A project of such a movie by the producer and director of numerous documentaries, Adrian Munsey, was first revealed in January 2015 (Maughan 2015). Some more details were revealed in November 2016 when Munsey joined forces with two other producers and hired Angus Fletcher (Professor of English and Cinema as well as the author of the screenplay for

⁹ It may be advisable, however, to supplement reading the book with a review such as Monk (2017).

a still unreleased biopic *Middle Earth* about J.R.R. Tolkien) to adapt the novel for the screen (Tartaglione 2016). The movie is still listed as “in production” by the IMDB, no further information has been made public since.

In 2019, Odyssey Television produced a documentary entitled *E.M. Forster: His Longest Journey* produced and directed by Adrian Munsey and Vance Goodwin, including interviews with Forster’s biographers Nicola Beauman and Wendy Moffat, as well as a number of other scholars. It seems that this is what the original project of adaptation finally boiled down to. The collection of King’s College Archive Centre (Cambridge University) includes a screenplay based on Forster’s short story *Other Kingdom* written in 1993 by Michael Burge, probably one of many attempted in the wake of the successes of Lean and Merchant and Ivory. Perhaps Fletcher’s screenplay rather than released will also be discovered in an archive one day.

Short films

Short films, also known now as shorts and once also as short subjects, can be defined as motion pictures that have a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits. In literary terms they are the movie equivalent of a short story and, perhaps unsurprisingly, all six shorts¹⁰ based on Forster’s work are adaptations of short stories – five of *The Machine Stops* and one of *The Obelisk*. The first of them (and probably the most successful) was *Plug* (1998) directed by Meher Gourjian (now specialist in special effects e.g. for the *Harry Potter* series). *Desire* (2000), the only short based on *The Obelisk*, was the work of Jorge Torregrossa (now a successful TV director in his native Spain) who both directed it and wrote the script.

The four more recent adaptations of *The Machine Stops* were all produced when their directors and screenwriters were students, usually as term projects. The 2009 version was the work of twin brothers Adam and Nathan Freise, produced at School of Visual Arts, NYC; the 2010 version was the work of Jesse McNeely and Chantelle Sousa at the University of Nevada, Reno. The 2011 version was produced by Alex Vaughan (director and screenwriter) and Agnes Calka (screenplay), shot on campus at North Lake College

¹⁰ It is possible to find at least three more – ranging from 35 seconds to 2 minutes – on YouTube, all inspired by *The Machine Stops*. They are, however, spoofs (term used by one of their authors) rather than serious shorts.

in Irving, Texas, and it received Judges' Choice and Audience's Choice Awards at the NLC Video Festival 2011. The 2014 (the date of upload to YouTube, no further information is available) version was directed by Alex LaRoza.

The opera

Forster's passion for music started in his early childhood and continued until his old age. In his younger days he was a fairly skilful pianist and all his life he remained a music lover, attending concerts and opera performances (Fillion 2010, 1–23), which would feature prominently in his fiction (Fordoński 2010). Forster's name has been known to opera lovers since 1951 when, with Eric Crozier, he completed the libretto for Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*.

It is impossible to discuss here all the numerous stage adaptations of *Billy Budd* (see: Rochlitz 2012). It does make sense perhaps to mention that as many as eight of these performances were televised by various TV stations and, with the arrival of generally accessible recording technologies, distributed on cassettes or DVDs. The first TV transmission took place as early as 1952 when the first episode of the *NBC Television Opera Theatre* presented on October 19th the performance directed by Kirk Browning with Theodore Uppman as Billy Budd. The BBC broadcasted their version on December 11th, 1966, with Peter Pears as Captain Vere. Later versions appeared in 1988 (production from the National English Opera recorded for the BBC), 1998 (production from the Metropolitan Opera), 2001 (German production), 2010 (production from Glyndebourne Festival), 2017 (production from Teatro Real Madrid), and most recently a production of Den Norske Opera & Ballett, Oslo in 2019.

