

BLOOMSBURY WRITERS IN ITALY:  
A COMPARISON  
OF THE ITALIAN PUBLICATION HISTORY  
OF E. M. FORSTER, LYTTON STRACHEY  
AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

ELISA BOLCHI

They're different human beings from any I thought possible.  
Raymond Mortimer on Bloomsbury

**ABSTRACT** · This article examines Italian publication history of three writers commonly associated to the Bloomsbury Group through an investigation of Italian publishers' and translators' archives. While the publication of Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey roughly developed in the same period, E. M. Forster, whose work exhibits a strong cultural tie with Italy, had to wait almost 40 years to see his works translated and published in Italy. This article investigates the reasons for such asymmetry with a two-pronged approach: on one side, it takes into consideration the critical reception of the three writers; and on the other, it highlights the editorial policies driving the Italian translation and publication inferred through the archival documentation of the people involved in the pre-publication stage. Archival documents testify that Mondadori, which first translated and published Woolf and Strachey in Italy, also had an interest in Forster well before 1945, but never managed to obtain the translation rights.

**KEYWORDS:** Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster, Reception, Translation, Publishing market.

**RIASSUNTO** · *Il gruppo di Bloomsbury in Italia: storia della pubblicazione di E. M. Forster, L. Strachey e V. Woolf* · La storia della pubblicazione dei tre scrittori del gruppo di Bloomsbury è qui presa in esame a partire da una ricerca negli archivi di editori e traduttori italiani. Mentre la cronologia della pubblicazione di Virginia Woolf e Lytton Strachey ha grosso modo coinciso nella prima fase, E. M. Forster, la cui opera esibiva un forte legame culturale con l'Italia, dovette aspettare quasi 40 anni per vedere i propri lavori tradotti in Italiano. L'articolo indaga le ragioni di tale ritardo con un duplice approccio che prende in considerazione da un lato la ricezione critica dei tre scrittori, e dall'altro mostra le politiche editoriali che hanno portato alla loro traduzione e pubblicazione, così come emerge dai documenti d'archivio dei vari agenti in gioco. I documenti mostrano che Mondadori, l'editore che per primo tradusse e pubblicò Woolf e Strachey in Italia, ebbe un interesse in Forster ben prima del 1945, ma non riuscì mai ad accaparrarsi i diritti di traduzione.

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster, Ricezione, Traduzione, Mercato editoriale.

Elisa Bolchi, e.bolchi@reading.ac.uk, University of Reading.

IN her introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to the Bloomsbury Group*, Victoria Rosner claims that the group of artists and intellectuals known as the Bloomsbury Group left behind «a body of work so influential that in many ways can be said to have profoundly shaped twentieth century Anglo-American culture» and «remains, as it has always been, difficult to ignore».<sup>1</sup> While the Group is well identified as such nowadays, as the publication of a *Cambridge Companion to the Bloomsbury Group* clearly testifies, its identity as a ‘group’ had been a contentious issue for a long time. Leonard Woolf pointed out in his autobiography that: «what came to be called Bloomsbury by the outside world never existed in the form given to it by the outside world. [...] We were and always remained primarily and fundamentally a group of friends».<sup>2</sup> Italian critics were among those who did not assign importance to the Bloomsbury Group until the 1970s, when the first Italian translation of Quentin Bell’s biography of Woolf was published by Garzanti.<sup>3</sup> Their identity as a group was famously discussed by Raymond Williams who, in his essay *The Bloomsbury Fraction*, analysed the social and cultural factors which led to the formation and distinction of this group of friends which he described as a fraction by association rather than a fraction or group by manifesto or programme. As Williams claims:

there is something in the way in which Bloomsbury denied its existence as a formal group, while continuing to insist on its group qualities, which is the clue to the essential definition. The point was not to have any common – that is to say general – theory or system, not only because this was not necessary – worse, it would probably be some imposed dogma – but primarily, and as a matter of principle, because such theories and systems obstructed the true organizing value of the group, which was the unobstructed free expression of the civilized individual. The force which that adjective, ‘civilized’, carries or is meant to carry can hardly be overestimated.<sup>4</sup>

This quite unique «group of friends» included economists such as John Maynard Keynes; artists like Saxon Sydney-Turner, Desmond MacCarthy, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell; critics like Roger Fry and Clive Bell; and prose writers such as Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey and E.M. Forster. These last three being the most renowned writers of the group, they are the object of inquiry of this essay, which explores the Italian publication history of the writers of the Bloomsbury Group by interrogating hitherto ignored evidence sourced from publishers’ archives, namely the Mondadori Historical Archive, Apice and the Bompiani Archive; and the Scalero Fund, an archive of the writers and translators Liliana and Alessandra Scalero.

<sup>1</sup> VICTORIA ROSNER, *Introduction*, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Bloomsbury Group*, ed. Victoria Rosner, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 1-15: 2.

<sup>2</sup> LEONARD WOOLF, *Beginning Again. An Autobiography of the Years 1911-1918*, London, Hogarth, 1964, pp. 21, 23.

<sup>3</sup> QUENTIN BELL, *Virginia Woolf*, Milano, Garzanti, 1974. Italian translation by Marco Papi.

<sup>4</sup> RAYMOND WILLIAMS, *The Bloomsbury Fraction*, in *Contemporary Marxist Literary Criticism*, ed. Francis Mulhern, Harlow, Longman, 1992, pp. 125-145: 140.

The publication chronology of these three writers of the Group (see TABLE 1) shows how Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf's early publication chronology roughly coincided, while E. M. Forster was translated much later. This raises a series of questions that this essay will try to address: why was a novel like *Orlando*, with a 'transgender' protagonist and written by a woman married to a Jew, translated under a Fascist regime, whereas novels like Forster's *A Room with a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, describing the beauties of Italy, had to wait almost 40 years to be translated and published in Italy? Were Italian publishers really indifferent towards Forster? If so, why? The editorial trajectory of these three authors is examined, demonstrating that what actually happened was different from what initial impressions seemed to suggest. The examination of their reception is two-sided, as it not only takes into consideration the critical reception of the authors and their works, but also highlights the editorial policies behind their Italian translation and publication. The latter is inferred from the archival documentation of the actors involved in the pre-publication stage – that is publishers, editors and translators – in order to understand whether the policies coincided with the critical reception. The time frame considered spans the interwar years, when two of the three Bloomsbury writers studied here, Woolf and Strachey, were published by leading publisher Mondadori, up to the 1960s, when Forster, who was not among Mondadori's authors, eventually started to receive editorial attention. As Regina Marler explains:

how we perceive Bloomsbury now, and its cultural uses to us, would have surprised the group's members. Although several of them achieved fame, most also lived long enough to see their fortunes decline in the 1930s. Those who survived to witness the group's revival thirty years later had some idea of the complicated critical legacy of Bloomsbury [...] and the rich, many-faceted influence of Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster, in particular.<sup>1</sup>

This is not completely true for its Italian reception, though, given that Bloomsbury recognition in Italy occurred quite late.

