

## 1                   **The Reconciling of Two Forsters:** 2                   ***Maurice* and *A Passage to India* as Intertextual Dialogue**

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4                   *In 1885, British Parliament passed the Labouchere Amendment, which*  
5                   *criminalized unspecified acts of “gross indecency” between men. This was*  
6                   *the law that, when E.M. Forster was sixteen, sent Oscar Wilde to prison.*  
7                   *This situation had a profound impact upon Forster, leading him to conceal*  
8                   *his sexual orientation for the remainder of his life. So, although Forster*  
9                   *wrote *Maurice*, a novel about a romantic relationship between two men, in*  
10                   *1913, he withheld its publication until after his death. After abandoning*  
11                   **Maurice*, Forster—previously a prolific novelist—lapsed into a decade-long*  
12                   *silence that finally ended with the publication of his final novel, *A Passage**  
13                   *to *India*, in 1924. Critics conventionally discuss *A Passage to India* in*  
14                   *relation to such central and recurring themes in Forster’s canon as the*  
15                   *tension between social classes, racial conflict under British Colonialism,*  
16                   *and the limitations of conventional gender roles. Yet, *A Passage to India**  
17                   *also specially reimagines, reconfigures, and sublimates the overtly*  
18                   *homosexual novel that Forster could not publish in his lifetime. The ghost of*  
19                   **Maurice* haunts *A Passage to India*, determining such elements as its*  
20                   *portrayals of relationships (platonic, romantic, or merely complicated)*  
21                   *between men and its depictions of women as upholders of social*  
22                   *conventions, catalysts to the breakdown of male relationships, and secret*  
23                   *keepers. *A Passage to India*, then, is a palimpsest of *Maurice*, a story of*  
24                   *colonial India written over the erasure of an openly gay love story but with*  
25                   *subtle traces of the original remaining.*

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27                   **Keywords:** *E.M. Forster, Palimpsest, Intertextuality, Homosexuality*  
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30                   A significant and recurring theme in the fiction of E.M. Forster is, of  
31                   course, people’s desire to establish connections—whether between individuals  
32                   or races—by developing the heart. Forster coined the term “undeveloped heart”  
33                   in his 1936 essay, “Notes on the English Character,” and Lionel Trilling  
34                   observes that this theme is “almost obsessive with Forster. It is not the  
35                   unfeeling or perverted heart that absorbs him, but the heart untrained and  
36                   untutored, the heart checked too early in its natural possible growth. His whole  
37                   literary effort is a research into this profound pathology” (1942, 170). The  
38                   developed heart allows Forster’s characters “to achieve some kind of ethical  
39                   connection through personal salvation and not through worldly success . . .  
40                   they project a vision of truth which is enjoyed only by those who trust their  
41                   emotions and guard their inner integrity from the corrupting influences of  
42                   convention” (Singh 1986, 7). This search for connection went beyond Forster’s  
43                   literary works, also characterizing the author’s struggle with his sexual identity  
44                   within the rigid confines of Edwardian England. In 1885, Parliament passed  
45                   the Labouchere Amendment, which “criminaliz[ed] unspecified acts of ‘gross  
46                   indecency’ between men” (Moffat 2010, 33). This was the law that, when  
47                   Forster was sixteen, sent Oscar Wilde to prison (33-34), leading Forster to  
48                   conceal his sexual orientation for the remainder of his life. However, his

1 inability to be open about himself did not stop him from discussing and  
2 contemplating issues personal to him through his fiction.