The first opera based on Forster's novel was *A Room with a View* composed by Robert Nelson with the libretto written by Buck Ross. The original opera was first performed in 1992 but it was revised for a new performance in 2004 at the Moores Opera House (University of Houston) in Houston, Texas, and this version is available on DVD. The second opera, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the work of Mark Lanz Weiser (music) and Roger Bruyatte (libretto), was first performed in 1999 at the Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland) but the professional premiere took place only on 7th February 2015 at the California Theatre, San Jose, California.

This premiere may be seen as a part of the rediscovery of the operatic quality of Forster's writing which began in 2014 since when a new opera has appeared almost

every year. The first was *The Machine Stops* by John Lake (music) and Cecile Goding (libretto), stage reading of selections was performed on 17th June 2014 at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and a recording from this reading is available on YouTube. The opera has since remained a work in progress, its premiere is currently scheduled for July 25th, 2021 at Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, Coralville, Iowa, US. It was followed in January 2016 by another take on *The Machine Stops*, this time composed by Stephen Webb, Robert Taylor, and Patrick McGraw, with the libretto written by Michael Albano, staged at the University of Toronto MacMillan Theatre.

The semi-professional Surrey Opera staged in September 2017 at the Harlequin Theatre, Redhill¹¹ *The Life to Come*, written by the young composer Louis Mander and the seasoned writer and actor (but an unexperienced librettist) Stephen Fry. In an interview to the local newspaper Fry explained his choice of source material as follows:

The Life to Come struck me as a possibility, partly because it answers some of the clichéd requirements for what makes good opera – thwarted passion and a terrible death at the end – but also because I liked the fact that it dealt with sexual and political issues in a way that’s personal, passionate and sad but on the edge of satire. (White 2017, n.p.)

The most recent opera based on the fiction of Forster, *Howards End. America* premiered in February 2019 at the Z Space, San Francisco, California. This chamber opera is the work of Allen Shearer (music) and Claudia Stevens (libretto), it was the eighth opera they wrote together (Stevens 2017). In some ways it may be compared to two of the earlier discussed takes on *Howards End*, *The Inheritance* and *On Beauty* as it also transfers the location from Edwardian England at the beginning of the 20th century to the US (as both Smith and Lopez did) in the 1950s and introduces along with the theme of social injustice the topic of racial inequality as Smith also does in her novel.

It is quite clear from the above description that the Forsterian operas are quite ephemeral undertakings. They are usually staged at universities or local theatres, only one of them has been revived so far. They are also most often the works of young and relatively unexperienced composers and librettists (except for Shearer and Stevens); perhaps their chance for a revival and a wider appreciation will come when their authors are better known.

¹¹ Further performances took place at Croydon, Brighton, and Oslo (White 2017).

Musicals

Apart from more or less serious operas Forster has also been the inspiration behind two musicals. The first of them, *A Room with a View*, opened on 2 March 2012 at the Old Globe Theatre in London, to “reviews that ranged from very enthusiastic to scathing, with most mingling praise and reservations” (Berson 2014, n.p.) such as the review in *Variety* which concluded: “*A Room With a View* is beautiful, but this first production does itself in by its refusal to raise the stakes and treat traditional authority’s power as something to be taken, and confronted, for real” (Verini 2012, n.p.). The libretto was written by the novelist and comedian Marc Acito and lyrics and score by Jeffrey Stock. It was revived in an improved version in Seattle at the 5th Avenue Theater in March 2014 but apparently failed to transfer to Broadway as it was initially planned. Kit Goldstein Grant was somewhat luckier with her *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. The musical had its premiere at the Off-Broadway Players Theatre in New York in September 2017.

Other Musical Inspirations

The best known Forster’s short story *The Machine Stops* (1909) inspired also three more musical works – they are a song and two concept albums. The song “The Machine Stops” was released in 1983 by the English jazz-funk band Level 42 on their fourth album *Standing in the Light*. In 2016, the space rock band Hawkwind published under the Cherry Red label the concept album *The Machine Stops*, the twenty-ninth in their career which had started in 1969. The album consists of 14 songs which in an hour retell in a poetic way the plot of the short story. The second concept album *The Machine Stops* is the debut work of the Italian guitarist Tommaso Gambini and it was released in March 2020 by the Workin’ Label. The album features a suite of seven original smooth jazz compositions of Gambini with spoken excerpts from the short story. The suite was first presented at the Torino Jazz Festival in May 2020.

