

**MAURICE: THROUGH THE LENSES OF LACANIAN “MIRROR,  
MIRROR, ON THE WALL...”<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract**

*Maurice*, a *bildungsroman* by E. M. Forster, revolves around the theme of homosexuality. By presenting homosexual characters, who are on a futile quest for their actual identity, Forster attempts to be the voice of the unspeakables in the Edwardian period in England, where all acts of homosexuality were considered illegal. In this paper, the identity of the characters is analysed through the lenses of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory by focusing on the concept of mirror. This paper attempts to reveal to what extent cultural codes and societal norms of the Edwardian period are functional in forming the identity of the characters. Besides, this study uncovers that Forster wisely uses Lacanian concepts such as imaginary order, symbolic order and real order in creating his characters. It is concluded that the mirror, which reflects the actual self of the characters, just like dreams and music, plays a significant role in (re)forming the identities from compulsory heterosexuality to voluntary homosexuality.

**Keywords:** *Maurice*, E. M. Forster, Lacan, identity, mirror

**MAURICE: LACANCI BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA “AYNA, AYNA, GÜZEL  
AYNA ...”**

**Öz**

Bir *bildungsroman* olarak E. M. Forster tarafından kaleme alınan *Maurice* konusunu homoseksüellikten alır. Gerçek kimliklerini bulabilmek için anlamsız bir arayışa giren homoseksüel karakterleri sergileyerek, Forster aslında her türlü homoseksüel eylemin kanunsuz kabul edildiği Edward dönemi İngiltere’inde “konuşamayanlar”ın sesi olmaya çalışır. Bu çalışmada homoseksüel karakterlerin, özellikle kahraman Maurice’in kimliği, psikanalitik yaklaşıma göre Fransız psikiyatrist ve psikanaliz Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (1901-1981) tarafından öne sürülen ayna kavramı ele

<sup>1</sup> This study is a reviewed and revised version of an unpublished PhD dissertation on the novels of E. M. Forster, which is to be submitted to Istanbul Aydın University, English Language and Literature program in order to fulfil the requirements of a graduate student.

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alınarak incelenmektedir. Homoseksüellik ve heteroseksüellik arasına net sınır çizgileri çizerek, bu çalışma aynı zamanda homoseksüel karakterlerin kimliklerini (yeniden) oluşturmada Edward döneminin kültürel kodları ve sosyal normlarının ne ölçüde etkili olduklarını ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu çalışma Forster’in homoseksüel karakterleri yaratırken ne kadar akıllıca Lacan’ın imgesel, sembolik ve gerçeklik dönem gibi kavramlarını kullandığını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu çalışma karakterlerin gerçek kimliği yansıtan aynanın tıpkı rüyalar ve müzik gibi, zorunlu heteroseksüellikten gönüllü homoseksüelliğe geçen karakterlerin kimliklerini (yeniden) şekillendirmede önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Maurice, E. M. Forster, Lacan, kimlik, ayna

### Introduction

The novel entitled *Maurice* (written in 1913-14 and published in 1971), a *bildungsroman* by Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970), mainly revolves around the theme of homosexuality. The plot does not include many incidents on the life of the protagonist, namely Maurice himself, but rather, it deals with human psyche. As a homosexual novel, *Maurice* presents the developmental stages of its protagonist from celibacy to adulthood by emphasizing the struggle he has experienced while searching for his actual sexual identity. Apart from Maurice, many other homosexual characters such as Clive, Alec and Risley are also included in the novel in order to reveal the identity of the homosexual characters from a wide variety of perspectives.

*Maurice* was not publicized except Forster’s closest friends until his death in 1970 as it included many implications on homosexuality, which was accepted as an illegal act in Britain at that time.<sup>3</sup> As far as British laws are concerned, homosexual relations were considered to be criminal and no amendment on homosexuality was made throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Explicitly, “By section 11 [...] of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, all male homosexual acts short of buggery, whether committed in public or private, were made illegal” (Weeks, 1990, p. 14) and they were all subjected to penalties of jail terms up to two years with the potential of hard labour until the enactment in 1967, which leads to a “more liberal

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<sup>3</sup> As far as western literature is concerned, it is obvious that most of the homosexual writers before the early 20th century not only withheld their homosexual writings from the publication units but also omitted the homosexual contents from their drafts and/or preferred denying their homosexual orientations publicly. Among some of the famous writers of this group are George Gordon Lord Byron (1788-1824), Walt Whitman (1819-1892), John Addington Symonds (1840-1893), Walter Pater (1839-1894), A. E. Housman (1859-1936), Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), Marcel Proust (1871-1922) and Forrest Reid (1875-1947). Undoubtedly, E. M. Forster (1879-1970) can also be added to this group. Yet, the literary works by these authors have remained predominantly in the spheres of queer studies because of their thematic connections with homosexuality itself.