3 The unpublished novel *Maurice* provided safe expression for Forster's  
4 homosexual thoughts and desires without fear of social or legal repercussions.  
5 He began the novel in 1913, eleven years prior to the publication of *A Passage*  
6 *to India*, when he visited the home of Edward Carpenter, the writer of *The*  
7 *Intermediate Sex* (1908) (Dettmar 2006, 351). During his lifetime, Forster only  
8 allowed other "like-minded individuals," such as Christopher Isherwood, to  
9 read drafts of the novel. However, he permitted the work to be published upon  
10 his death. For both Forster's generation of gay men and the contemporary  
11 LGBTQ+ community, *Maurice* stands as a "significant organizing narrative for  
12 homosexual experience" (Adair 2010, 51), as well as a plea by Forster to  
13 "only connect,' to find the courage to understand and to love people different  
14 from ourselves" (Moffat 2010, 8). Marvin Mudrick even claims that "*Maurice*  
15 . . . is Forster's only truthful book, full of nerves, hysteria, infatuations,  
16 bitterness. . . . The 'great novels' are mirages" (143-44). When writing  
17 *Maurice*, Forster believed a happy ending, an embrace of otherness, was  
18 vital to his personal well-being and to his writing. He said, "I shouldn't have  
19 bothered to write otherwise. I was determined that in fiction anyway two men  
20 should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows"  
21 (qtd. in Moffat 2010, 7). The idea of a "happy ending" for a male homosexual  
22 couple was essential for Forster because most homosexual writings published  
23 during his time portrayed gay men either "converting" themselves to  
24 heterosexuality by getting married, committing suicide, or being killed because  
25 of their sexual orientation (Adair 2010, 53).

26 Even though *Maurice* upheld Forster's personal wishes and beliefs, he put  
27 the novel aside and continued to develop another work of fiction, *A Passage to*  
28 *India*, which would be more "appropriate" for the general public. His final two  
29 novels share a particularly strong connection. At first view, *A Passage to India*  
30 appears to be a palimpsest of *Maurice* or a novel haunted by the ghost of its  
31 predecessor. George Steiner argues that Forster "saw that sexual eccentricity  
32 could be isolated in racial or caste terms," adding that encounters between  
33 white and native in *A Passage to India* "are a brilliant projection of the  
34 confrontations between society and the homosexual in *Maurice*" (1971, 158).

35 The situation, however, is rather more complicated than *A Passage to*  
36 *India* merely transforming and translating *Maurice*'s account of sexuality into a  
37 narrative about colonialism. Forster began writing *A Passage to India* during a  
38 visit to India in 1912-1913, around the same time that he started writing  
39 *Maurice*, and did not return to it until 1921 (Stone 1966, 281). After the  
40 publication of *A Passage to India* in 1924, Forster continued to revise *Maurice*  
41 until his death in 1970, thus offering *A Passage to India* the opportunity to  
42 influence the other novel. Upon reading the last draft of *Maurice*, Isherwood  
43 was delighted to discover that Forster's final version was "much more  
44 forthright" than the earlier draft he had seen many years before, and the  
45 "gauzy, sexless version was invigorated with an entirely new, and frank, sex  
46 scene" (Moffat 2010, 8). In addition, the resolution for some key characters

1 drastically changed. In an early draft, “Alec emigrated to South America,  
2 leaving Maurice only to hope for a reunion” (8). The revised ending was  
3 “firmer” with Maurice and Alec “end[ing] up in each other’s arms—in  
4 England, of all places and, of all times, before the First World War,” claiming  
5 “. . . we shan’t be parted no more” (8).

6 The 1971 publication of *Maurice* established for many scholars and  
7 readers a profound disconnection between traditional notions of Forster and the  
8 now openly gay Forster. For many years, Forster had been “a giant of  
9 twentieth-century literature,” a key writer of the British literary canon, and  
10 “father of liberal humanism” (20). Readers had become accustomed to Forster  
11 as a sensitive writer who discussed the plights of human nature and attempts  
12 for connection, most famously in *A Passage to India*. Now, *Maurice* abruptly  
13 made him something entirely different: an explicitly “queer” novelist. For  
14 many, Forster became either one or the other—venerable modernist author or  
15 radical gay writer—but not both.

16 It is then not surprising that literary criticism about *Maurice* predominately  
17 focuses on homosexuality and this new Forster. After its publication, a number  
18 of critics had hostile responses. Jeffery Meyers claimed “there are no  
19 interesting characters, the bad drains in Clive’s *mother’s* house are an ‘anal  
20 symbol,’ Maurice is attracted to a lower-class lover ‘with whom sex replaces  
21 shit’” (qtd. in Martin and Piggford 1997, 19-20). However, there were also  
22 many positive views of the text by those who “felt compelled to write positive  
23 assessments of Forster’s work and to argue for the validity of his homosexual  
24 themes” (Martin and Piggford 1997, 18). Anne Hartee discusses Forster’s  
25 attempt to reconcile homosexuality, in addition to other forms of identity, such  
26 as race and class, with Englishness, arguing that it is “tempting to read the  
27 totality of Forster’s work as a prolonged circling around the subject of  
28 homosexuality, which lurks as the unspoken of, or is obliquely encoded in,  
29 each text” (1996, 128). She adds that the “crisis of each text is provoked by  
30 desire for an object deemed ‘inappropriate’ by dominant society, and what is  
31 ultimately at stake in such crises is Englishness” (128).

