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Homosexuality as Trope of Race: Revisiting E.M. Forster's *Maurice*

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The paper analyses E.M. Forster's posthumously published novel *Maurice* to show how the author drew an analogy between sexual and racial difference. The paper explores *Maurice* as a narrative conceptualizing a relationship with members of ones own race. Heterosexuality to Maurice Hall, the protagonist is repulsive, and the divide between the male sex and the female sex is as sharp as the divide between races. In Forster's fiction the concept of race has several connotations, one is that 'racial similarity' implies belonging to the same country or nation and the other implies 'racial similarity' in terms of belonging to the same sex. This paper revisits *Maurice* as work advocating homosexuality because of the fact that Forster considered relations between men and women difficult as they belong to different geographies of gender. Forster remarks in *Howards End* that sexes are really races, each with its own code of morality. So homosexuality in *Maurice* is undrestood in terms of same sex/same race relation.

E.M. Forster's *Maurice (1914)* is often taken as a plea for homosexual rights on the part of a homosexual writer. The scholarship available on the novel is concerned primarily with an opposition between homosexuality and heterosexuality. A new dimension to the opposition between homo and hetero in the novel emerges if it is studied with reference to Forster's views on heterosexual relationships. Forster conceptualized the relationship between men and women, "as 'racial' difference and heterosexual intimacy to be beset by an irremediable barrier of sexual 'culture' and alienation" (Lane 1993: 93). He drew an analogy between sexual and racial difference.

In *Howards End* (1910) Forster says, "Are the sexes really races, each with their own code of morality, and their mutual love a mere device of Nature to keep things going?" (Forster 1978: 596). Forster's male and female characters are divided by a barrier as intractable as race; they occupy different "geographies" of gender. Elaine Showalter writes, "I think we must accept the fact that Forster often saw women as part of the enemy camp" (Showalter 1977: 7).

Few of Forster's characters seem to choose heterosexuality except in the interest of reproduction. As Mrs. Moore remarks in *A Passage to India (1924)*, for instance: "Why all this marriage, marriage? … The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use" (Forster 1957: 207). There is an insurmountable barrier between men and women. The female sex is termed as the "other", the binary opposite of the male. In Forster's fiction the concept of race has several implications; one implication is that "racial similarity" implies belonging to the same country or nation. The second implication of "racial similarity" is belonging to the same sex. When Forster talks of same sex relations there is more than one meaning to it. Homosexuality becomes a trope of "belonging to the same race" and affirms Forster's maxim of "only connect" which rings throughout his fiction as connecting only with the people of one's own race, disguised as sex in *Maurice*. Homosexuality is termed as same race relationship where sex is designated as race. The division between men and women renders homo-friendships more natural, as homosexuality is merely the extension of an already palpable same sex understanding.

Maurice though written somewhere in 1913 or 1914, was published posthumously in 1971. During the interval it was revised several times by the author, who made a number of additions and alterations in the text. The 'Terminal note' of the novel written in 1960 is like an afterword. In the 'Terminal note' Forster acknowledges that *Maurice* was the direct result of a visit to Edward Carpenter. Carpenter lived with his comrade George Merrill, and he "was a believer in the love of comrades, whom he sometimes calls 'Uranians'" (Forster 1971: 235). On one of the visits to Carpenter's place, his comrade George Merrill happened to tickle Forster's sensuality with a touch on the back, which led to the conception of *Maurice*. Both Carpenter and Merrill strongly influenced Forster. Carpenter's long Whitmanesque poem, "Towards Democracy" and his homosexual connection with George Merrill made Forster look upon Carpenter as his saviour.

Around 1890's there existed a group of writers, artists and philosophers dedicated to the goal of securing sympathetic recognition to homosexuality. Edward Carpenter was one of the two most important ideologues of the Uranian movement, the other being John Addington Symond. Both of them "were disciples of Walt Whitman, and they preached the love of comrades in numerous poems, pamphlets, and books" (Summers 1987: 147). Both Carpenter and Symond placed "homo" at a higher level than "hetero".