### 1. A CURIOUS CHRONOLOGY

TABLE 1. Chronology of the first Italian translation of the writers of the Bloomsbury Group.

ITALIAN PUBLICATION	AUTHOR	TITLE	UK PUBLICATION	ITALIAN TRANSLATION
1920	J. M. Keynes	<i>The Economic Consequences of the Peace</i>	1919, Macmillan & Co.	<i>Le conseguenze economiche della pace</i> (trans. by V. Tasco), Flli Treves
1922	J. M. Keynes	<i>A Revision of the Treaty</i>	1922, MacMillan & Co.	<i>La revisione del trattato</i> , Ausonia
1925	J. M. Keynes	<i>A Tract on Monetary Reform</i>	1923, MacMillan & Co.	<i>La riforma monetaria</i> (trans. by P. Sraffa), Flli Treves
1930	L. Strachey	<i>Queen Victoria</i>	1921, Chatto & Windus)	<i>La Regina Vittoria</i> (trans. by S. Caramella), Mondadori

<sup>1</sup> REGINA MARLER, *Bloomsbury's Afterlife*, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Bloomsbury Group*, cit., pp. 215-230.

ITALIAN PUBLICATION	AUTHOR	TITLE	UK PUBLICATION	ITALIAN TRANSLATION
1932	J. M. Keynes	<i>A Treatise on Money</i>	1930, MacMillan & Co.	<i>Trattato della moneta</i> (trans. by E. Radaeli), Treves-Treccani-Tumminelli
1933	L. Strachey	<i>Elizabeth and Essex. A Tragic History</i>	1928, Chatto & Windus	<i>Elisabetta e il Conte di Essex, tragica storia</i> (trans. by E. Fabietti), Genio
	V. Woolf	<i>Orlando</i>	1928, Hogarth Press	<i>Orlando</i> (trans. by A. Scalero), Mondadori
1934	V. Woolf	<i>Flush</i>	1933, Hogarth Press	<i>Flush</i> (trans. by A. Scalero), Mondadori
	V. Woolf	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>	1927, Hogarth Press	<i>Gita al faro</i> (trans. by G. Celenza), Flli Treves
	J. M. Keynes	<i>The End of Laissez-faire</i>	1926, Hogarth Press	<i>La fine del lasciar fare: autarchia economica</i> , UTET
1945	E. M. Forster	<i>A Passage to India</i>	1924, Edward Arnold	<i>Passaggio all'India</i> (trans. by A. Guidi), Perrella
1946	V. Woolf	<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>	1925, Hogarth Press	<i>La Signora Dalloway</i> (trans. by A. Scalero), Mondadori
1947	R. Fry	<i>Vision and Design</i>	1923, Chatto & Windus	<i>Visione e disegno</i> (trans. by E. Cannata e L. Pola), A. Minuziano
	L. Strachey	<i>Books and Characters</i>	1924, Chatto & Windus	<i>Libri e personaggi</i> (trans. by A. M. Gadda Conti), Bompiani
	J. M. Keynes	<i>The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money</i>	1936, Palgrave Macmillan	<i>Occupazione, Interesse e moneta: teoria generale</i> (trans. by A. Campolongo), UTET
1950	L. Strachey	<i>Portraits in Miniature and Other Essays</i>	1933, Chatto & Windus	<i>Ritratti in miniatura</i> (trans. by M. and R. Celletti), Longanesi
	V. Woolf	<i>A Haunted House</i>	1944, Hogarth Press	<i>La casa degli spiriti</i> (trans. by D. Pasolini), Mondadori
	V. Woolf	<i>Jacob's Room</i>	1922, Hogarth Press	<i>La camera di Giacobbe</i> (trans. by A. Banti), Mondadori
1951	J. M. Keynes	<i>Essays in Biography</i>	1933; MacMillan & Co.	<i>Politici ed economisti</i> (trans. by B. Maffi), Einaudi
1954	E. M. Forster	<i>A Room with a View</i>	1908, Edward Arnold	<i>La finestra sull'Arno</i> (trans. by J. Pinna Pintor), SAIE
1959	E. M. Forster	<i>Howards End</i>	1910, Edward Arnold	<i>Casa Howard</i> (trans. By L. Chiarelli), Feltrinelli
1961	E. M. Forster	<i>Where Angels Fear to Tread</i>	1905, Blackwood & Sons	<i>Monteriano</i> (trans. By L. Chiarelli), Feltrinelli
1964	E. M. Forster	<i>The Longest Journey</i>	1907, Blackwood & Sons.	<i>Il cammino più lungo</i> (trans. by L. Chiarelli), Feltrinelli
1963	V. Woolf	Selected essays		<i>Per le strade di Londra</i> (trans. by ), il Saggiatore (trans. by L. Bacchi Wilcock and J. R. Wilcock)
1963	E. M. Forster	<i>Aspects of the Novel</i>	1927, Edward Arnold	<i>Aspetti del romanzo</i> (trans. by C. Pavolini), il Saggiatore
1963	Clive Bell	<i>The French Impressionists in Full Colour</i>	1952, Phaidon	<i>Impressionisti francesi</i> (trans. by F. Anti), Eugenio Cassin Editore

