

homophobic milieu presented here will highlight the progress made by modern society in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity, and evoke sympathy for the isolation and mockery that gay men have had to endure in times gone by.

Ruby Roy, 2015.
A Comparative Study of E. M. Forster's Maurice
(New Delhi: Gennext Publications)

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According to the cover, "This book attempts to comprehensively and objectively study, survey, evaluate thematic patterns in *Maurice* in comparison with other novels of E. M. Forster. Thus a deliberate design emerges which proves some of Forster's viewpoints regarding Love, Life, and role of artists." Ruby Roy holds a Bachelor's and Master's in English from the University of Delhi and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. on "Ironic Vision of Christopher Marlowe" from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University in Agra.

Roy begins by asking why, if Forster was dissatisfied with the manuscript of *Maurice*, did he not destroy it? Her answer: Forster's desire for posthumous fame. Roy next considers two reasons for Forster's failure to write more novels after *A Passage to India*: his nostalgia for a lost Edwardian world before the Great War and the psychological pressures of homosexuality. Pursuing sexual repression, Roy compares *Maurice* to "Goldie," Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Forster's friend from college, and points to the contradictory exhortation by all of *Maurice*'s family members and mentors to imitate his father, whom he never knew (and, as I will note below, whose sexuality remains ambivalent). She then surveys Forster's works for similarities, but there is little originality or depth there. In fact, it is unclear what this little volume attempts to accomplish.

We do find a promising claim on the cover: "*Maurice*, a central text within the gay literary canon, is by far one of the bravest creative works written within the genre of LGBT literature, arguably, it is one of the bravest texts of the early twentieth century. [...] While bravery is not necessarily reflected in Forster's [perfectly reasonable] [Roy's square brackets] decision to withhold publishing the text during his lifetime, it is reflected in the novel's content to envision a world, fictional or realistic, in which two men could 'could [sic] fall in love and remain in it' [that] was beyond the scope of most modernist writers." What I would have wished for here is a comparison to those modernist writers, a discussion of the Greenwood's realism, an analysis of its bravery. Later the verdict is more negative, Roy dismissing Forster's depiction of homosexuality as "tortured and ambiguous" (74)⁹—how do those adjectives jibe with "brave"?

Lamentably, the companion is riddled with grammatical errors and typos, some quite irritating, such as *Maurice*'s posthumous publication date of 1917, and of course there is the apostrophe in *Howards End*. The "lightest" sentence for homosexuality was not "ten years in prison" (7); Forster did not write "IX" novels (13); the flight to Italy for sexual freedom is not a "twentieth century technique" (33). Some phrases make little sense: *Maurice* as a "strong little radical novel" (10) or Clive as "mortily-coddled aesthetile" (30); there are those rather mysterious "Bloomsburian standards" (38); "Clearly, sex and should is not enough" (72); poor Tibby appears as Tubby in the wonderfully ironic "Tubby's relationship with his sisters is thus not stable" (61), but there are also Mourice, Adaa, Helon, Cecil Yse, Clive Ducham, and Mr. Eilcox. Some interpretations are quite questionable or politically incorrect: Italy in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* "is more of a heaven for homosexuals since it excludes women and exalts men" (36); worse, Roy finds a "long line of Forsterian misogynists, many of whom are inclined homosexually" (42). Or what is one to make of the following statement: "*Maurice* can be considered a queer thesis novel as the idea of homosexuality stands at the center of the book. Other themes and characterisation do not have any place in it and didactic purpose rigorously control each incident" (21). If I understand correctly, Roy argues that *Maurice* is overpowered by its hero's sexuality, which seems a terribly reductive approach. And if homosexuality is so central to *Maurice*,

⁹ I give Roy's page numbers, but they are out of sequence in her volume.

I would *not* compare Henry Wilcox' affair with Jacky Bast in *Howards End* to the presumed womanizing of Maurice's father (73). Roy quotes Forster's words, "Mr Hall senior had [...] moved without a crisis from illicit to licit love," which I take to be a coded reference to homosexuality (why else would Hall, Sr. react with "envy" when "he sees the flesh educating the spirit" in his son?).

When we get to the bibliography, another problem emerges. Roy's most recent publication is Bonnie Finkelstein's *Forster's Women: Eternal Differences* from 1974, thus ignoring all scholarship from the past forty-plus year. She quotes famous studies by Lionel Trilling, Wilfred Stone, or Frederick Crews, all of which predate the publication of *Maurice*. No *Queer Forster*, edited by Robert K. Martin and George Piggford (1997); no Frederick Roden's "E. M. Forster's *Maurice*: A Roadmap to the First 'Gay' Novel in English" in *LGBTQ Literature: Critical Insights* (2015); no new(er) biographies by Nicola Beauman (1994) and Wendy Moffat (2010), although not even P. N. Furbank is cited; no engagement with the Merchant-Ivory movie, which has become so iconic (and controversial) in the depiction of homosexuality of *Maurice*. Finally, I wonder about Roy's audience. The book is a bound hardcopy, handsomely presented, for the price of 250 Indian Rupee, about 3 Euros or 13 Zloty. It would be a great deal for an undergraduate guide to *Maurice*, but because it is so inaccurate, I cannot recommend it.