32 When not merely praising, lambasting, or casting its homosexuality as a  
33 symbol of something else, scholarship tends to marginalize *Maurice*. Forster’s  
34 earlier works are canonical texts and “Panoramic studies surveying Forster’s  
35 oeuvre build a narrative to the apex that is *A Passage to India*” (Bailey 2002,  
36 324). Yet, most critics classify *Maurice* as queer literature or minor fiction,  
37 emphasizing its lack of significance compared to Forster’s other works (325).  
38 Wendy Moffat explains that *A Passage to India*, in both India and England,  
39 was “recognized as something greater and deeper than a work in the  
40 universally admired vein of Forster-the-sensitive-novelist. It was a  
41 masterpiece” (2010, 195). Forster’s theme of connection is ever present, but the  
42 novel emphasizes the limitations rather than the promotion of human  
43 connection (190). Fredrick Karl and Marvin Magalaner add that Forster’s  
44 purpose is to present a mystical, highly symbolic view of life, death, and  
45 human relationships (1959, 120). Instead of gender and class, the novel  
46 addresses colonialism and race relations and many scholars consider the

1 significance of Forster’s continued discussion of otherness, where “matters of  
2 human conduct and especially with the dark places in the human heart . . .  
3 make for unhappiness and confusion not only between individuals but between  
4 races and nations” (120).

5 Critics tend to see the relationship between *Maurice* and *A Passage to*  
6 *India* as an act of repression or sublimation of the former into the latter. But it  
7 is not simply a case of projection or transferal. Instead, the two works together  
8 constitute a dynamic dialogue *about* the interrelationship and disjunctions  
9 between them--a dialogue about the subjects that one (unpublished) presents  
10 overtly and which the other (published) transforms into subtext, a dialogue  
11 about reconciling the various tensions between them.

12 One of the intertextual dialogues between the two novels concerns the  
13 potential for relationships between men—platonic or romantic—and the  
14 contexts in which such relationships have the capacity to flourish. In both  
15 *Maurice* and *A Passage to India*, men must engage with each other in intimate  
16 spaces in order to evade the social taboos, whether of race or sexuality, that  
17 divide them elsewhere.

18 In *Maurice*, the two important bonds in the novel commence in private  
19 rooms. Clive Durham and Maurice Hall’s friendship begins within the safety of  
20 their Cambridge dorms rooms by day, but their intimacy radically develops  
21 when Maurice sneaks into Clive’s room through the window one evening.  
22 Later, Clive reminisces that “Their love belonged to [Cambridge], and  
23 particularly to their rooms” (Forster 1971, 80). Later, Alec Scudder, Clive’s  
24 under-gamekeeper, parallels Maurice’s actions by entering Maurice’s private  
25 room at Penge, Clive’s home. Alec, having sensed—and heard—Maurice  
26 reaching out for someone, slips in through the window and moves toward  
27 Maurice, whispering, ““Sir, was you calling out for me? Sir, I know, I know,’  
28 and touched him” (192).

29 In *A Passage to India*, Dr. Aziz and Cyril Fielding also begin their  
30 relationship in intimate spaces. Their first encounter takes place in Fielding’s  
31 bedroom, where Aziz offers his collar stud to Fielding who is missing his.  
32 Intimacy develops surprisingly quickly, as the two shake hands and smile,  
33 while Aziz “began to look round, as he would have with any old friend”  
34 (Forster 1952, 65). Shortly after, Fielding visits the ailing Aziz in his own  
35 bedroom. The close quarters allow the friendship to flourish to the extent that  
36 Aziz even takes the unconventional step of showing a private photograph of his  
37 wife to the white European. Aziz states, “She was my wife. You are the first  
38 Englishman she has ever come before” (116). After this meeting, “they were  
39 friends, brothers. That part was settled, their compact had been subscribed by  
40 the photograph, they trusted one another, affection had triumphed for once in a  
41 way” (122).