The first time the word 'Bloomsbury' appeared in Italian periodicals, it was used with reference to the neighbourhood of London where Woolf lived, and it was misspelled «Bloongbres».<sup>1</sup> As mentioned above, in Italy none of the early critics of Woolf or Strachey recognized the important role the Bloomsbury Group had on the two writers until the 1970s, when two volumes appeared on the market that shaped the debate on Bloomsbury: the first Italian translation of Quentin Bell's biography of Woolf (1974);<sup>2</sup> and the collection *Moments of Being*, published in Italian translation by the feminist press La Tartaruga<sup>3</sup> and containing the memoir *Old Bloomsbury*, which shed light on the fundamental role the Bloomsbury 'friends' had played in forming those «civilized individuals», to quote Williams, that were Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey and E. M. Forster. Yet, as shown in the publication chronology displayed in Table 1, although Strachey and Woolf were not presented to the public as being part of a 'group', their publication chronology in Italy roughly coincided, since they were both translated in the interwar years, while John Maynard Keynes, himself a member of the Bloomsbury Group, was translated much earlier (1920), and E. M. Forster and C. Bell much later (1945 and 1963 respectively). Although Keynes is not the object of this study, since he was not a writer of novels, it is useful to note the attention that was immediately dedicated to his work by Italian publishers, above all in comparison with the other writers of the Bloomsbury Group. E. M. Forster, for instance, despite being one of the prominent writers of the group, together with Woolf, was only introduced after the Second World War. Unsurprisingly, the first essays by Keynes to be published were the ones directly connected to the post-First World War political climate. These were published by F.lli Treves, a socially engaged publisher who, together with novels and novellas by renowned Italian and foreign writers, published committed socio-political and historical studies<sup>4</sup> and who, in 1934, translated and published Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. Keynes's economic essays also suited the catalogue of F.lli Treves thanks to the rhetorical structure of his argumentation, which, as noted by Alessandra Marzola, displayed a thought process strictly connected to creative consciousness.<sup>5</sup> *The Economic Consequences of Peace* in particular, Keynes's first book to be translated into Italian, is the work in which, since he was addressing a more general public, he allowed himself the kind of

<sup>1</sup> UMBERTO MORRA DI LAVRIANO, *Virginia Woolf*, «Il Baretto», 5, 1928, p. 27.1 BELL, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> BELL, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> VIRGINIA WOOLF, *Momenti di essere*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind, Milano, La Tartaruga, 1977.

<sup>4</sup> In 1920, the same year in which F.lli Treves published Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, the press published books by Gabriele D'Annunzio, Grazia Deledda, Luigi Capuana, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, to name only a few. In that same year F.lli Treves also published historic and political works such as Carlo Alberto Alemagna's *I problemi del dopo Guerra*, a biography of Garibaldi by Eugenio Cecchi or bigger works on the Great War such as the two works in six volumes *La Guerra delle nazioni* and *La guerra d'Italia: 1915-1918*.

<sup>5</sup> ALESSANDRA MARZOLA, *Retorica e immaginario nel discorso economico e politico di J. M. Keynes*, in *John M. Keynes. Linguaggio e metodo*, ed. Alessandra Marzola and Francesco Silva, Bergamo, Lubrina, 1990, p. 235.

liberties associated with novelistic structures.<sup>1</sup> This is even more evident in his *Essays in Biography*, treating a theme – that of biographies – dear to the members of the Bloomsbury Group. In the *Preface* to the volume, Keynes declared to «have sought with some touches of detail to bring out the solidarity and historical continuity of the High Intelligentsia of England, who have built upon the foundations of our thought in the two and a half centuries, since Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, wrote the first modern English book».<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly this was the first book by Keynes published by Einaudi in 1951, in line with the culturally engaged editorial programme of the publisher.

To return to the writers of the Group, the first to be translated and published in Italian was, in fact, the one who had published his first book the latest: Lytton Strachey. His first book was published by Chatto & Windus in 1920, when Forster had been a writer for fifteen years and had already published four novels; yet, while Strachey was translated into Italian in 1930, Forster had to wait until 1945. Further aspects emerge if the individual titles published are taken into consideration. While the first two books by Strachey to be translated were, not surprisingly, *Queen Victoria* and *Elizabeth and Essex*, more surprising was the choice, in 1933 and under a Fascist regime, to publish *Orlando* as Woolf's first novel, a book with what can be considered a transgender protagonist. Mondadori bought the Italian rights of *Orlando* in 1932. The publishing house had also considered *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Common Reader*, but Mondadori seemed to have been immediately convinced by *Orlando*, and he soon sent an agreement together with 900 lire as an advance on the sales. The reasons behind this choice are manifold and have already been discussed by Sara Villa's essay *Translating Orlando in 1930s Fascist Italy: Virginia Woolf, Arnoldo Mondadori and Alessandra Scalero*.<sup>3</sup> Among these reasons is the witty prose which characterizes *Orlando*, displaying Woolf's best humour and irony, but, as Villa explains, the novel also fitted the needs of the Medusa collection because «besides being an acclaimed and unconventional work, *Orlando* had already proven to be a success both in England and in France. Woolf herself had been surprised by the British public's response to *Orlando*, which had sold 8104 copies within the first six months of its publication in 1928».<sup>4</sup> The gender issues present in the novel were probably so ahead of the times for the cultural climate of the Regime that the book was just read as a fantastic reverie,<sup>5</sup> while some of the issues raised by *Mrs Dalloway* – first and foremost Septimus's suicide – were much more problematic and in fact caused many delays in the Italian translation of the novel. After *Orlando*, Mondadori actually published *Flush* in 1934, thus

<sup>1</sup> Ivi, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES, *Essays in Biography*, London, Macmillan & co., 1933, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the first Italian translation of *Orlando* see: SARA VILLA, *Translating Orlando in 1930s Fascist Italy: Virginia Woolf, Arnoldo Mondadori and Alessandra Scalero*, in *Virginia Woolf and the Literary Marketplace*, ed. Jeanne Dubino, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 209-222.

<sup>4</sup> Ivi, p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Sibilla Aleramo in reviewing the novel actually described Orlando's life as «magically persuasive». SIBILLA ALERAMO, *Orlando inglese*, «L'Italia letteraria», 42, 1931, p. 9.



fostering the reputation of Woolf as a brilliant and humorous writer, while the publisher F.lli Treves published *Gita al Faro*, a translation of *To the Lighthouse*. The particular selection of Woolf's work in the Italian literary marketplace informed public expectations, so much so that critic Pia Addoli, reviewing the novel in the literary periodical «Alleanza nazionale del libro»,<sup>1</sup> described it as «libro che, ripeto, non sempre ci persuade: ma che non manca mai di tener viva la nostra attenzione e il nostro interesse, specialmente nella prima parte, in cui noto alcune deliziose finezze umoristiche».<sup>2</sup> Appreciating *To the Lighthouse* for its 'fine humour' was indeed an original way to interpret the novel.

For the next translation of Woolf, Italians had to wait until 1946, when Mondadori published *La Signora Dalloway*, which had already been translated in 1940 by Alessandra Scalerò, but publication had to wait until the end of the Fascist regime. The reasons behind this delay are quite obvious: an emasculated veteran of the First World War committing suicide was not the kind of plot that the Fascist regime was looking for.<sup>3</sup> The publication of *La Signora Dalloway* represented the beginning of a project by Alberto Mondadori, son of Arnoldo, of publishing Woolf's *Opera Omnia*, edited by the renowned scholar Emilio Cecchi. Although this project failed to meet its aims,<sup>4</sup> it is significant for comparing Mondadori's interest in Woolf and in the other writers of the Bloomsbury Group: Strachey and Forster.