statute that decriminalized hitherto forbidding acts between consenting adults” (Kermode, 2009, p. 81). Moreover, to Markley (2001), Forster “did not write *Maurice* with the intention of publishing it during his lifetime” (p. 285). Furthermore, writing frankly and overtly on homosexuality was almost impossible due to the censorship in Forster’s time as “he [also] lived under threat from the law that ruined Oscar Wilde in 1895” (Kermode, 2009, 81). More precisely, the case of Oscar Wilde unveils the general judgements of the authorities about homosexuality. When Wilde’s act of sodomite was known publicly as a scandal, his works were picked by prosecutors in an attempt to find proof for the writer’s sexuality. Most probably, “had he not become known publicly as a ‘sodomite’, his writings no doubt would have continued to be read as straight” (Markley, 2001, p. 270), just as those of Forster’s were.

Yet, it does not mean that there was no reference to homosexuality in literature. The narratives, which make allusions, anecdotes and implications with the same-sex eroticism, emerged subsequently through *Eccentric writers*, a concept coined by Ed Cohen (1995) to define the late Victorian men who express their “true” selves by means of their writing and find some other ways to reveal their own opinions which had already been unrepresentable into the texts (p. 88) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. So, these texts become a form of narration which is called homotextuality in literature. Likewise, Markley (2001) reveals that Forster “invented a kind of narration that powerfully expresses male homoerotic desire while shrewdly maintaining the veneer of heterosexual conventionality” (p. 268). In other words, Forster uses “distinctively homoerotic subtexts” that are “distinct from the conventional heteronormative interpretation” as an indication of “male homoerotic desire” (Markley, 2001, p. 268) while inserting his views into the narrations on homosexuality.

*Maurice* reflects the general aspects of societal norms and cultural codes of the Edwardian period. Accordingly, Toda (2001) emphasizes that “*Maurice* is essentially Edwardian” and, that it unveils “the effects of a public school education” in the formation of homosexual identity “as it [public school education] affects the conceptualization of relations between men” (p. 134). In his study, A. R. Buck (1996) reveals that *Maurice* is a novel “about alienation” (p. 71) by emphasizing the fact that Forster “consistently portrays characters interacting with those culturally or socially unequal to them and thus encountering unavoidable conflict in their personal relations” (p. 71). Furthermore, Bolling (1974) asserts the idea that Forster uses thematically the “imperative of the personal relationship, the need for a mutuality of feeling and understanding which transcends the formidable and

dehumanizing barriers of modern society” (p. 162) in *Maurice*. As for Schwarz (1983), the plot revolves around the protagonist’s quest for finding his real identity “by expressing feelings and passions and by creating personal ties” for the sake of escaping “social entrapment” (p. 624) in a community where the secrecy about homosexuality is somewhat unveiled.

In his work entitled *A Reading of E. M. Forster*, Glen Cavaliero (1979) states that the main reason of Forster’s penning a homosexual novel is “to provide an education in feeling” (p. 132). Similarly, in his Terminal Note in the sub-title “Homosexuality”, Forster highlights how the public itself is transformed from obliviousness to awareness with these words: “Since *Maurice* was written there has been a change in the public attitude here: the change from ignorance and terror to familiarity and contempt” (Forster, 1971, p. 221). Through *Maurice*, Forster has reached his utmost aim, which is dealt with educating the emotions of the people. The following quotation, which asks a thought-provoking question at the end, clearly indicates that *Maurice* has gone through a long process until its publication by law:

Heterosexual relationship has always been approved of and, though not always in the worldly sense, encouraged, in the Western civilisation, and yet, a novel that celebrates such relationship had to wait for its uncensored publication for thirty years, till 1960. Same-sex relationship, on the other hand, was reluctantly legalised in 1967, given rather an orange light than a green one. In 1914, would an expurgated edition of *Maurice* do the trick? (Kelbelová, 2006, p. 34).