42 Beyond their evident parallels, the disjunctions between the two stories  
43 clearly demonstrate that friendship between men of two races is more socially  
44 acceptable than romance between two men of the same race. Where the Indian  
45 and British male characters of *A Passage to India* begin their friendship in a  
46 private space but subsequently continue it openly, the homoerotic love in

1 *Maurice* must remain—for much of the narrative, at least—private and  
 2 secretive. The subversion of racial conventions in the former, however, paves  
 3 the way for the climactic rejection of more contentious sexual taboos in the  
 4 latter, when Maurice and Alec finally choose to pursue their togetherness  
 5 beyond the confines of an intimate space.

6 Besides the significance of secluded rooms, the men in *Maurice* and *A*  
 7 *Passage to India* struggle with multiple social obstacles that threaten to stifle  
 8 their relationships. After two years together, Clive decides he would rather be  
 9 with women and “the change won’t spoil anything in [their] friendship that is  
 10 real” (Forster 1971, 128). Clive’s determination to embrace this change leaves  
 11 Maurice unable to overcome this obstacle, and they are left looking “at one  
 12 another for a moment before beginning new lives” (129). Maurice’s  
 13 relationship with Alec involves “a tense confrontation that addresses one of the  
 14 central facts of English homosexual life, the attraction between men of  
 15 different classes” (Fone 1998, 351). The upper-middle-class Maurice fears that  
 16 the lower-class Alec is attempting to blackmail him. An intense confrontation  
 17 between the two takes place, but it quickly becomes clear that both men  
 18 actually care for one another. Maurice states, “I should have known by that  
 19 time that I love you” (Forster 1971, 225) and then “they were in love with one  
 20 another consciously” (227). Alec and Maurice overcome the challenge of  
 21 differing social classes when Maurice gives up his social standing to be with  
 22 Alec, demolishing any barriers remaining between the two men. While the men  
 23 of *Maurice* deal with changing sexual preferences and social class, Aziz and  
 24 Fielding struggle with race relations in India at the time of British Colonialism.  
 25 The British in India generally keep to themselves and likewise do not befriend  
 26 the indigenous people, but Fielding and Aziz break those impediments quickly.  
 27 Fielding, even at the expense of his own reputation, defends Aziz against the  
 28 British when Adela Quested accuses him of sexual assault during a trip to the  
 29 Marabar Caves. At the same time, Aziz battles with his Indian identity and his  
 30 role in British India. Martin Price explains that “Aziz is most steadily  
 31 consumed by anxiety, aware of how he is regarded by others, needing  
 32 confirmation in his own identity” (Forster 1952, 613). Even though both men  
 33 are concerned with each other’s well-being, they must deal with ever-present  
 34 racial tensions, which escalates with the fallout from Adela’s accusation.

35 The discussion between both texts shows the men attempt to overcome  
 36 obstacles in order to gain something they want, to be who they truly are, and/or  
 37 to obtain an authentic connection, but every situation and each choice comes  
 38 with some form of potential displacement. *Maurice*’s main hindrance stems  
 39 from homosexuality and those willing to accept it or not. Clive refuses any  
 40 possible otherness within himself; instead, he chooses to be a proper  
 41 Englishman. Initially, Maurice also struggles to accept who he truly is and  
 42 fears displacement, but through the love he shares with Alec, Maurice  
 43 recognizes that he no longer is willing to conform to society’s expectations.  
 44 Unlike Clive, Aziz and Fielding wish to surpass the cultural tension building  
 45 around them and appear willing to face possible displacement, especially  
 46 Fielding, who does not feel comfortable with the closed-minded views of the

1 Englishmen. But Aziz and Fielding, dissimilar to Maurice and Alec, cannot  
2 overcome the insurmountable racial issues that ultimately thwart their  
3 friendship.

4 In addition to the relevance of private spaces and obstacles, the multiple  
5 resolutions to Clive and Maurice's relationship in *Maurice* prefigure the  
6 ambiguous ending of Aziz and Fielding's connection. Yet, the unclear  
7 conclusion of *A Passage to India* leaves both men, as well as the reader, with  
8 the possibility of hope, the confidence that one day, an Indian and Englishman  
9 can be friends. Maurice and Alec embrace this potential for a happier ending  
10 when they head into the greenwood, further emphasizing the cyclical nature of  
11 influence and dialogue between the two novels.

