

Contemporary Thought in Literature : A Study of E.M Forster's *Maurice* and *The Life to Come*.

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A reader familiar with postcolonial studies needs no explanation of theoretical terms developed by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, *The World, The Text and the Critic* and *Culture and Imperialism*. Said's concepts can also be used as critical methodology to interpret literary texts. This paper analyses E.M. Forster's *Maurice* (1914) and his short story, *The Life to Come* (1972) from a postcolonial perspective within the framework of Edward Said's critical concepts, particularly the concept of the "other" as given by him in his *Orientalism*. Said holds the view that the "other" is the construct of the western sensibility, to refer to races inferior, uncivilized and therefore outside the norms of civilization and society.

However, in this paper the concept of the "other" is used in a wider sense. It has varied connotations in both *Maurice* and *The Life to Come*. In *Maurice* the "other" refers to the heterosexuals. 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, i.e., maintaining relations only with the people of one's own race, disguised as sex in *Maurice*. In the second part of the paper Forster's short story, *The Life to Come* is analysed and here again the concept of the 'other' is used. However, here the 'other' is used in terms of belonging to the 'other nation'.

E.M. Forster's *Maurice* 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. The 'Terminal Note' of the novel written in 1960 is like an afterword in which Forster talks of how the novel came into existence and also how the characters were developed by him.

In the 'Terminal Note' Forster acknowledges that *Maurice* "was the direct result of a visit to Edward Carpenter". (Forster, *Maurice*, 235) Edward Carpenter lived with his comrade George Merrill, and "he was a believer in the Love of Comrades, whom he sometimes calls Uranians".