Politics

Forster’s political views, his belief in democracy and liberalism, rooted in the 19th but put to the test in the 20th century might have been perceived as outdated at the moment of his death but surprisingly enough prove current again and again. His belief in the

value of friendship above political views that he stood by all his life (Fordoński 2017b) is just as valid today as it was when he first presented his creed in “What I Believe” in 1938. Perhaps Forster is not an authority that politicians like to quote or refer to in their speeches and yet he is present in political debates as these two examples may prove.

The Indian poet and scholar Maaz Bin Bilal referred to Forster’s *The Longest Journey* in his paper on Indian universities facing a political crisis in the mid-2010s (Bilal 2017). Pankaj Mishra stirred a much broader debate with his article published on January 17, 2019, in the *New York Times* entitled “The Malign Incompetence of the British Ruling Class.” Mishra attempted to explain the political disaster of Brexit with certain British national characteristics, using E.M. Forster essay “Notes on the English Character” (Fordoński 2016) as his source. In Mishra’s opinion: “The malign incompetence of the Brexiteers was precisely prefigured during Britain’s exit from India in 1947, most strikingly in the lack of orderly preparation for it” because they were “privately educated men, callow beneficiaries of the country’s elitist public school system” as described by Forster in his essay (Mishra 2019, n.p.).

Scholarship

Last but not least we must refer to the creative influence of Forster upon the academy. Although Forster was not an academic himself, regardless of his experience as a lecturer and the long-term connection with Cambridge, his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) remains an important reading not only among Forsterian scholars. The works of Forster have been the subject of literary research for over a century. The first book dedicated to his works, *The Writings of E.M. Forster* by Rose Macaulay was published in 1938. The annotated bibliography of writings about Forster published by Frederick P.W. McDowell in 1976 includes 1913 texts (McDowell 1976), although the editor was rather liberal in his selection and many, especially the early texts included do not qualify as scholarly or academic works.

It is difficult to estimate how many books, chapters, articles, and papers dealing with Forster and his works have appeared since 1976. From the year 2000 to 2017 there were at least fifty such books, including previously unpublished material by Forster himself such as his diaries and letters (Fordoński 2017a). The most current overview of Forsterian scholarship may be found in the “Introduction: Forster and After” by Elsa Cavalié and Laurent Mellet in the collection of essays *Only Connect: E.M. Forster’s Legacies in*

British Fiction they edited in 2017. Two scholarly associations have been founded to promote the works of Forster – the International E.M. Forster Society IEMFS (June 2010) and Association for Forsterian Research AFAR (December 2015).

Conclusions

The interest in Forster shifts and changes over time as new aspects of his work resound more with contemporary issues. The genres and media also change – this process is obviously influenced by their availability and accessibility although Forster’s dislike of cinema also played a significant part. When we set apart the novels, in which case the writers’ personal fascinations are the most significant factor, we can clearly see “tides” of Forster’s popularity. The first one started slowly in the 1940s with the radio-plays, strengthened in the 1950s with the stage adaptations, and reached its climax in the 1960s when TV adaptations began. Following the death of the writer the tide turned and in the 1970s we see the total of only four (three TV and one stage) adaptations. Naturally, Forster remained a part of the literary canon, his works were included in reading lists while the existing adaptations continued to be staged and broadcasted.

The tide started to swell again in the early 1980s when the rights to movie adaptations became available. It started in earnest in 1984 with Lean’s *A Passage to India* and within a decade four more movies were produced, and the first opera was staged. The theatre was slow to pick up, the first adaptation appeared only in 1996, but once the interest in Forster was renewed, we saw a new play almost every year until 2006 when the “saturation point” had long been reached (partly as majority of possible adaptations was already available) and another decade of “low tide” began.