The question above seems to be a rather debatable issue. But most probably, abridged or censored edition of *Maurice* will be inadequate in giving the same senses to its readers. Since neither in the society nor in the British laws the prerequisite conditions for the publication of the novel had been improved, *Maurice* had had to wait for a long time for its publication. Moreover, Forster, who is considered as one of the most closeted ones among many other homosexual writers, unambiguously tells Florence Barger that “he had almost completed a long novel”, namely *Maurice* itself, “though it could not be published until my death or England’s” (1978, p. 259) in the first volume of Furbank’s work entitled *E. M. Forster: A Life*.

In a world where the cultural, social and economic disparities have always occurred, it is not unforeseen that “[g]ender classifications are not organised in fixed schema: they are ambiguous and fluctuating. This [...] must be understood in terms of the importance placed [...] on the maintenance of a multiplicity of differences and alternatives” (p. 277), as revealed by Karin Barber (1991). Indeed, not only in the past but also in our contemporary society, it is

rather difficult to say that there exist only females and males as far as individuals' gender and/or sexual orientations are concerned. In other words, there have not only existed heterosexual and homosexual people but also lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, bicurious, polysexual, monosexual, allosexual, androsexual, gynosexual, asexual, demisexual, grey asexual, heteronormative, queer people and so on throughout the history. Through penning such a homosexual novel, Forster shows us where he stands as far as homosexuality is concerned.

### **(Un)earthing Gender Identity**

Femininity and masculinity, that is to say, an individual's *gender identity*, depends upon to what extent an individual sees himself or herself as feminine or masculine in a given society. Spence (1985) pronounces that “personal senses of masculinity or femininity appear to be phenomenologically real, even though their meanings remain unarticulated, and to be relatively independent of any given class of masculine and feminine attributes and behaviours” (p. 78-79). Both femininity and masculinity are rooted in one's social and cultural aspects rather than biological ones. Yet, the quote by Beauvoir (1973) “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (p. 301) reveals how particularly the women are under the strong influence of society and culture rather than the men. Similarly, the homosexual men have always been under the threat of the “compulsory heterosexuality within a masculinist sexual economy” (1999, Butler, XXXI) historically.

With regard to social identity criticism (Tajfel, 1982), gender identity “as a primary identity, organizing the earliest experience and integrated into the individual sense of selfhood” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 70) is to do with many role identities the individuals have already had in social settings. Correspondingly, the self-meanings regarding an individual's “role identity”, which means that one's “imaginative view of himself as he likes to think of himself being and acting as an occupant” of a particular position (McCall & Simmons, 1978, p. 65), are relatively formed in social situations and interactions with the others. In other words, “With respect to gender identity, [...] the character of masculinity and femininity – that is, what it means to be male or female – varies from one society to another and even across individuals within a society” (Burke & Stets, 2009, 65). As indicated, gender identity involves the meanings ascribed to males and females within a given society.

As far as gender stereotypes are concerned, an individual with a more masculine identity acts more masculine, namely, he commonly engages in acts which suggests more masculinity such as “active, ambitious, aggressive, assertive, adventurous and boastful”

whereas an individual who defines herself as a female engages in more feminine acts such as “affected, affectionate, amiable, anxious, appreciative, attractive” (Ashmore, Boca & Wohlers, 1986, p. 70). However, an individual may define herself female, but instead of seeing herself in a stereotypical female manner such as emotional, warm and submissive, she may ultimately see herself in somewhat stereotypically masculine manner such as decisive, rational and dominant. So, individuals have certain views of themselves about their meanings of femininity and masculinity; some people see themselves more feminine while some others more masculine, and some may also see themselves as a mixture of two. For Katz (1986), “it is possible to have a gender identity other than masculine or feminine”, or else an individual may exhibit androgynous traits which suggest that “individuals are (or can be) neither masculine nor feminine but rather some combination of both” (p. 56). Nevertheless, self-meanings cannot be directly observed and can only be inferred from the behaviors and interactions in which one engages.

In a given society, males often define themselves as masculine whereas females as feminine. However, sometimes the individuals do not define themselves at all, because none of these categorizations fit them. Therefore, they consider themselves as “the unspeakables” or rather, “a minority”, a term Forster used “to describe his ‘position ’as a homosexual” (Moffat, 2010, p. 70) in the Edwardian England. Since Forster has always rejected the conventional culture, which displays abhorrence of the homosexuals, he preferred being labelled as a “minority” rather than a “homosexual”. Because Forster has always been “fiercely resistant to medical theories which identify same-sex sexuality as a marker of degeneration and mental illness” (Wilper, 2016, p. 114) personally.

