

**Abstract:**

E.M. Forster's impact on the literary representation of homosexual relationships and desire is widely acknowledged nowadays. This is due, mainly, to his 1914 novel *Maurice*, published posthumously in 1971. His lesser-known short stories that deal with homoerotic encounters and tensions, on the other hand, have traditionally been dismissed as the author's manifestation of his personal fantasies, or even as sexual indulgences.

These stories, however, provide a very significant insight into the way in which Forster creates a new and personal code for the representation of homosexuality that disrupts previous, more traditional Victorian ways of representing this sexual identity. These Victorian paradigms usually included disability or aestheticism in their representation of homoerotic tensions and characters. Forster, despite his Victorian upbringing and influences, deviates from these paradigms. He transforms them by adding more physicality, and more hopeful endings and, finally, he refuses to keep on replicating them. His short fiction is a testimony of his internal fight to shed homosexual desire from the representational constraints of the Victorian era and to re-orientate it towards a more accepting and explicit conceptualization.

Considering this, this paper will re-assess the importance of Forster's homoerotic stories as key points to understand the evolution of homosexual representation in literature between the end of the Victorian era and the first half of the Twentieth century. The theories of Dominic Janes that analyse the existence of certain representational paradigms that enable the popular recognition of homosexuality depending on changing factors according to the historical period<sup>1</sup>, will be used as a revisionist lens to explore how Forster's stories challenge these paradigms. The significance of this challenging will be addressed using Sarah Ahmed's concept of Orientation, showing how it eventually produces a re-orientation towards new, almost Utopian for his time, paradigms in the representation of same sex male desire.

**References:**

- Ahmed, Sara. "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 4 (2006): 543-574.
- Forster, E.M. *The Life to Come and Other Stories*. New York: Norton, 1987.

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<sup>1</sup> Dominic Janes, *Picturing the Closet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2-5.