The most recent “high tide” has started in the mid-2010s, more precisely in the years 2014–2016 – when the first comic book, the first concept album, three operas, and two plays appeared within three years. This new wave of interest, largely fuelled by the “discovery” (inverted commas are necessary here as the short story was included in obligatory reading lists in British schools which makes it rather difficult to miss) of *The Machine Stops* (last six years saw ten various adaptations of the short story) and the “re-discovery” of *Howards End* (four adaptations), includes also other works of Forster, some never adapted before as “The Life to Come” or “The Point of It.” If the trend holds as it did before, with the appearance of streaming platforms and their insatiable thirst for new adaptable source materials, we can expect another decade filled with Forsterian adaptations.

The popularity of Forster and his importance within the English-speaking culture seem only to strengthen with the passage of time. It can be compared to that of Jane Austen, Forster's favourite novelist and also a writer with a fairly modest oeuvre but dozens of adaptations, rather than to that of any of his contemporaries. The English – first readers and then writers, composers, directors, screenwriters, playwrights, librettists – started to appreciate Forster very soon, even if his critical attitude might not have been to everybody's liking. They read him today with still greater attention as the safe and seemingly unchanging world, not unlike that which is the setting of his works, disappears, replaced by a world in which nothing is certain.

The works inspired by Forster or merely adapted from his works vary greatly in their artistic merit and recognition; some of them are award-winning novels and block-buster movies, many others are, or perhaps were, ephemeral, known to a very small circle of aficionados. They are all, however, a testimony to the fact that Forster still has something important to say to us. Something that must not only be listened to but requires a response, and provokes still new questions.

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Online Resources

Amazon.com and amazon.co.uk

BBC Genome Project <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/>

Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com

The Playwrights Database Doollee www.doollee.com

Lists of adaptations

Comics

2014 – *The Machine Stops* – Michael Lent, Marc Rene.

2019 – *The Blessed Machine* – Jesse Hamm, Mark Rodgers, Caitlin Like.

Concept albums

2016 – *The Machine Stops* – Hawkwind, Cherry Red Record, available on YouTube.

2020 – *The Machine Stops* – Tommaso Gambini, Workin' Label, available on YouTube.

Movies

1984 – *A Passage to India* – director: David Lean, screenplay: David Lean and Santha Rama Rau, producer: John Brabourne, Richard Goodwin.

1987 – *Maurice* – director: James Ivory, screenplay: Kit Hesketh-Harvey and James Ivory, producer: Ismail Merchant.

1987 – *A Room with a View* – director: James Ivory, screenplay: Ruth Praver Jhabvala, producer: Ismail Merchant.

1991 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – director: Charles Sturridge, screenplay: Tim Sullivan, Derek Granger and Charles Sturridge, producer: Derek Granger.

1992 – *Howards End* – director: James Ivory, screenplay: Ruth Praver Jhabvala, producer: Ismail Merchant.

Musicals

2012 – *A Room with a View* – Marc Acito (book), Jeffrey Stock (music and lyrics), staged at the Old Globe, London, premiere 2 March 2012.

2017 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – Kit Goldstein Grant (book, music and lyrics), staged at The Players Theatre, New York, September 2017. Complete demo recording available on Soundcloud.

Novels

1915 – *The Voyage Out* – Virginia Woolf.

1920 – *Women in Love* – David Herbert Lawrence.

1922 – *The Enchanted April* – Elizabeth von Arnim.

1927 – *The Hotel* – Elizabeth Bowen.

1928 – *Lady Chatterley's Lover* – David Herbert Lawrence.

1960 – *A Treasonable Growth* – Ronald Blythe.

- 1985 – *The Italian Lesson* – Janice Elliott.
 1988 – *The Swimming Pool Library* – Alan Hollinghurst.
 1998 – *The Spell* – Alan Hollinghurst.
 2004 – *The Closed Circle* – Jonathan Coe.
 2005 – *On Beauty* – Zadie Smith.
 2011 – *The Stranger's Child* – Alan Hollinghurst.
 2012 – *My Policeman* – Bethan Roberts.
 2014 – *Arctic Summer* – Damon Galgut.
 2018 – *The Ballad of Syd & Morgan* – Haydn Middleton.
 2021 – *Alec* – William di Canzio.