12 In *Maurice*, Clive and Maurice's relationship suffers from two  
13 conclusions—one ends their romantic connection and the other their friendship.  
14 Clive and Maurice's amorous bond expires when Clive seeks a relationship  
15 with a woman and is further solidified when Clive becomes engaged to Anne  
16 Woods, which leads to infrequent and superficial interactions between Maurice  
17 and Clive. When Maurice finally confesses to Clive that "I'm in love with your  
18 gamekeeper" (Forster 1971, 242), Clive's "whimper of disgust" and  
19 declaration that Maurice's news is "a grotesque announcement" formally ends  
20 their friendship (243).

21 While Maurice and Clive end their relationship owing to differing  
22 perspectives on homosexuality, Aziz and Fielding break apart because of racial  
23 tensions. Aziz and Fielding's exchange at the end expresses a desire by both to  
24 be together, regardless of race or nationalities. They embrace and half kiss one  
25 another, while asking, "Why can't we be friends now?" (Forster 1952, 322).  
26 But, shortly after, the men depart, recognizing that their friendship cannot be.  
27 Moffat argues that "Despite their intentions to connect in spite of barriers of  
28 race and culture," Fielding and Aziz "faced a world that seemed destined to  
29 break their wills and their hearts" (5). Until British rule has been removed from  
30 India, Fielding and Aziz cannot be together on any level.

31 While Aziz and Fielding recognize their inability to remain friends at the  
32 conclusion of *A Passage to India*, Maurice and Alec leave social conventions  
33 behind and head into the greenwood, an ambiguous but potentially happy  
34 ending. Maurice and Alec are no longer willing to deal with possible negative  
35 consequences of their homosexuality and acknowledge "They must live outside  
36 class, without relations or money; they must work and stick to each other till  
37 death" (Forster 1971, 239). Krzysztof Fordonski explains that Maurice and  
38 Alec's decision to go into the greenwood shows the "heroes['] reject[ion of] a  
39 world they both felt at home with as they are aware that they are breaking the  
40 rules of it" (2003, 129). Jon Harned further adds that "It is only by breaking  
41 with society as cleanly as possible that Maurice can find any escape from the  
42 tightly woven discursive oppositions that prevent him from connecting with  
43 someone else" (1993, 64).

44 While the portrayal of male characters displays the interrelationship and  
45 disjunctions between the novels, the depiction of the women contributes to the  
46 dynamic dialogue as well. In both works, the female characters, particularly in

1 their roles as wives and mothers, are the primary instigators and upholders of  
2 social conventions.

3 In *Maurice*, the female characters sustain social norms by properly raising  
4 their children within the confines of English standards and by being suitable  
5 and demure wives. Mrs. Hall hopes to provide Maurice with motherly love  
6 while trying to mold him into a proper Englishman, so “[he] may grow up like  
7 [his] dear father in every way” (Forster 1971, 17). Mrs. Durham is “looking out  
8 wives for Clive” to make sure he is properly matched (101). Also, Anne  
9 Woods, Clive’s wife, is a sexually naïve and inexperienced woman. After they  
10 are married, Anne “did not know what [Clive] wanted” because “no one had  
11 told her about sex” (164). Jane Eldridge Miller argues that Anne’s primness  
12 and ignorance, the norm for many Edwardian wives, emphasizes that “The  
13 physical relationship between Clive and his wife Anne is . . . a failure . . . [and]  
14 Forster . . . condemns their marriage as emblematic of the shallow and  
15 dishonest nature of heterosexual relations” (53). Outside the bedroom, Anne  
16 focuses on being a proper housewife by organizing the household and acting as  
17 hostess at Penge.