As already stated, while Strachey's and Woolf's publication chronology roughly coincided, Forster had to wait many years to see his works translated into Italian. The first question to be faced is thus: why was a novel like Woolf's *Orlando* translated under a Fascist regime, whereas novels like Forster's *A Room with a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, which were in the public domain and described the Italian beauties of Florence and Tuscany, had to wait almost 40 years to be published in Italy?

Patrizia Nerozzi Bellman tried to answer this question in her book *La fortuna di E. M. Forster in Italia*, where she wrote that, although he was

autore anche di racconti e romanzi di ambiente italiano, in cui l'Italia è alternativamente luogo letterario dell'ispirazione romantica e della fuga decadente [...] E. M. Forster rima-

<sup>1</sup> A cultural periodical founded in 1934 to promote the dissemination of books in Italy and abroad. The journal had a political reference in Giovanni Gentile and was in line with the Fascist regime, which helped its circulation in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> PIA ADDOLI, *Scrittrici*, «Alleanza Nazionale del Libro», 12, 1934, p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> On 5 November 1940 Luigi Rusca, at the time general co-director of Mondadori, wrote to Alessandra Scalerò to say there was no hurry to write the introduction to her translation of *Mrs Dalloway* since «come ben comprenderete, per il momento non si può pensare alla pubblicazione di quel volume. Speriamo si possa farlo più avanti». For a more detailed analysis of the processes of translating *Mrs Dalloway* into Italian, see: ELISA BOLCHI, «La Woolf è scrittrice difficile e ci vuol dei traduttori coscienziosi». *Le vicende traduttive delle prime edizioni italiane di Virginia Woolf*, «Testo a Fronte», 53, 2015, 2, pp. 87-106.

<sup>4</sup> Of the ambitious scheme Alberto Mondadori agreed with Emilio Cecchi in 1946, which foresaw the publication in Italian of all Woolf's works, only four books were published before Alberto left the Mondadori Publishing House to found his own firm, il Saggiatore, which eventually published a collection of essays by Woolf in 1963. The titles translated and published before 1963 were *Mrs Dalloway*, *Jacob's Room*, *The Years (Gli anni)*, *The Waves (Le onde)* and the posthumous collection of short stories *A Haunted House (La casa degli spiriti)*.

ne però sempre sostanzialmente estraneo non solo alla realtà politica e sociale del nostro paese, ma anche alla sua fenomenologia culturale.<sup>1</sup>

This disinterest towards 'real' Italy was met, according to Nerozzi, with an equal indifference by the Italian public and critics, at least until the publication of *Howard's End* by Feltrinelli in 1959, which opened the way for a more organized and coherent publication of other works by Forster.<sup>2</sup> As previously mentioned, Forster was only published in 1945 and not by a great publisher like Mondadori, as was the case for Woolf and Strachey, but by a small independent publisher based in Rome: Perrella. This point leads to a second question: were Italian publishers really indifferent towards Forster? Was it true that he was not even considered for publication until the end of the Second World War? Another aspect that appears to emerge from this chronology is that Mondadori had an early interest in Woolf and Strachey, and, by contrast, a complete disinterest in Forster until 1967, when it produced a retranslation of *A Passage to India*, considerably late compared to Woolf's and Strachey's works.

## 2. LYTTON STRACHEY AND THE ITALIAN MARKETPLACE

The first document to be found in Lytton Strachey's file at the Historical Archive of the Mondadori Publishing house clears up one of the points above. It is a letter addressed to the agents A. M. HEATH & C. dated 18 October 1934, in which Alberto Mondadori wrote that with the sales report of Strachey's *La Regina Vittoria* being completely negative, they would no longer forward sales reports until the balance became positive again.<sup>3</sup> Strachey's book was not, then, the great success that one could have been led to believe by the close publication of another of his works (see TABLE 1).

The following document is dated 4 September 1947 – the year in which Strachey was eventually republished in Italy by Bompiani. It is a letter from Chatto & Windus mentioning the contract for *Queen Victoria*, in which Chatto & Windus asks how Mondadori «is situated over this work»: if they do not wish to reprint it «the author's heir would no doubt like to feel himself free to dispose of the rights elsewhere».<sup>4</sup> Although there is no trace in Bompiani's documents either at Bompiani's Archive nor at Centro Apice<sup>5</sup> of letters or notes revealing the publisher's interest in buying the rights of other Strachey books, it might be assumed that,

<sup>1</sup> PATRIZIA NEROZZI BELLMAN, *La Fortuna di E.M. Forster in Italia. Saggio e Bibliografia (1925-1979)*, Bari, Adriatica, 1980, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> For an examination and discussion of Feltrinelli's editorial plans, also with regard to E. M. Forster, see ROBERTA CESANA, "Libri necessari". *Le edizioni letterarie Feltrinelli (1955-1965)*, Milano, Unicopli, 2010; see in particular ch. V.2, pp. 296-317.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Alberto Mondadori to A. M. HEATH & C., 18 October 1934, typewritten. Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Archivio Storico Arnoldo Mondadori Editore (from now on: Faam, AsAme), Sez. See, B.74 f.94, file «Lytton Strachey».

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Chatto & Windus to Mondadori, 4 September 1947, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, Sez. See, B.74 f.94, file «Lytton Strachey».

<sup>5</sup> Archivi della Parola, dell'Immagine e della Comunicazione Editoriale: <http://www.apice.unimi.it>



having bought the rights for the Italian translation of *Books and Characters*, Bompiani was also interested in buying the rights for one of Strachey's most famous works, and the agents were thus asking Mondadori if they were still interested in the rights.