Opera

- 1992 – *A Room with a View* – Robert Nelson (music), Buck Ross (libretto), (revised 2004). Recording from the Moores Opera Center, Houston released on DVD by Newport Classic in 2006.
 1999 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – Mark Lanz Weiser (music), Roger Bruyatte (libretto), professional premiere at the California Theatre, San Jose, California, 7th February 2015. Available on YouTube.
 2014 – *The Machine Stops* – John Lake (music), Cecile Goding (libretto), stage reading of selections 17th June 2014, University of Iowa, Iowa City, available on YouTube. Work in progress, premiere scheduled for July 25th, 2021 at Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, Coralville, Iowa, US.
 2016 – *The Machine Stops* – Stephen Webb, Robert Taylor, Patrick McGraw (music), Michael Albano (libretto), staged at the University of Toronto MacMillan Theatre, January 2016.
 2017 – *The Life to Come* – Louis Mander (music), Stephen Fry (libretto), premiere at the Harlequin Theatre, Redhill (Surrey Opera), 28th September 2017.
 2019 – *Howards End, America* – Claudia Stevens (libretto), Allen Shearer (music), premiere at Z Space, San Francisco, California in February 2019.

Opera – Screen Adaptations of *Billy Budd*

- 1952 – dir. Kirk Browning, conductor Peter Hermann Adler. NBC Television Opera Theatre (season 4 episode 1) with Theodore Uppman as Billy Budd. Available on YouTube.
 1966 – dir. Basil Coleman, conductor Charles Mackerras. The BBC production was broadcasted on December 11th, with Peter Pears as Captain Vere. Released by Decca

in the DVD set *Britten: Composer, Conductor, Pianist – The Historic BBC Films* in 2010. Available on YouTube.

1988 – dir. Barrie Gavin, conductor David Atherton. Production from the English National Opera filmed by the BBC, released on DVD.

1998 – dir. Brian Large, conductor Stuart Bedford. Production from the Metropolitan Opera, released on DVD.

2001 – dir. Claus Viller, conductor Donald Runnicles. German production for Kultur, released on DVD.

2010 – dir. François Roussillon, stage dir. Michael Grandage, conductor Mark Elder. Production from Glyndebourne Festival, released on DVD.

2017 – dir. Jérémie Cuvillier, stage dir. Deborah Warner, conductor Ivor Bolton. Production from Teatro Real Madrid, released on DVD.

2019 – dir. Friedrich Gatz, stage dir. Annilese Miskimmon, conductor Mark Wigglesworth. Production of Den Norske Opera & Ballett, Oslo in co-production with Teatr Wielki Opera Narodowa, Warsaw, released on DVD.

Plays

1950 – *A Room with a View* – Stephen Tait and Kenneth Allot, staged (The Arts Theatre, Cambridge) and published (London: Edward Arnold, 1951).

1960 – *A Passage to India: A Play* – Santha Rama Rau, staged (Comedy Theatre, London) and published (London: Edward Arnold).

1963 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread: A Play in Two Acts* – Elisabeth Hart, staged (The New Arts Theatre, London) and published (London: S. French).

1967 – *Howards End* – Lance Sieveking and Richard Cotterell, staged at the Golder's Green Hippodrome, London.

1975 – *A Room with a View* – Lance Sieveking and Richard Cotterell, staged by the Prospect Theatre Company at the Albery Theatre.

1996 – *Howards End* – Roger Parsley, premiere at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London.

1998 – *Maurice* – Roger Parsley and Andy Graham, premiere at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London.

1999 – *Maurice* – Michael D. Jackson, premiere at Studio Theatre, Sacramento.

2002 – *A Passage to India* – Martin Sherman, staged (Richmond Theatre Surrey) and published (London: Methuen).

2002 – *Howards End* – Marcus Goodwin, premiere at the Seattle Center House Theatre, Seattle, USA.