The term "Uranian" comes from Plato's *The Symposium*, in which Pausanias distinguishes between Heavenly Aphrodite 'Aphrodite Urania' and Common Aphrodite. According to Pausanias, those who are inspired by Heavenly Love "are attracted towards the male sex, and value it as being naturally the stronger and more intelligent … their intention is to form a lasting attachment and partnership for life" (Plato 1951: 46-47). Homosexuality is superior and lasting as compared to heterosexuality. Edward Carpenter was of the opinion that marriage is linked to property, whereas homosexuality exists outside class and ownership.

Homosexuality may provide the occasion for a growth in spiritual awareness. It is not, of course, that heterosexuals are denied the possibility of such growth; it is that they lack that the impulse toward it, and that the institutions of heterosexuality, such as marriage, specifically work against growth. (Tambling 1995: 110)

Homosexuality is spiritual and heterosexuality is related to material concerns.

John Addington Symond also implied the superiority of homosexuality to heterosexuality finding the former more spiritual and less bound by material considerations. Symond isolated homosexual love as a private experience and minimized physical passion, Carpenter forthrightly acknowledged the physical.

E.M. Forster in *Maurice* also places homosexuality at a higher level that heterosexuality and he says in the Terminal Note, that, the happy ending for the two men in the novel was imperative. One reason for this imperative happy ending is that Forster considered relations between men and women difficult as they belong to different geographies of gender. Forster remarks in *Howards End* that sexes are really races, each with its own code of morality. So homosexuality in *Maurice* guarantees a happy ending to the novel.

In the novel there are two homosexual relations, one between Clive Durham and Maurice Hall and the other between Alec Scudder and Maurice Hall. In the first relationship the attitudes of Symond prevail: homosexuality is defined as higher form of love, and its spiritual superiority is preserved by its exclusion of physical consummation. In the second Carpenter's influence in evident, homosexuality is seen to include physical love, and whatever superiority it may possess over heterosexuality is now related to its social consequences, to its provision of an outlaw status even for its most respectable adherents.

The novel is divided roughly into equal parts, each of which is then again divided in two, to provide the four parts identified by Forster. The first half of the book is devoted to the Maurice–Clive relationship, to suburban life, and to Cambridge. Similarly, the second half of the book is devoted to the Maurice-Alec relationship, to the opposition of gentry and servants, and to the country house, Penge. The first half is dominated by Plato and, indirectly, by John Addington Symonds and the apologists for 'Greek love', the second half is dominated by Edward Carpenter and his translation of the ideas of Walt Whitman. The two sections run almost exactly parallel: Part I ends with Maurice entering Clive's window in response to his call; Part III concludes with Alec entering Maurice's room in response to a similar call. Part II concludes with dawn, the hope for new light that ironically brings the death of love between Maurice and Clive; Part IV ends with sunset, the apparent darkness that ironically brings life and the survival of the love of Maurice and Alec.

The novel opens with Maurice Hall a "plump, pretty lad, not in anyway remarkable" (Forster 1971: 4) passing out of Mr. Abraham's preparatory school. Maurice is to move from Mr. Abrahams preparatory school to Sunnington Public School. On the last day in school, one of the teachers Mr. Ducie expresses his wish to talk alone with Maurice. During the course of their conversation Mr. Ducie asks Maurice about the men he knows, Maurice mentions only the coachman and George, the gardener of his household. The key note theme is struck in this disclosure of Maurice at the beginning of the novel. Later, Maurice expresses his grievance to his mother when he knows that George has been sent away. This, when connected with what Ducie advises Maurice about the importance of sex – 'hetero', shows how Maurice is inclined towards 'homo' from his early boyhood. For after Mr. Ducie's elaborate lecture on sex thoroughly illustrated with diagrams of male and female sketched in the sand, all about reproduction, procreation, Maurice simply says, "I think I shall not marry" (Forster 1971: 8). At this Mr. Ducie says that in ten years time he will invite Maurice and his wife to dine with him.