For his part, Mondadori, who had always invested in foreign rights in the belief that they were «I diritti restano e sono l'unica autentica ricchezza dell'editore»,<sup>1</sup> did not want to lose these rights, even though they concerned a work which they were no longer selling. In Chatto & Windus's letter there is a handwritten note by Elio Vittorini: «È una vecchissima 'Scia' apparsa nel 1932. Si è esaurita lentamente nel 1938. Mai ristampata».<sup>2</sup> Next to this there is another note, presumably by Alberto Mondadori: «rispondere che ristamperemo, ma far presente forza maggiore della carta».<sup>3</sup> Paper shortage was a real issue at the time, with the price of paper tripling from 1946 to 1947.<sup>4</sup> The high costs slowed down the publication of many other authors, including Woolf, for instance. *Queen Victoria* was reprinted in Italian in 1949 and then again in 1966 and in 1985 – this time introduced by Virginia Woolf's essay *The Art of Biography* – but it remained the only book by Strachey that Mondadori published. All other books by Strachey, from *Libri e Personaggi*,<sup>5</sup> to *Ritratti in Miniatura*,<sup>6</sup> to *Eminentissimi Vittoriani*,<sup>7</sup> were published in Italy by different publishers, without a coherent editorial plan, although receiving enthusiastic responses from critics, who employed for Strachey more or less the same terms used for his Bloomsbury colleagues, describing him as the most perfect British prose writer of our century.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. THE PROJECT FOR VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *OPERA OMNIA*

A very different approach was used by Mondadori for Virginia Woolf. The publication of Woolf in Italy has already been discussed in my book *L'indimenticabile artista*,<sup>9</sup> but it is worth mentioning here that, among the writers of the Bloomsbury Group – and among modernist writers in general – Woolf was the only one to have a specific editorial project entirely dedicated to her after 1945. The plan

<sup>1</sup> «I diritti restano e sono l'unica autentica ricchezza dell'editore»; Alberto Mondadori, memo for the President, Faam, AsAme, *Miscellanea Arnoldo Mondadori*, B.12 f.5, file «Esilio Svizzera», not dated but probably June 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Chatto & Windus to Mondadori, 4 September 1947, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, Sez. See, B.74 f.94, file «Lytton Strachey?»

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. «La Fiera Letteraria», 2, 25, 19 June 1947, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Bompiani, 1947, translated by A. M. Gadda Conti.

<sup>6</sup> Longanesi, 1950, translated by M. and R. Celletti.

<sup>7</sup> Rizzoli, 1988, translated by M. T. Pieraccini.

<sup>8</sup> See for example E. Talarico review of *Libri e personaggi* in «Libri d'Oggi», 23 October 1947, where he describes Strachey as «il più perfetto prosatore britannico del nostro secolo», or the anonymous review published in «Il ragguaglio librario» in April 1948, where Strachey is defined «uno dei più originali e squisiti prosatori del suo tempo». The reviews are now held at Archivio Casa Editrice Valentino Bompiani, Fondazione Corriere della Sera, 3.3 Strachey Giles Lytton (01/01/1947 – 31/12/1948).

<sup>9</sup> ELISA BOLCHI, *L'indimenticabile Artista. Lettere e Appunti sulla Storia Editoriale di Virginia Woolf in Mondadori*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2015.

for an *Opera Omnia*, although never fulfilled, set the basis for the publication, later on, of her work in the Meridiani, the prestigious series sealing a writer's canonical status in Italian culture.

Sergio Perosa's essay<sup>1</sup> on Woolf's fortunes in Italy hypothesized that Mondadori's publication choices for Woolf were random, but a thorough analysis of the archives both of the publisher and of her translator proved that there were precise editorial and commercial reasons behind every publication. First of all, a very clear plan existed from 1945, when Mondadori bought the complete translation rights from Leonard Woolf, and Alberto Mondadori asked Emilio Cecchi to be the editor of Woolf's works. Cecchi was not sure about publishing all of Woolf's works, though: «La Woolf ha circa venti volumi. Tradurli tutti indiscriminatamente? Pensaci un poco»,<sup>2</sup> he wrote to Mondadori. But Alberto soon replied: «io credo sia conveniente tradurre tutte le opere»,<sup>3</sup> and he asked Cecchi to make a list of Woolf's works, which he did, dividing them into categories (novels, short stories, biographies, criticism) and in chronological order.

The list shows Mondadori's plan to publish all Woolf's works, and Alberto replied to Cecchi explaining their publication plan for the following years:

Nell'anno in corso vorrei far uscire una ristampa di "ORLANDO" e "FLUSH", due opere nuove: "JACOB'S ROOM" e "BETWEEN THE ACTS" e almeno la consegna, se non la pubblicazione, della traduzione dei tre volumi di "SAGGI" da ricavarsi da una scelta dei sei volumi originali. La consegna del primo volume dovrebbe essere per il 31/8/46, e quella del secondo per il 31/10/46.<sup>4</sup>

Things would not be so easy. As a matter of fact, *Between the Acts* was translated by Renata Barocas but, once it was ready, Salvatore Rosati, a professor of English who also worked as a translator and critic, decided to revise the translation. The revision took so long that the translation never reached Mondadori. The book, therefore, was never published by Mondadori<sup>5</sup> and the first Italian translation of the novel eventually appeared in 1978 for the publisher Guanda, translated by F. Wagner and F. Cordelli.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of the documents held at the Historical Archive highlighted Mondadori's intention to give priority to the translation of Woolf's essays. Although Cecchi was doubtful about it, and advised that only a selection of essays should be published, Alberto emphasised that Woolf's *Opera Omnia* should include the entirety of her critical output. Unfortunately, an unfor-

<sup>1</sup> For example, SERGIO PEROSA's essay *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Italy*, contained in *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*, eds. N. Luckhurst, M. A. Caws, London, Continuum, 2002, pp. 200-217.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, Sez.See, file «Emilio Cecchi». Now in BOLCHI, *L'indimenticabile Artista*, cit., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, SezAlM, file «Emilio Cecchi».

<sup>4</sup> «This year I would like to reprint "ORLANDO" and "FLUSH", and to publish two new works: "JACOB'S ROOM" and "BETWEEN THE ACTS" and at least the delivery, if not the publication, of the translation of the three volumes of "ESSAYS" chosen from the six original volumes. We should receive the first volume on 31/8/46, and the second on 31/10/46.» Letter from Alberto Mondadori to Emilio Cecchi, 7 January 1946, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, SezAlm, file «Emilio Cecchi». Now in BOLCHI, *L'indimenticabile Artista*, cit., p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> The whole matter, with the relative correspondence, is described in BOLCHI, *L'indimenticabile Artista*, cit., pp. 55-65.

<sup>6</sup> VIRGINIA WOOLF, *Tra un atto e l'altro*, Parma, Guanda, 1978.

tunate choice of the translators, dictated by the need to have the volume ready as soon as possible, led to changes in the editorial plans, so that publication of the essays had to be postponed many times.<sup>1</sup> They were only published in 1963 and not by Mondadori, but by the publishing house il Saggiatore, an independent publishing house that Alberto Mondadori founded in 1958 to be able to realize his own cultural and editorial project. As Alberto wrote in a letter to his father, il Saggiatore «realizzerà [...] quella circolazione delle idee che tanto è sentita oggi in ceti sempre più vasti di pubblico».<sup>2</sup> The publishing plans of il Saggiatore mirrored Alberto's interest in non-fiction and in foreign culture as well, as the publication of both Woolf's and Forster's essays in its series *La Cultura*<sup>3</sup> testifies.

