

*A Passage to India* (Lezione 22/10/2015)

**1. Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970)**

- 1897 King's College, Cambridge.
- Viaggi in Germania Italia, Grecia (1905-1910); Egitto (1915-18).
- il viaggio in India (1912-14; 1921-1924).
- Riconoscimenti: Order of Companions of Honour (1953); Order of Merit (1969).
- Opere maggiori:

Romanzi:

*Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905)

*The Longest Journey* (1907)

*A Room with a View* (1908)

*Howard's End* (1910)

*A Passage to India* (1924)

*Maurice* (1971)

Non Fiction:

*Aspects of the Novel* (1927)

*Abinger Harvest* (1936)

- Temi:
  - Affetto *vs.* convenzioni sociali;
  - *comedy of manners*.

**2. Forster e il genere *novel***

*Aspects of the Novel*: Forster prende in esame sette aspetti del romanzo (storia, personaggi, trama, fantasia, profezia, motivi e ritmo).

Citazione 1

“the novel’s success lies in its own sensitiveness, not in the success of its subject matter”  
(E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, London: Penguin, 1966, p.27).

Citazione 2

“Flat characters were called “humours” in the seventeenth century, and are sometimes called types, and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality: when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round”  
(*Aspects*, p. 33).

Citazione 3

“The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is a flat pretending to be round. It has the incalculability of life about it—life within the pages of a book” (*Aspects*, p. 40).

### 3. Forster e il modernismo

- *Bloomsbury Group* vs. *Edwardian Fiction*

#### Citazione 4

“[Forster occupies] an ambiguous position in the history of modern fiction, on the grounds that he could never muster the conviction for a pragmatic assault on traditional forms and remained committed to an evolutionary rather than revolutionary change” (M. Levenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 78-79).

### 4. *A Passage to India* (1924): elementi narrativi

- Genesi e significato del titolo
  - La dedica a Syed Ross Masood.
  - Il titolo: Walt Whitman, “Passage to India”:

#### Citazione 5

“Passage O soul to India!

Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables.

Not you alone, proud truths of the world!

Nor you alone, ye facts of modern science!

But myths and fables of eld—Asia’s, Africa’s fables

The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos’d dreams,

The deep diving bibles and legends,

The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions”

(W. Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 1900)

- Spazio
  - Chandapore: il vecchio quartiere indiano vs. la British Civil Station.
  - Chandapore Club.
  - La moschea.
  - Le grotte Marabar.
  - Mau.

- Tempo della storia
  - Amirstar massacre (1913).

- Punto di vista
  - Narratore onnisciente in terza persona, variazione della prospettiva del punto di vista, stile indiretto.

#### Citazione 6

“And unlocking a drawer, he took out his wife's photograph. He gazed at it, and tears spouted from his eyes. He thought, "How unhappy I am!" But because he really was unhappy, another emotion soon mingled with his self-pity: he desired to remember his wife and could not. Why could he remember people whom he did not love? They were always so vivid to him, whereas the more he looked at this photograph, the less he saw. She had eluded him thus, ever since they had carried her to her tomb. He had known that she would pass from his hands and eyes, but had thought she could live in his mind, not realizing that the very fact that we have loved the dead increases their unreality, and that the more passionately we invoke them the further they recede” (E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, London: Penguin, 1979 [1924], pp. 74-75, Ch.VI).

- Narratore intrusivo:

#### Citazione 7

“In every remark he found a meaning, but not always the true meaning, and his life though vivid was largely a dream. Fielding, for instance, had not meant that Indians are obscure, but that Post Impressionism is; a gulf divided his remark from Mrs. Turton's "Why, they speak English," but to Aziz the two sounded alike. Fielding saw that something had gone wrong, and equally that it had come right, but he didn't fidget, being an optimist where personal relations were concerned, and their talk rattled on as before” (*Passage*, p. 84, Ch. VIII).

#### ○ Personaggi

- Dr. Aziz
- Mr. Cyril Fielding
- Mrs. Moore
- Ms. Adela Quested
- Ronny Heaslop
- Professor Godbole

#### ○ Temi

- *culture clash*:

#### Citazione 8

“The trouble is that the English nature is not at all easy to understand. It has a great air of simplicity, it advertises itself as simple, but the more we consider it, the greater the problems we shall encounter. People talk of the mysterious East, but the West also is mysterious. It has depths that do not reveal themselves at the first gaze. We know what the sea looks like from a distance: it is of one color, and level, and obviously cannot contain such creatures as fish. But if we look into the sea over the edge of a boat, we see a dozen colors, and depth below depth, and fish swimming in them. That sea is the English character--apparently imperturbable and even. These depths and the colors are the English romanticism and the English sensitiveness--we do not expect to find such things, but they exist. And -- to continue my metaphor--the fish are the English emotions, which are always trying to get up to the surface, but don't quite know how. For the most part we see them moving far below, distorted and obscure. Now and then they succeed and we exclaim, "Why, the Englishman has emotions! He actually can feel!" And occasionally we see that beautiful creature the flying fish, which rises out of the water altogether into the air and the sunlight. English literature is a flying fish. It is a sample of the life that goes on day after day beneath the surface; it is a proof that beauty and emotion exist in the salt, inhospitable sea” (E. M. Forster, “Notes on the English Character”, in *Abinger Harvest*, London: Penguin, 1967, [1936], p. 156).

#### Citazione 9

“[...] the book is not really about politics, though it is the political aspect of it that caught the general public and made it sell. It's about something wider than politics, about the search of the human race for a more lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the Indian earth and the Indian sky, about the horror lurking in the Marbar Caves and the release symbolized by the birth of Krishna. It is, or rather desires to be, philosophic and poetic” (E. M. Forster, “Three Continents”, as quoted in the “Editor's Introduction” of *A Passage to Indian*, London: Penguin, 1979 [1924], p. 25)

- Dio e la religione e il simbolismo.