At Sunnington Maurice's body developed, his thoughts became 'dirty' and he longed for 'smut'. Moreover he had two dreams at Sunnington. In the first dream, "he was playing football against a nondescript whose existence he resented. He made an effort and the nondescript turned into George, that garden boy … George headed down the field towards him, naked and jumping over the wood stacks" (Forster 1971: 15). After this Maurice woke up in disappointment. The second dream was different:

he scarcely saw a face, scarcely heard a voice say, 'That is your friend', and then it was over, having filled him with beauty and taught him tenderness. He could die for such a friend, he would allow such a friend to die for him; they would make any sacrifice for each other, and count the world nothing, neither death nor distance not crossness could part them, because 'this is my friend'. (Forster 1971: 15)

Both the dreams show Maurice longing for a companion.

From Sunnington Maurice moves to Cambridge. Here he meets Clive Durham , a year senior to Maurice , the scion of a country family and heir to Penge, a declining country house located near the Wiltshire and Somerset border. In the company of Clive Durham, Maurice is influenced by Greek culture and thought, with its ideals of tolerance and sexual freedom. Clive introduces Maurice to Plato's *The Symposium*, about Greek homosexuality. Their relationship is based on the admiration of the man of intellect and imagination (Clive) for the companion who has a body of pure beauty (Maurice) which seems to express the beautiful integrity of his being.

One day, in a crowd of other undergraduates Clive goes up to Maurice and "with eyes that had gone intensely blue he whispered, 'I love you'." To which Maurice "shocked to the bottom of his suburban soul, exclaimed, 'Oh, rot'! … 'Durham, you're an Englishman. I'm another. Don't talk nonsense'" (Forster 1971: 50).

Maurice's rejection of Clive, however leads him to re-examine himself and come to terms with his own nature. He acknowledges the degree of self-deception that he has engaged in. This rediscovery of the personal self below the social self leads Maurice to his resolve: "He would not – and this was the test – pretend to care about women when the only sex that attracted him was his own. He loved men and had always loved them" (53).Maurice finds his real self, and also finds Clive. One night he climbs through Clive's bedroom window to tell him that he loves him, just as Clive calls out his name in sleep. "His friend has called him … laying his hand very gently upon the pillows he answered 'Clive!'" (Forster 1971: 57).

The relationship of Clive and Maurice remains platonic, romantic but non-physical. Clive under the influence of Plato's *Phaedrus* idealises homosexual love under the pretext that "their love; though including the body should not gratify it" (Forster 1971: 139). Clive's love is idealistic in nature, and it is Maurice who desires physical fulfillment. But Clive being his model, and Clive's model being Plato, the relationship remains non-physical. For Clive this higher love depended upon the renunciation of physical passion. "The love that Socrates bore Phaedo, now lay within his reach, love passionate but temperate" (Forster 1971: 89). This relationship between Clive and Maurice is pure, in that although they stroke and kiss one another and lie together in deep grass, they do not, technically, 'come'.

After Cambridge the two friends correspond with each other regularly and also visit each other. On one of the visits to Maurice's house Clive falls ill with influenza. Clive's attack of flu provides an opportunity to Maurice and Clive to come emotionally and physically together. Maurice earns Clive's love through service and sacrifice. But later Clive wishes to have a nurse, which is an indication of the beginning of an unconscious inclination towards 'hetero' in him. Thus Clive's disease threatens to shatter Maurice's love for him.

After his recovery Clive goes to Greece and on his return he finds Maurice's company repulsive, and feels increasingly attracted to women. At Maurice's home, Clive is attracted to Ada, the beautiful one of Maurice's sisters. Ada's looks, spirit and voice resemble Maurice's. In her dark hair, eyes, curves of the body, he finds the answer to his need of transition from 'homo' to 'hetero'. She is the synthesis of memory and desire, sentiment and emotion, tenderness and passion. Precisely Ada makes Clive forget even Greece. "He had not supposed there was such a creature except in Heaven" (Forster 1971: 114). But the promise of glory in the transition is shadowed by the horror of masculinity that Maurice brings to bear on him. When Clive says that he has changed, Maurice confidently puts the question, “can the leopard change his spots?” (Forster 1971: 117).