- 2003 – *A Room with a View* – Roger Parsley, premiere at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich.
- 2004 – *The Machine Stops* – Eric Coble, premiere at Hiram College (Hiram, Ohio).
- 2006 – *A Room with a View* – Christina Calvit, premiere at Lifeline Theatre, Chicago.
- 2016 – *A Room with a View* – Simon Reade, premiere at Festival Theatre, Chichester, later staged at the Theatre Royal, Bath.
- 2016 – *The Machine Stops* – Neil Duffield, premiere at the Theatre Royal, York, directed by Juliet Forster.
- 2018 – *A Passage to India* – Simon Dormandy, premiere at the Royal and Derngate Theatre, Northampton, January 16th, 2018 (Written in 1997).
- 2016 – *A Room with a View* – Simon Reade, premiere at Festival Theatre, Chichester, later staged at the Theatre Royal, Bath.
- 2016 – *The Machine Stops* – Neil Duffield, premiere at the Theatre Royal, York, directed by Juliet Forster.
- 2019 – *A Room with a View* – Kate McAll, staged at the James Bridges Theater, UCLA in March 2019.
- 2019 – *Howards End* – Douglas Post, premiere at the Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Theatre Wit, Chicago.
- 2019 – *The Point of It* – Simon Dormandy, based on short stories “The Point of It,” “The Story of a Panic,” and “The Other Boat,” premiere at the GBS Theatre (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art), 28 June 2019.
- 2020 – *The Machine Stops* – Zoe Seaton, staged by the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine, Northern Ireland – online play available on 6th and 7th June on Zoom.
- 2021 – *Maurice* – Scott Parker, directed by David Cromer for the Writers Theatre, Chicago, USA. Originally announced in May 2020, date of premiere unknown.

Plays inspired by Forster’s life

- 2009 – *A Dose of Fame* – Stephen Wakelam, radio play, broadcasted by BBC Radio 4.
- 2015 – *A Kind of Marriage* – Charles Leipart, presented as a rehearsed reading at the Donmar rehearsal space, London, in 2017, extract published in the *Qu*, in January 2018.
- 2019 – *Nonsense and Beauty* – Scott C. Sickles, premiere at the Repertory Theatre of St Louis, Missouri, in March 2019.

Radio Plays¹²

- 1942 – *The Celestial Omnibus* – Leonard Cottrell, BBC Home Service.
- 1945 – *The Eternal Moment* – Alec Macdonald, BBC Home Service.
- 1946 – *Mr. and Mrs. Abbey's Difficulties* – Douglas Cleverdon, adapted from the essay by E.M. Forster, BBC Home Service.
- 1947 – *Two Fantasies* – Leonard Cottrell, (short stories *Co-ordination* and *Other Kingdom*, adapted as plays), BBC Third Programme.
- 1947 – *The Story of the Siren* – Leonard Cottrell, BBC Third Programme.
- 1948 – *A Passage to India* – George Lefferts, NBC, NBC University Theatre. Available on YouTube.
- 1955 – *Between Two Worlds: A Passage to India* – Lance Sieveking, BBC Home Service.
- 1957 – *The Celestial Omnibus* – Richard Chappick, CBS, the *CBS Radio Workshop* episode 81, broadcasted on 18 August. Published on CD in 2017. Available on YouTube.
- 1964 – *Howards End* – Lance Sieveking, (13 episodes), BBC Home Service.
- 1967 – *A Room with a View* – Lance Sieveking, BBC Home Service.
- 1968 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – Cynthia Puge (an adaptation of the play by Elizabeth Hart), BBC Radio 4.
- 1968 – *A Passage to India* – John Maynard (an adaptation of the play by Santha Rama Rau), BBC Radio 4.
- 1983 – *The Eternal Moment* – Penny Leicester, BBC Radio 4.
- 1985 – *Howards End* – Jeffrey Segal, (four parts), BBC Radio 4.
- 1995 – *A Room with a View* – David Wade, BBC Radio 4. BBC CD. Available on YouTube.
- 2001 – *The Machine Stops* – Gregory Norminton, BBC Radio 4. Available on YouTube.
- 2003 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – Penny Leicester, BBC Radio 4. BBC CD.
- 2007 – *Maurice* – Philip Osment, BBC Radio 4. BBC CD.
- 2007 – *The Machine Stops* – Eric Coble, (an adaptation of the play which premiered in 2004), WCPN 90.3 FM in Cleveland, Ohio. Available on YouTube.
- 2009 – *Howards End* – Amanda Dalton, BBC Radio 4. BBC CD.
- 2019 – *A Passage to India* – Tanika Gupta, BBC Radio 4. BBC CD.

