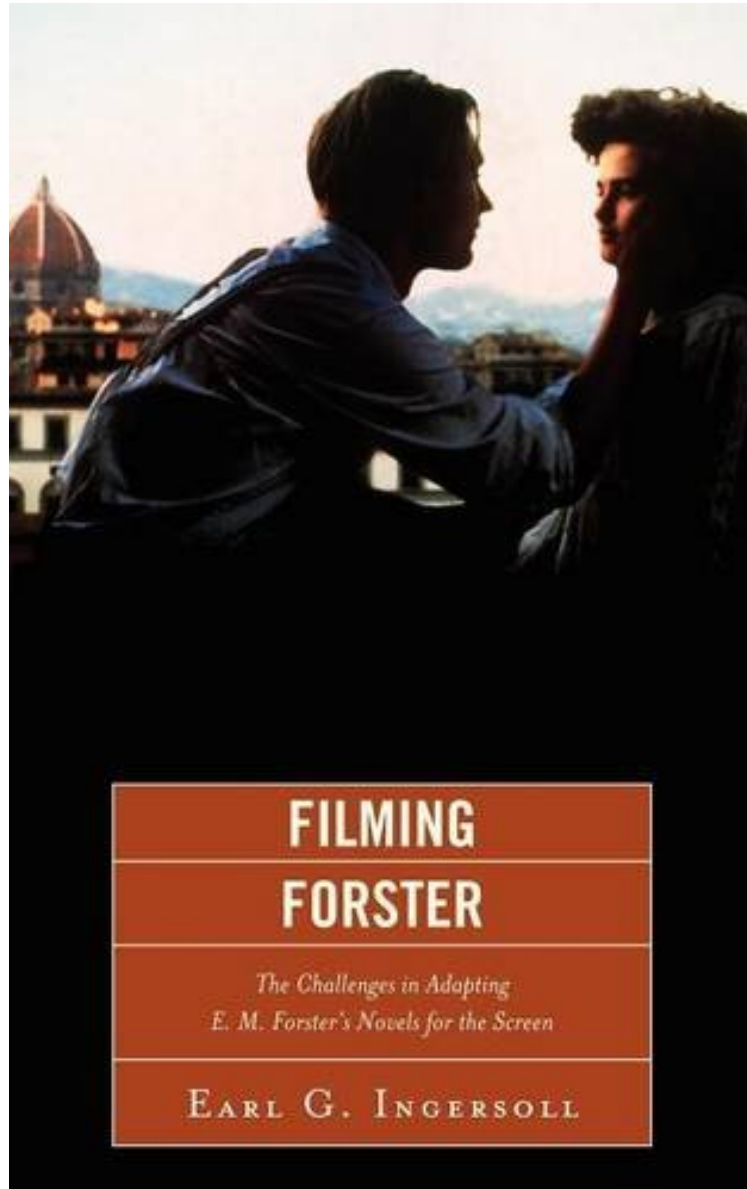


Filming Forster: The Challenges of Adapting E.M. Forster's Novels for the Screen

Earl G. Ingersoll

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Challenges of Adapting E.M. Forster's Novels for the Screen:

Filming Forster focuses upon the challenges of producing film adaptations of five of E. M. Forster's novels. Rather than follow the older comparative approach, which typically damned the film for not being faithful to the novel, this project explores the interactive relationship between film and novel. That relationship is implicit in the title *Filming Forster*, rather than *Forster Filmed*, which would suggest a completed process. A film adaptation forever changes the novel from which it was adapted, just as a return to the novel changes the viewers' perceptions of the film. Adapting Forster's novels for the screen was postponed until well after the author's death in 1970 because the trustees of the author's estate fulfilled his wish that his work not be filmed. Following the appearance of David Lean's film *A Passage to India* in 1984, four other film adaptations were released within seven years. Perhaps the most important was the Merchant Ivory production of *Maurice*, based upon Forster's gay novel, published a year after his death. That film was among the first to approach same-sex relationships between men in a serious, respectful, and generally optimistic manner.

This volume offers nuanced discussion of the five film adaptations to date of E. M. Forster's work, all released between 1984 and 1992. By way of introduction, Ingersoll (emer., English, SUNY, Brockport) surveys recent developments in adaptation studies against a decades-long backdrop of critical insistence on "fidelity" to the source novel. Drawing on contemporary scholars like Deborah Cartmell, Imelda Whelehan, and Simone Murray, he then situates his close analyses of Forster adaptations in context of both the film industry and wider culture. At his best, the author is masterful, interweaving a detailed critique of the Merchant-Ivory adaptation of *A Room with a View* (1985) and debates over the status of "heritage film" and "costume film" (the latter a more nebulous label). Ingersoll's observations are astute and engaging throughout. This is a must read for those interested in Forster and/or film adaptation. **Summing Up: Recommended. (CHOICE)** *Filming Forster* is an important study. Ingersoll's cultural and historicist perspective offers a contemporary approach to Forster's novels as well as to their film adaptations. (Louis K. Greiff, professor of English Emeritus, Alfred University) **About the Author** Earl G. Ingersoll is Emeritus Distinguished Teaching Professor and Distinguished Professor of English at the State University of New York, College at Brockport.