Clive leaves Maurice after a row and the edifice of mutual love, built over three years collapses. Maurice resents Clive’s treachery and accuses his sister, Ada of being its cause. He is maddened by incestuous jealousy for Clive and Ada too. His loneliness, agony and mortification increase his suffering. Clive is prepared to do anything for Maurice except love him. Meanwhile, Clive gets engaged to Anne woods, whom he had met in Greece. Maurice is devastated by Clive’s desertion and by the collapse of his orderly life .After flirting with the idea of suicide, Maurice decides to become normal. He confesses to his neighbour Dr. Barry that he is “an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort”, a confession the old physician dismisses as “Rubbish, rubbish!” (Forster 1971: 145).

Clive is already married and Maurice accepts an invitation from him and his new bride, Anne Woods, to spend a brief holiday in the country. At Penge, he discovers that Clive is almost totally absorbed in an election campaign. Disappointed at Clive’s neglect and even more determined to become normal, Maurice writes for an appointment with a hypnotist. He allows Anne and Clive to believe that he plans to get married. After a session with the hypnotist, Maurice returns to Penge, in his sleep that night, he walks to the window of his room and calls ‘come’ The plea is answered when Alec Scudder, the estates handsome gamekeeper with bright brown eyes, climbs up a ladder and into Maurice’s arms.

The next morning, during a cricket match, Maurice envisions himself and Alec as two comrades fighting against a hostile world, a reverie broken by the appearance of Clive. Suddenly taken ill, Maurice abruptly leaves Penge. At home, he receives a letter from Alec requesting a meeting before the young gamekeeper emigrates to Argentina. Fearing blackmail, Maurice ignores the letter. But in his next encounter with the hypnotist, he fails to enter a trance; the hypnotist tells him that by “sharing” with Alec, Maurice has “cut himself off from the congregation of normal men.” (Forster 1971: 199).

Maurice’s failure to be converted to heterosexuality actually gives him an inner peace, and he is not disturbed when he receives a threatening letter from Alec. He asks the young man to meet him at the British Museum. The encounter there culminates in Maurice’s declaration of love for Alec and in a night of passion in a cheap hotel. Alec does not emigrate and they decide to retreat into the greenwood together. Before the lovers depart for the greenwood, Maurice confronts a disbelieving Clive with the astonishing news. The novel ends with the squire meditating on “some method of concealing the truth from Anne” (Forster 1971: 231). The novel concludes with Maurice leaving everything for same sex love and Clive remaining in the clutches of a passionless heterosexuality. The novel proclaims that homosexual love, in its fullest sense, is happy and enduring.

Maurice conceptualizes a relationship with ones own sex and not with the female race because the female sex is alien and therefore the ‘other’. Sexual similarity is akin to racial similarity and the novel illustrates that happiness is guaranteed only when people keep to their own sex/race. Maurice’s sensibility to refrain from marriage at the age of fourteen establishes his attraction for ‘homo’. Perhaps Maurice refrains from marriage because marriage is an interracial relationship for men and women are divided by a barrier as intractable as race and difference of sex is a difference of race rather than a biological difference. Maurice says “I think I shall not marry”, (Forster 1971: 8) this assertion is an outcome of the English Public School system, which ensures the "exclusion from manliness of those attributes seen as feminine, especially the ability to express emotions" (Hartree 1996: 130). The Public School rigidly excluded women and encouraged the spirit of Comradeship. To refrain from the opposite sex is perhaps expected from these Public School boys, as to the Principal Mr. Abraham they were "a race small but complete, like the New Guinea Pygmies, 'my boys'. And they were even easier to understand than pygmies, because they never married … celibate … the long procession passed before him …" (Forster 1971: 4).