18 Where the female characters in *Maurice* uphold Edwardian social  
19 expectations within the confines of England, Mrs. Moore and the British wives  
20 demonstrate similar conventions in India. Mrs. Moore comes to India to escort  
21 Adela, a prospective wife for her son, Ronny. Once Ronny and Adela become  
22 engaged, Mrs. Moore feels like her “duties here are evidently finished” and  
23 now that Ronny is properly matched, “she must go home and help the others  
24 [Stella and Ralph], if they wished . . . [because] her function was to help  
25 others” (Forster 1952, 95). As Mrs. Moore focuses on taking care of her  
26 family, the British wives bring England and all its social norms to India,  
27 demonstrated through their separate housing area and the exclusive English-  
28 only club. The British wives further reinforce the divide between the British  
29 and the Indians. The English wives, when in large numbers, create exclusive  
30 groups, which “socially distance” the British from the indigenous peoples  
31 (Strobel 1991, 1-2). When the British “attempt” to bridge the cultural gap  
32 through a party, the British wives show no real effort in getting to know their  
33 Indian counterparts, who are left feeling ostracized and uncomfortable.

34 The dialogue between both novels stresses the significance of the female  
35 characters to the plot, but they remain static figures. In *Maurice*, none of the  
36 women have real agency; they focus exclusively on proper upbringings,  
37 motherly love, or being a fit wife. Most of the female characters do not develop  
38 much more in *A Passage to India*. Yet, the British wives strive for more power  
39 and control in India and, to some degree, obtain it. By maintaining  
40 conventions, they continue to wield the authority to widen the divide between  
41 the British and the Indians, emphasizing that “Friendship between Indian and  
42 English men is impossible mostly because Englishwomen prevent it”  
43 (Sainsbury 2009, 61). And, by the end of *Maurice*, the need to uphold social  
44 expectations disappears, along with mother and wife figures, once Maurice and  
45 Alec decide to be together.

1 In *Maurice*, the male characters use the female characters as pawns to end  
 2 or negatively alter significant male connections. First, Ada, Maurice’s sister,  
 3 finds herself unintentionally drawn into the breakup of Clive and Maurice  
 4 when Clive claims “If I love anyone it’s Ada” (Forster 1971, 128). Anne  
 5 further symbolizes the end of Maurice and Clive’s relationship when Clive  
 6 makes Anne “The centre of his life” by marrying her, which results in fewer  
 7 visits, fewer phone calls, and fewer letters between Clive and Maurice (164).

8 Adela, in *A Passage to India*, who initially helps bring Aziz and Fielding  
 9 together, provokes the downfall of their friendship. Fielding disappoints Aziz  
 10 by aiding Adela after she retracts her accusation against Aziz. Fielding  
 11 explains, “In the course of a long talk with Miss Quested I have begun to  
 12 understand her character. It’s not an easy one, she being a prig. But she is  
 13 perfectly genuine and very brave. When she saw she was wrong she pulled  
 14 herself up with a jerk and said so. I want you to realize what that means”  
 15 (Forster 1952, 252). When Aziz demands an apology and makes rude  
 16 comments about Adela, Fielding comes to her defense, causing a larger riff  
 17 between himself and Aziz. Shortly after, “the trouble rose to the surface”  
 18 because Aziz believes his friend intends “to marry Miss Quested for the sake of  
 19 her money” (279).

20 The dynamic dialogue between the two novels emphasizes the men’s *need*  
 21 to use female characters to end significant male connections. Even though  
 22 homosexuality and race are the underlying matters, the male characters appear  
 23 unwilling to acknowledge either issue. Instead, it is easier for them to utilize  
 24 and blame the women for the downfall of relationships. Clive is disinclined to  
 25 just end his romance with Maurice; rather, he brings Ada into the situation,  
 26 even though “He would not marry Ada” because “she had been transitional”  
 27 (Forster 1971, 130). Maurice also refuses to simply accept that Clive no longer  
 28 wants to be with him; instead, Maurice must put the blame on someone other  
 29 than himself, or even Clive, so he accuses “his sister of corrupting his friend”  
 30 (134). For Aziz and Fielding, the concern is not if Aziz actually committed the  
 31 assault against Adela, nor is it Fielding’s defense of Adela. Neither one is  
 32 willing to recognize their racial differences are the genuine cause of the tension  
 33 between them. Even though Fielding is quite sympathetic towards the Indians  
 34 and their plight, he cannot stop being an Englishman; Fielding feels the need to  
 35 help one of his own. And Aziz cannot rid himself of his suspicions about the  
 36 British, even Fielding. He is constantly on guard against another threat to him  
 37 or his fellow Indians. Unlike the two previous examples, it is Maurice and  
 38 Alec’s relationship, that does not use women at all, which is the strongest and,  
 39 potentially, the happiest.