¹²The list below does not include novels and short stories read on the air by the author or actors, only dramatizations. Radio-plays marked with “BBC CD” were published in the CD collection *E.M. Forster: A BBC Radio Collection*, London: BBC Studios Distribution Ltd. 2019.

Short films

- 1998 – *Plug* – director: Meher Gourjian, screenplay (based on the short story *The Machine*): Meher Gourjian and Jamie Waese. 11 minutes. Available on YouTube.
- 1999 – *Desire* – director: Jorge Torregrassa, screenplay (based on the short story *The Obelisk*): Jorge Torregrassa.
- 2009 – *The Machine Stops* – director: Adam Freise, Nathan Freise, screenplay: Adam Freise, Nathan Freise. School of Visual Arts, NYC. 11 minutes. Available on YouTube and Vimeo.
- 2010 – *The Machine Stops* – screenplay: Jesse McNeely, Chantelle Sousa, producer: Digital Media Studio at the University of Nevada, Reno. 20 minutes. Available on YouTube.
- 2011 – *The Machine Stops* – director: Alex Vaughan, screenplay: Alex Vaughan and Agnes Calka, producer: Gerson Cobaxin. 10 minutes, shot on campus at North Lake College in Irving, Texas. Available on YouTube.
- 2014 – *The Machine Stops* – director: Alex LaRoza. 11 minutes. Available on YouTube.

TV Adaptations

- 1958 – *A Room with a View* – director: Robert Tronson, screenplay: Robert Tronson, producer: Granada Television, (ITV Play of the Week Season 3 Episode 43).
- 1959 – *E.M. Forster and The Longest Journey* – with a dramatized scene from the novel and an interview with Forster. Producer: CBS (US), (*Camera Three* Season 4 Episode 38).
- 1963 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – director: Glen Byam Shaw, screenplay: Elisabeth Hart, producer: BBC. 45 minutes.
- 1965 – *A Passage to India* – director: Waris Hussein, screenplay: Santha Rama Rau, adapted for TV by John Maynard, producer: BBC, (BBC Play of the Month Season 1 Episode 2). Available on YouTube.
- 1966 – *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – director: Naomi Kapon, screenplay: Elisabeth Hart, producer: Cedric Messina, producer: BBC, (BBC Play of the Month Season 1 Episode 5), 120 minutes.
- 1966 – *The Machine Stops* – director: Philip Saville, screenplay: Kenneth Cavander and Clive Donner, producer: BBC, (*Out of the Unknown* Season 2 Episode 1). Released on DVD in 2014 in the box-set *Out of the Unknown* by the BBC.
- 1970 – *Howards End* – director: Donald McWhinnie, screenplay: Pauline Macaulay, producer BBC, (BBC Play of the Month Season 5 Episode 7).
- 1973 – *A Room with a View* – director: Donald McWhinnie, screenplay: Pauline Macaulay, producer: BBC, (BBC Play of the Month Season 8 Episode 7).

1977 – *The Obelisk* – director: Giles Forster, screenplay: Pauline Macaulay, producer: BBC (BBC Premier Season 1 Episode 4).

2007 – *A Room with a View* – director: Nicholas Renton, screenplay: Andrew Davies, producer IWC Media for the ITV, released on DVD in 2008 (PBS in the US) and 2009 (ITV in the UK).

2017 – *Howards End* – director: Hettie MacDonald, screenplay: Kenneth Lonergan, producer: Laura Hastings-Smith for BBC One / Starz, released on DVD in 2018 by Lionsgate Home Entertainment.