Though the publicly articulated ideal of 'manliness' remained purely heterosexual; yet the sensibility embedded in the Public Schools was contrary to it. Both Maurice's identity and his relationship with Clive are constructed within the frame of this public-school mindset and represent an attempt to redraw its boundaries to contain some version of same-sex love. Maurice, its central representative, is "persistently associated with athleticism and physical combat; for example his pursuit of Clive is represented as a military. This imagery at once defines Maurice as 'manly', guarantees his virility and courage and locates homosexual love within the ideal of manliness" (Hartree 1996: 131).

Clive comes in Maurice's life at a later stage but this confused attraction for men is always there in him. In a female dominated household, where the father is conspicuously absent, and no mention is made of him by the mother or sisters, where the other denizens are three maidservants to look after the house, and the sole male occupants, the coachman and the gardener, George, kept at a disdainful distance in the lower ranks of precedence, "the cry 'George' becomes a male fixation. Father, or friend, celibate or sexual, it did not matter – so long as it was 'he' working through both." When Maurice returns from school and enquires why 'George' has been dismissed, his mother shrugs off the question, as does the coachman and his wife. "In killing George-father or friend or lover – his mother and the rest have become traitors"(Buhariwala 1983: 139). An intense feeling of misogyny is seen in Maurice and he does not seem to agree with his neighbour, Dr. Barry when he tells him, "Man that is born of woman must go with woman if the human race is to continue" (Forster 1971: 20).

But Maurice does try heterosexual intimacy during one vacation from Cambridge. His attempt to establish a heterosexual relation with one Miss Olcott is disastrous, "she knew something was wrong. His touch revolted her. It was a corpses" (Forster 1971: 46). Maurice then realizes that he should just maintain relations with his own race/sex, vowing not to "pretend to care about women when the only sex that attracted him was his own. He loved men and always had loved them. He longed to embrace them and mingle his being with theirs" (Forster 1971: 53). In *A Passage to India* Forster says that there can be nothing but disaster the result when interracial intimacy is attempted.Miss Olcott is soon forgotten and Maurice comes close to Clive and acknowledging his love for him says "I have always been like the Greeks and didn't know" (Forster 1971: 56).

To Maurice, Clive is the most important person in the world. Clive too reciprocates his feeling. He says to Maurice, "I feel to you as Pippa to her fiancé, only for more nobly. Far more deeply, body and soul … a particular harmony of body and soul that I don't think women have even guessed" (Forster 1971: 81). To Clive his relationship with Maurice is higher and nobler than his sister's relationship with her fiancé. This is because Clive and Maurice come from the same sex, whereas women are part of the enemy camp. Homosexuality as expressed by Clive and as lived by Maurice and him, "is a state reserved for a tiny elite of those with highly developed sensibilities. It effects no change in the homosexual. It encourages misogyny – Clive is Forster tells us, even more misogynistic than Maurice" (Tambling 1995: 105).

The Clive-Maurice relationship is a marriage of true minds. Each agreed to what the other said and there was no question of who was leading whom? During Clive illness Maurice nursed him and allowed no one to help. He did not permit his sister Ada to enter Clive's room lest she should attract him. But it is during this illness that Clive experiences a change of heart, moving away from 'homo' towards 'hetero'. He expresses a wish to have a nurse as he has already begun to develop heterosexual attractions and to regard his homosexual attachment as something dirty and shameful. Clive views his attachment to Maurice as unclean and longs for the forgetfulness of Lethe. Finally from Greece he writes to Maurice that "Against my will I have become normal. I cannot help it" (Forster 1971: 106).

Clive not only affirms the reality of his heterosexuality, for which he cannot be blamed, but more culpably, he also coldly rejects the legitimacy of his former attachment, "I was never like you" (Forster 1971: 117), he tells Maurice. To deny one's experience is, in the words of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, "to put a lie into the lips of one's life. It is no less than denial of the soul" (Wilde 1905: 37). Maurice tries to pressurize Clive, saying that his change cannot be permanent, he cannot change, "can the leopard change his spots?" (Forster 1971:117). But Clive is adamant and leaves Maurice, to embrace the 'beautiful conventions' that earn social approval.