#### 4. «THE GREATEST BRITISH NOVELIST LIVING» IGNORED: E. M. FORSTER

As the chronology in Table 1 shows, the Italian translations of Forster followed a different pattern from that of Woolf and Strachey, and the author started to have a coherent editorial plan only after the publication of *Howards End* in the *Classici Moderni* series by Feltrinelli in 1959. In 1962, the literary critic and University professor Gabriele Baldini, who had been the director of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in London from 1959 to 1961, denounced the fact that Italians had hitherto ignored «uno dei maggiori narratori inglesi contemporanei e, senza dubbio, il maggior romanziere inglese vivente: E.M. Forster».<sup>4</sup> In an article in the newspaper «Il Messaggero»,<sup>5</sup> Baldini tells the backstory of the first publications of Forster in Italy. *A Passage to India* was translated in 1945 by Augusto Guidi, a Professor of English and an acknowledged literary critic, for a small and semi-clandestine publishing house, Perrella, which published the novel with the title *Passaggio all'India*. Publication of the novel was suggested by Salvatore Rosati, and the novel, as Baldini explains in his article, soon sold out because only a few copies were printed. Moreover, the translation was only sold in Rome: «a nord di Civitavecchia e a sud di Anzio nessuno l'ha mai vista né sospettata. E quindi, per molti aspetti, è proprio come se fosse stata pubblicata in edizione numerotée».<sup>6</sup>

As a matter of fact, one copy of the novel is now preserved at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome, as part of Enrico Falqui's personal collection, which was donated to the National Library in 1976 and was made available to the public in 1982.<sup>7</sup> The novel was part of the *Prisma* series, which produced translations of

<sup>1</sup> See: BOLCHI, *L'indimenticabile Artista*, cit., in particular ch. II.2 and II.3, pp. 50-64.

<sup>2</sup> «will achieve [...] that circulation of ideas that is so strongly felt in more and more wider social classes». ALBERTO MONDADORI, *Lettere di una vita 1922-1975*, ed. Gian Carlo Ferretti, Milano, Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, 1996, p. 595.

<sup>3</sup> The series had been inaugurated in 1959 with the publication of essays by Sartre, Jasper and Lévi-Strauss.

<sup>4</sup> GABRIELE BALDINI, *La retina del gallese*, «Il Messaggero», 21 February 1962, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Founded in Rome in 1878, «Il Messaggero» is among the eight most read Italian newspapers.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*. Upon inspecting the volume, the 'domestic' dimension of the print-run is clear, because the book has a different price for sales «in Rome» or «outside Rome».

<sup>7</sup> This is probably the reason why Nerozzi's 1980 book does not describe the volume.

foreign literature that included Camilo José Cela (printed in 1944), Balzac, Hoffmann and Brönte [sic] (with a diaeresis on the 'o' instead of the 'e' being indicative of the quality of the editing). Unfortunately, no information on the publisher Perrella seems to remain. Other publications in the series show that Perrella printed with the typography Reda – Ramo Editoriale degli Agricoltori [Farmers' Publishing Branch]; the only document that remains appears to be a letter from Perrella addressed to the International Literary Agency in 1951, in which they describe themselves as «da molti anni specializzata in pubblicazioni di carattere tecnico» and «interessata a tradurre manuali industriali».<sup>1</sup> Rather than dissipating doubts surrounding the first Italian publication of Forster, this letter instead makes the situation more intriguing.

In his review, Baldini wonders why E. M. Forster was so disregarded in Italy, mentioning the fact that every time a publisher asked him which contemporary novelist they should publish, he answered: «prima fate Forster, poi se ne parlerà».<sup>2</sup> However:

né quelli di Torino né quelli di Milano né quelli di Firenze, m'ha mai voluto dare, in quanto a Forster, il minimo ascolto. Tanto che, una volta che incontrai proprio lui, Forster, a Cambridge, nel giardino di Peterhouse – era nel '49 – egli se ne rammaricò meco, e non seppe far altro che attribuire quell'ostracismo al fatto che in qualche suo romanzo suonava un giudizio poco lusinghiero sull'Italia.<sup>3</sup>

Baldini does not agree with Forster's hypothesis, though, because he felt that Forster might have been accused of the opposite, of sounding nostalgic over the Italian landscape and atmosphere, as viewed through the paintings of the fifteenth century. Moreover, according to him, no intelligent publisher in post-war Italy would have refused to publish Forster because of a negative judgement of Italy. Baldini then outlines the Italian publication chronology of Forster, stating that the first 'national' edition – if we consider Perrella's as a mere Roman edition – was the 1958 translation of *A Room with a View* by Giuliana Aldi Pompili for Rizzoli. Baldini seems to overlook another translation that appeared before Aldi Pompili's: *La finestra sull'Arno*, translated by Jole Pinna Pintor for the SAIE press in 1954. The SAIE publishing house was created by Don Giacomo Alberione and Don Gabriele Piazza, founders of the Società San Paolo, now better known as San Paolo Edizioni. Don Alberione used to say to his coworkers and collaborators: «non parlare solo di religione, ma di tutto parlare cristianamente».<sup>4</sup> After a publisher interested in technical and industrial textbooks, the second publisher of Forster's novels in Italy was thus a priest who, wishing to speak 'in a Christian way' of everything, published *A Room With a View*, a novel portraying the emancipation of Lucy Honeychurch from the conservative Victorian and Christian ideal

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the publisher Perrella to Mondadori, 1951, typewritten. Faam, Archivio Storico Agenzia Letteraria Internazionale.

<sup>2</sup> «First do Forster, and then we'll talk about it». BALDINI, *art. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.saiesanpaolo.it/chi-siamo/> (last accessed 2 July 2019). The Editrice SAIE (Società Azionaria Internazionale Editrice) was founded in Turin in 1954.

of the 'pure and innocent woman' and describing her 'sexual awakening' thanks to the liberal and progressive Edwardian values represented by the Emersons, two figures openly challenging established conventions, declaredly atheist, and searching no answer in religion.

Why then had Mondadori, who before the end of the war had hastened to buy all possible foreign rights,<sup>1</sup> not bought Forster's rights as well? Were they really not interested in his works?