40 Besides upholding social conventions and breaking apart male  
 41 relationships, the female characters in *Maurice* act—whether consciously or  
 42 not—as keepers of secrets, specifically sexual ones. Mrs. Hall and Anne  
 43 unintentionally help hide the sexuality of some male characters. Maurice tells  
 44 his mother that “you needn’t tell the others I kissed Durham” because “He  
 45 wouldn’t like it” and “I was rather upset and did it without thinking” (104-  
 46 105). Whether Mrs. Hall consciously grasps that her son is asking her to



1 conceal a homosexual encounter remains ambiguous, but she consents  
 2 immediately to this proposition because she “liked to have little secrets with  
 3 her son; it reminded her of the time when she had been so much to him” (104-  
 4 105). Similarly, although Clive never explicitly confides in Anne about his  
 5 sexuality, her very act of marrying him protects his secret, allowing him to feel  
 6 “safe from intimacy” (163) within the façade of an “ideal” marriage to “a fit  
 7 helpmate” (165). The dialogue stresses the importance of secrets and their  
 8 keepers in maintaining social conventions in England. Homosexuality must be  
 9 kept a secret due to moral and legal repercussions. Mrs. Hall and Anne do not  
 10 force Maurice or Clive to acknowledge or deal with their real or potential  
 11 homosexual tendencies, but the issue still lingers. The women help Clive keep  
 12 his secret, while he attempts to push the concern out of his life, but Maurice  
 13 chooses to face the reality of his homosexuality.

14 Where the female characters in *Maurice* help men conceal their  
 15 homosexuality, Adela, in *A Passage to India*, helps conceal the *text’s*  
 16 potentially homoerotic implications, at least initially. Besides not wanting to  
 17 face the reality of whatever occurred in the Marabar Caves, Adela is also  
 18 “desirous of being amiable” and consents to a trial that constructs Aziz as an  
 19 Indian rapist of white women (Forster 1952, 148), thus cementing not only  
 20 racist stereotypes but also heteronormativity: if Aziz has assaulted Adela  
 21 sexually, this implicitly disavows the significance of any potentially  
 22 homoerotic tensions between the Indian doctor and Fielding. Ultimately,  
 23 however, Adela acknowledges that she has been mistaken in her accusations  
 24 and that Aziz did her no harm (229). In the process, she recasts her experience  
 25 in the Marabar caves in terms of inexpressible ambiguity. She “didn’t think  
 26 what had happened, or even remember in the ordinary way of memory, but she  
 27 returned to the Marabar Hills, and spoke from them across a sort of darkness”  
 28 (227). Adela never explicitly resolves the enigma of what transpired in the  
 29 caves, keeping her secret either out of choice or her inability to comprehend  
 30 what happened. The caves thus become symbolic of human experience  
 31 broadly, and sexuality specifically: a murky subconscious landscape that defies  
 32 precise categorization or certainty. What is more, with Aziz now acquitted of  
 33 assaulting Adela, the narrative reinstates his interactions with Fielding as the  
 34 central and climactic relationship. Just as the women in *Maurice* conceal the  
 35 homosexuality of men, so does Adela seem to repress the potentially  
 36 homoerotic connotations of *A Passage to India*—only to then very subtly re-  
 37 enable them by asserting the inherent ambiguity of human sexual experience.

38 The dynamic dialogue between *Maurice* and *A Passage to India* explores,  
 39 interrogates, dismantles, and/or transcends ever present tensions, resolving or  
 40 bridging the gulf between binary oppositions (center/margins, white/black,  
 41 male/female, gay/straight), and, in the process—not coincidentally—aiding the  
 42 resolution between what scholars now see as the division of Forster himself  
 43 into two. Through the connection between *Maurice* and *A Passage to India*, we  
 44 reconcile the two different images of Forster, which were created with the  
 45 publication of *Maurice*. Just as the two texts work together, the two Forsters  
 46 must as well. We cannot recognize, appreciate, or understand one Forster

1 without the other because he created all of his works as one man—the  
 2 canonical writer and the gay man. None of his novels would be as rich or  
 3 significant without the influence of both Forsters and his continual  
 4 encouragement to “only connect.”

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