Maurice is miserable at the loss of his friend and even Clive is not happy in the exact sense of the word. During his relationship with Maurice he thought of marriage merely a means of procuring an heir, he said, "… the need for an hier for Penge. My mother calls it marriage" (Forster 1971: 87). Clive's wife is not a true companion to him, rather her role is only of a mere social appendage. Clive thus rejects instinct and the ideal, deliberately choosing falsity, and, consequently, forever excludes love from his life.

Clive had married for procuring an heir, but the marriage far from producing children, is not even a full-blooded fulfillment. Clive, although embracing heterosexuality, retains prudishness about sexuality and this makes his marriage shallow, rather a sad desecration. Their time together is unnatural and pallid:

When he arrived in her (Anne) room after marriage, she did not know what he wanted. Despite an elaborate education no one had told her about sex. Clive was as considerate as possible, but he scared her terribly, and left feeling she hated him. She did not. She welcomed him on future nights. But it was always without a word. They united in a world that bore no reference to the daily, and this secrecy drew after it much else of their lives. So much could never be mentioned. He never saw her naked, nor she him. They ignored the reproductive and the digestive functions. (Forster 1971: 151)

Maurice while nursing Clive during his illness, used to clean out his chamber pot as well. Though Clive valued the body, the actual deed of sex seemed to him unimaginative and best veild at night. Sex "between man and woman may be practiced since society approves, but should never be discussed nor vaunted" (Forster 1971: 151). Surely the fact that Clive and his wife never see each other naked, or want to, emphasizes that Clive's alteration might be an imposed public requirement than the outward sign of a spontaneous private passion. "Forster exposes with this a myriad real-life dud marriage, contracted but never truly consummated" (Curr 2001: 63).

Clive-Anne marriage being passionless is also not based on equality. The novels final words, “he returned to the house, to correct his proofs and devise some method of concealing the truth from Anne” (Forster 1971: 231). According to Edward Carpenter it seems quite natural that marriage and social institutions should lumber along over the bodies of women, as commercial institutions grind over the bodies of the poor and ‘imperial’ enterprise over the bodies of barbarian races. Clive-Anne relationship is not a marriage of true minds and leads to nothing but passionless heterosexuality. Clive went out of his race but the attraction of the ‘other’ race/sex turns out to be momentary and the result is disillusionment. Forster finds himself unable to make place for the acceptance of homosexual love as equal to heterosexual love, and claims it as superior and this is what is emphasized in the disparagement of marriage.

Marriage does not give Clive happiness, but Maurice does find happiness with Alec, his true companion. Maurice can identify only with Alec and says, ‘I have really got to think that ‘natural’ only means ones self” (Forster 1971: 206). Keeping to ones self is keeping to ones sex, and so Maurice develops an intense relationship with Alec Scudder the gamekeeper of Clive.

This Maurice-Alec relationship is different from Maurice-Clive relationship in that, it also involves the body. Maurice looking back on his affair with Clive holds it against him, that he only half-offered himself and held back from the complete sexual act. With Alec, Maurice shares everything including his body. But this relationship does not take off without the initial doubts and fears.

After the night of physical union at Penge, when Alec seeks to renew contact, Maurice class-ridden suspects him of attempted blackmail. Maurice receives a threatening and impertinent letter from the gamekeeper when he remains silent and indifferent. Maurice is sorry that he gave in to lust and formed a connection with a member of a lower class.

The union of Maurice and Alec is threatened because the latter belongs to a lower social order. In their relationship class distinction persists, “Alec has to climb a ladder to reach Maurice’s window to share with him, while Maurice jumps directly in Clive’s room earlier” (Murthy 1985: 127). The Forsterian pre-occupation with class distinction and with the need for ‘connection’ is central to the novel. Class consciousness is inseparable from the action time to the story, which is 1912. Maurice alternates between his conventional distaste for ‘social inferiors’ and his desire for comradeship. As he and Alec play Cricket together, Maurice meditates on the possibilities of their union. Maurice makes Scudder his ‘lord’ by making him the captain of the cricket match, and contends himself to be a footer in the match. “They played for the sake of each other and their fragile relationship – if one fell, the other would follow. They intended no harm to the world, but so long as it attacked they must punish, they must stand, wary, then hit with full strength, they must show that when two are gathered together majorities shall not triumph” (Forster 1971: 187). This reverie of liberation is interrupted by the arrival of Clive, the representative of convention, the future Member of Parliament, the apostle of class loyalty to whom “intimacy with any social inferior was unthinkable” (Forster 1971: 227). The affair with Alec is deep and disturbing to Maurice as he had gone outside his class:

but all that night his body yearned for Alec’s, despite him. He called it lustful, a word easily uttered, and opposed to it his work, his family, his friends, his position in society. In that coalition must surely be included in his will. For if the will can overleap class, civilization as we have made it will go to pieces. But his body would not be convinced. Chance had mated it too perfectly. (Forster 1971: 191)

Maurice longs to be with Alec despite the oppositions.

The novel shows England as hopelessly class-bound. Cross-cultural relationships are always difficult. Anne Hartree opines that Forster follows late nineteenth century convention in formulating class as a cultural rather than an economic construct, embodying a hierarchy of values reproducing the division of labour in which the upper classes are associated with civility, sensibility, the intellect and the aesthetic, whilst the working classes are connected with the male body, with nature, physicality, instinct, the emotions, directness, and simplicity:

For Forster and many others of the period, the working class is thus constructed as the 'other' of respectable middle class Englishness, possessed of something which the middle class have not; spontaneity, natural gaiety, recklessness, and on that account an object of desire. In sexual terms at stake in this 'otherness' are the virility, passion and 'real' masculinity of the working class body as an escape from middle class civility and convention. (Hartree 1996: 134)

The working classes are an object of desire for the upper classes. This pattern of desire clearly structures the Maurice-Alec relationship, and is reinforced in the contrast between Clive and Alec.

Not only does Alec, unlike Clive, instinctively understand Maurice's appeal and freely initiate physical love, but whilst Clive moves from intellectualized homosexuality of passionless heterosexuality, Alec's masculinity is guaranteed in his opposite move from sex with women to Maurice. Both Alec and Anne are the 'other' but Alec is 'other' culturally, whereas Anne is 'other' racially/sexually. Clive in marrying Anne moves away from his race and involves himself in a interracial relationship. Whereas Maurice has gone down in the social ladder in his relationship with Alec but his partnership is not interracial because they belong to the same sex/race.

Alec and Maurice meet at the British Museum and here they find, pair of five-legged Assyrian bulls, a male couple, just like themselves. Maurice seeing the pair remarks "I have really got to think that 'natural' only means ones self" (Forster 1971: 206). Incidentally in the museum Maurice also meets Mr. Ducie, the same teacher who wanted to invite Maurice and his wife to dinner after ten years. Now Maurice is actually with his wife i.e. Alec, though Mr. Ducie does not understand it. Also Maurice takes on Alec's name, for Mr. Duice does not remember his name. In taking Alec's name Maurice removes the class difference, between them, asserting symbolically that Scudder is not in any way different from his own self and especially in view of the fact that their physical union is complete.

Alec does not join the rest of his family aboard the ship bound for Argentine. Maurice returns to England to start his new life with Alec. To retreat into the greenwood with his lover. But before the lovers take the plunge, Maurice confronts a disbelieving Clive. He tells him, "You don't love me. I was yours once till death if you'd cared to keep me, but I'm someone else's now – I can't hang about whining forever – and he's mine in a way that shocks you, but why don't you stop being shocked, and attend to your own happiness?" (Forster 1971: 230). Thus the novel ends with Maurice leaving everything for same sex love with the assurance of stability and companionship of a homosexual marriage, and Clive remaining in the clutches of heterosexuality.

Clive's fate is aptly summed in Wilde's description of men who desire to be something separate from themselves, such a person Wilde writes, "invariably succeeds in being what he wants to be. That is his punishment" (Wilde 1905: 119).

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