##### 5. AN UNSIGNED READER'S REPORT AND NEW CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Historical Archive of Arnoldo Mondadori Editore only has one file on E.M. Forster, and it contains two readers' reports. The first, dated 21 May 1956, is a report on *Marianne Thornton*, a biography of Forster's great-aunt and one of the writer's minor works, with a note by Elio Vittorini advising against pursuing the publication further.<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Mondadori had requested the book from its agent in London, Mrs Andrew, thus proving that an interest in Forster on their part existed. More intriguing is the other reader's report present in the file, written by Anna Giustiniani in September 1953 and focussing, this time, on *Howard's End*.<sup>3</sup> The report immediately presents its socio-political setting:

È l'epoca in cui incomincia la battaglia per l'avvento del socialismo e per il voto alle donne. Le due sorelle, colte ed intelligenti, prendono vivo interesse al movimento, mentre Tibby si mostra indifferente per amore di quieto vivere.<sup>4</sup>

The report ends by judging the novel as «discreto», with figures and settings well outlined, but commenting: «interessante il problema sociale che affronta, anche se tale problema è per noi superato».<sup>5</sup> On the report is a big NO, written in pencil and underlined. The reason for refusing *Howard's End* seems to have been its theme, considered obsolete in a country which had just rid itself of the Fascist regime and in which women had just won the right to vote. As Sara Sullam explains,<sup>6</sup> the true Italian 'discovery' of Forster happened thanks to Giorgio Bassani, a careful and scrupulous reader, with an international flair that was exactly what Feltrinelli needed in that cultural moment in Italy.<sup>7</sup> In 1959, Bassani chose *Howard's End* to inaugurate what Roberta Cesana described as Feltrinelli's most prestigious and structured series,<sup>8</sup> "Classici Moderni", a series that was presented as publishing:

opere già definitivamente consegnate alla storia delle letterature straniere a cavallo tra l'Ottocento e il Novecento. Testi che avevano avuto il tempo di diventare classici mentre l'Italia era tagliata fuori dal mondo, prima dal provincialismo, poi dall'avvento del fasci-

<sup>1</sup> BOLCHI, *L'indimenticabile Artista*, cit., pp. 13-17.

<sup>2</sup> Faam, AsAme, Sez. Giudizi di Lettura, file «E.M. Forster».

<sup>3</sup> The report is described by SARA SULLAM in *Le traduzioni di letteratura inglese in Italia dal 1943 ai primi anni sessanta. Una ricognizione preliminare*, «Enthymema», 7, 2012, pp. 131-150.

<sup>4</sup> Faam, AsAme, Sez. Giudizi di Lettura, file «E.M. Forster».

<sup>6</sup> SULLAM, *art. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>7</sup> CESANA, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem.*

smo che aveva stroncato sul nascere il processo di europeizzazione incominciato subito dopo la grande guerra. Un recupero, insomma, del tempo perduto.<sup>1</sup>

«Making up for lost time» is indeed a meaningful phrase in terms of the translation of Forster's novels into Italian. *Casa Howard* was published with an introduction by the renowned scholar and critic Agostino Lombardo, who stressed on the one hand Forster's positioning among the classics of the history of literature, and on the other the modernity of a work that should be read on different levels, and not simply as the outdated portrait of a slice of society.<sup>2</sup> As Stefano Guerrieri explains, Bassani chose *Howard's End* because he considered it exemplary of a style akin to his.<sup>3</sup> This publication traces a more coherent path for the editorial *marquage* of Forster in Italy: in 1961 Feltrinelli published *Monteriano*, a translation by Luisa Chiarella of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*; in 1962 Einaudi published *Passaggio in India*, retranslated by Adriana Motti; and, in 1964, it was again Feltrinelli who published *Il cammino più lungo* [*The Longest Journey*], once again introduced by Lombardo and translated by Chiarella. Mondadori was only able to publish a book by Forster in 1967: it was Motti's translation of *Passaggio in India*, with the rights on concession from Einaudi.

Back to the initial question: was it true that Mondadori had no interest in the publication of Forster? Checking the documents concerning editors, translators, readers and advisers who worked with – and for – Mondadori at the time, a couple of documents proving Mondadori's interest in him came to light. One is a letter that Alberto Mondadori wrote to James Laughlin, the poet and founder of New Directions Publishing in New York. In October 1946 Mondadori wrote to him asking for some books «for perusal», among which were Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*, David Daiches's essay on Woolf and Forster's *A Room With a View* and *The Longest Journey*.<sup>4</sup> Laughlin managed to send him only Barnes and Daiches's books, together with Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*, and Mondadori wrote back to buy the rights of the volumes which he considered «representative of the most wistful and progressive strain in modern literature of the English speaking world».<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GIANGIACOMO FELTRINELLI EDITORE, *I Vent'anni della Feltrinelli. Catalogo Generale 1955-1975*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1975, p. 24. For a more in-depth analysis of the series see CESANA, *op. cit.*; and GIAN CARLO FERRETTI, STEFANO GUERRIERO, *Giorgio Bassani Editore Letterato*, Lecce, Manni, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> «Opere quali *A Passage to India* e questo *Howards End* (1910) appariranno allora come salde e insostituibili pietre miliari sulla strada del romanzo moderno, e ben si vedrà come questo debba anche a Forster – oltre che a Virginia Woolf o a Joyce – la sua maggiore conquista, e cioè l'acquisizione all'arte delle zone più segrete della coscienza», AGOSTINO LOMBARDO, *Prefazione*, in EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER, *Casa Howard*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1959, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> STEFANO GUERRIERO, *Le Letterature Straniere nei Classici Moderni*, in FERRETTI, GUERRIERO, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-120: 85.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Alberto Mondadori to James Laughlin, 25 October 1946, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, Sez. il Saggiatore, file «James Laughlin».

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Alberto Mondadori to James Laughlin, 20 June 1947, typewritten. Faam, AsAme, Sez. il Saggiatore, file «James Laughlin». West had already been published by Bompiani in 1948, though, and Mondadori was only able to publish *The Day of the Locust*, translated by Carlo Fruttero, in 1960; Daiches was never published by Mondadori.



What would have happened had Laughlin also managed to send a copy of Forster's novels to Mondadori?

The second document is a letter to Luigi Rusca, general co-director of Mondadori, written by Vittorini on 1 May 1938, containing his reader's report on Somerset Maugham's *The Summing Up*. At the end of his report Vittorini added:

Intanto le segnalo un libro molto bello, vecchio già di otto o dieci anni, ma oggi ancor più stimato (e sempre più citato, sempre più ricordato) di dieci anni fa, e che non mi risulta sia mai stato tradotto in italiano. Dico *Passage to India* di E. M. Forster. Io l'ho letto in questi giorni e mi sono arrabbiato con me stesso di non averlo letto prima. È anche un libro che avrebbe un grandissimo successo, forse più di Lawrence. Se Casa Mondadori non ne ha ancora affidato la traduzione a nessuno sarei lieto di poterlo tradurre io. Ma, in ogni caso, mi sembra della massima importanza tradurlo. (Il libro è compreso anche nella collezione Albatross).<sup>1</sup>

Rusca wrote on the margins «Per Helicon chiedi diritti» and «Per Piceni», who was the person in charge of relationships with foreign authors. To Vittorini's letter Rusca answered:

Conosciamo questo volume e già da diversi anni ci siamo interessati per ottenerne i diritti di traduzione; malgrado le nostre insistenze non siamo mai riusciti ad ottenere una risposta. Proveremo a fare un ultimo tentativo. Intanto, giacché l'ha letto, gradiremmo ricevere con comodo anche il Suo giudizio.<sup>2</sup>

In Vittorini's file there is no trace of his report on the novel, but Fondazione Mondadori holds a handwritten and unsigned report of *A Passage to India*, whose first page is missing and cannot thus be ascribed to anyone. The second page starts abruptly: «In realtà c'è molto di più e di più importante di questo che è soprattutto l'atteggiamento psicologico di una parte dei personaggi».<sup>3</sup> The reader describes this mainly in the characters of Adela and Mrs Moore:

Le due signore sono molto legate tra loro, oneste, intelligenti, animate da un profondo desiderio di comprensione, prese di sicuro interessamento per la terra e il popolo tra cui sono venute a vivere. Trovano invece la società dei loro compatrioti chiusa nella cerchia di pregiudizi crudeli presuntuosa e piena di rancore per il popolo soggetto e 'turbolento'. Ma al di sopra della convenzionalità, dei pettegolezzi e delle ingenerose ristrettezze mentali d'ogni genere, un'atmosfera di austero religioso e di destino grava intorno, ed è avvertito dalle due donne.<sup>4</sup>

The report proceeds with a synopsis of the novel and ends on a positive note about the epilogue, full of «significati profondi e di mistero». Although his previous correspondence with Rusca may lead one to believe that Vittorini wrote the report,

<sup>1</sup> Faam, AsAme, SezArM, file «Vittorini Elio (29 mar. 36 – 2 dic. 68 CHECK)». The Albatross editions were printed by Mondadori's presses in Verona, and Vittorini's remark intended to highlight easy access to a copy of the original. For a close analysis of the Albatross editions see: L. JAILLANT, *From New York to Shanghai: Global Modernism, Cheap Reprint Series and Copyright*, «Modernist Cultures», 13, 2018, pp. 115-133.

<sup>2</sup> Luigi Rusca to Elio Vittorini, 6 May 1938, typewritten. *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Unsigned reader report. Faam, AsAme, Sez. Giudizi negativi anni 1932-1947, B.6 f.368, file «Forster Edward Morgan».

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

the handwriting proves that he did not. What the correspondence does prove, however, is that Mondadori was indeed interested in Forster, and had been trying to obtain the translation rights at least since before 1938, without success. One last clue is found in a letter dated 15 June 1961 written by Alberto Mondadori to Don Gabriele Piazzo, the aforementioned founder of the SAIE publishing house, to ask him for the rights for two works they had previously published and that Mondadori wanted to reissue in his Pavone series, which Alberto described as «a high circulation series for reprints of important works at reasonable prices». The titles which interested Mondadori were Lisboa's *Le Messi di Caino* and Forster's *La Finestra sull'Arno*. Alberto proposed an advance of 200,000 lire for each copy and a percentage of 5% on sales.<sup>1</sup> But this request remained unanswered, so much so that Mondadori wrote back on 19 August to make the same request, which again remained unanswered. Alberto would succeed in publishing Forster only when he founded his own publishing house, il Saggiatore, with which he published the essays *Aspects of the Novel*, translated by Corrado Pavolini, in 1963, interestingly the same year of publication of the first collection of essays by Woolf.

The perception of the Bloomsbury Set as a group, a community, not only of artists and intellectuals but of friends with a common vision of the world, is relatively recent compared to their first translations in Italy. Even in 1974, ideas about the group were confused and it was possible to read in the feminist journal «Effe» that Woolf had «joined the famous Bloomsbury literary group, to which belonged Henry James, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce».<sup>2</sup> The Group probably started to be recognized as such after the publication of two biographical volumes: Quentin Bell's biography of Virginia Woolf and the collection of memoirs *Moments of Being*. This last work specifically not only shed light on Woolf's life events from a more intimate and personal perspective, but also revealed the fundamental importance that the Bloomsbury Group had on the intellectual and artistic formation of its members.

What this research has proved is that the considerable delay in publication of Forster's works in Italy, compared to the works by Woolf and Strachey, was not due to a lack of interest in the writer. This essay has confirmed a relatively early interest of the Mondadori Publishing house in Forster's works compared to his first Italian publication, not so distant from the interest shown in his Bloomsbury colleagues. Some research hypotheses can also be formulated. The study in fact underlined how the editorial *marquage* of Bloomsbury's writers was similar for Woolf and Forster, since an editorial plan for both had, sooner or later, been formulated which envisaged their inclusion in refined and cultural series, sometimes even inaugurating the series, as was the case for *La signora Dalloway* with the Il Ponte series and for *Casa Howard* with Classici Moderni; while Strachey's

<sup>1</sup> Faam, AsAme, Sez. il Saggiatore – Carteggio 1934-1976, file «Piazzo Gabriele».

<sup>2</sup> DANIELA COLOMBO, *Virginia Woolf, un suicidio di libertà*, «Effe», 2, 6, luglio 1974, now available at: <http://efferivistafemminista.it/2015/01/virginia-woolf-un-suicidio-di-liberta> (last accessed 5 October 2019).

publication was more scattered and lacked an editorial plan. Moreover, essays by both Woolf and Forster were bought and published by il Saggiatore in 1963, thus acknowledging their intellectual canonical status in the same year. Moving from such hypothesis, further answers might be searched for on the opposite side of the Channel: are there letters by Mondadori asking for Forster's rights in the UK archives? Are there traces of Forster's interest in the Italian translation of his novels? When did the identity of the Bloomsbury Group become so important that it was used to appeal to readers, as happened with Michael Holroyd's biography of Lytton Strachey, significantly translated in Italian in 2011 with the title *Lytton Strachey. L'arte di vivere a Bloomsbury*?<sup>1</sup> Maybe it is time for this research to 'cross the Channel'.

★

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 838658.

<sup>1</sup> MICHAEL HOLROYD, *Lytton Strachey. L'arte di vivere a Bloomsbury*, Milano, il Saggiatore, 2011.