As specified, the main purpose of this paper is to unearth homosexual identity of the characters in a male dominated society in *Maurice*, particularly through the lenses of Lacan. On the issue of homosexuality, Michel Foucault (1978) reveals that “Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species” (p. 43) in its historical context. Then, Foucault, nearly after two years, asks a rather crucial question in the preface of *Herculine Barbin* (1980): “Do we truly need a true sex?” (Foucault, 1980, p. VII), a question which ignites debates over sexuality that has still been going on. In his argument, Foucault considers both sex and sexuality along with the hermaphrodite and the invert. Accordingly, he puts forward a twofold suggestion for his question about the sexual truth. To him, firstly,

“everybody [is] to have one and only one sex. Everybody [is] to have his or her primary, profound, determined and determining sexual identity” (Foucault, 1980, p. VIII). And secondly, “it is in the area of sex that we must search for the most secret and profound truths about the individual” and therefore, “it is there that we can best discover what he is and what determines him” (Foucault, 1980, p. X). By considering Foucault’s question, it becomes rather meaningful to discover the “most secret and profound truths” about homosexual characters, as suggested by Foucault, in *Maurice* in regard to Lacanian mirror concept.

### **Lacanian Mirror: Concept of Identity**

Psychoanalysis, as an umbrella term which is generally defined as the study of the unconscious mind, was first developed by the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in the early 1890’s. Remarkably, Freud’s psychoanalytic studies have contributed to a large number of disciplines including literature as they are closely associated with human psyche. According to Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of personality, human personality has two main parts, namely the conscious and unconscious mind whereas human psyche consists of tripartite, that is, id, ego and super-ego, all of which are functional in creating the dynamics of identity (Freud, 1960). To him, the id, the most primal aspects of human psyche, satisfies the immediate needs and desires of the individual and also contains “the passions” (1960, p. 19); the ego, represents “reason and common sense” (1960, p. 19) which are in conformity with the demands and standards of the society; and lastly, the superego, which is associated with morality and ideals of an individual, struggles to humanize individual’s personality. In the novel, the protagonist Maurice goes through these three phases, namely the id, ego and superego while forming his homosexual identity. Firstly, he satisfies his immediate sexual needs and desires with Clive and then, Dickie, as a signal of his id; secondly, he sees the reality in the society and visits doctors in order to relinquish his homosexual orientations, as an indication of his ego; and lastly, he resolves to lead a homosexual life with Alec Scudder rather than betraying his ideals.

Besides Freud, Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (1901-1981), the French psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, has also attracted the attention of the researchers from different fields through his works. In 1966, Lacan with the publication of his 900-page collection of his essays and papers entitled *Écrits (Writings)* gained a sensational reputation within the spheres of academia. Moreover, he has been labelled as “the most controversial psycho-analyst since Freud” (Roudinesco, 1990, p. 104) explicitly. He has also influenced many intellectuals by employing the Freudian concepts of id, ego and super-ego almost in the same sense as

“imaginary order”, “symbolic order” and “real order”. Remarkably, these periods in human psyche are all equally important to the formation of an individual’s identity.

With regard to Lacanian three major structures, the imaginary order, a sphere where the imagination, deception and image exist, is shaped in the mirror stage. To Lacan, mirror stage as an identification is the “transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image” (Lacan, 1949, p. 288). In other words, the mirror stage, “which is to establish a relationship between the organism and its reality” (Lacan, 1949, p. 289), acts as a reflection of the individual between his/her apparent image and emotional understanding, that is, an identification process, which is called “alienation” by Lacan himself. In the symbolic order, the relation between the self and its image constitutes imaginary dimension of the self which inhabits in the realm of culture. Lacan proposes that the subject undergoes a twofold alienation in the symbolic order and elucidates that “There is also the Other who speaks from my place, apparently, this Other who is within me. This is an Other of a totally different nature from the Other, my counterpart. Society unfailingly has a certain impact on us. We gain everything from the general public” (Lacan, 1988, p. 452). Last of all, the real order, which acts as the primary element of desire, can be considered as the gaps in linguistic discourse. Or else, it is the unspeakable past, which is thoroughly connected to the mirror stage.

Lacanian psychoanalytic theory highlights the concept of “narcissism”, which can be assumed to be an integral part of the mirror stage. Lacan uses narcissism with a reference to the myth of Narcissus in Greek mythology<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, he attempts to define narcissism with its relation to the concept of desire, as revealed in the myth of Narcissus. In order to do this, Lacan (1958) develops masculine and feminine concepts of “jouissance” which are heavily dealt with the desire of the Other, and also adds that “male homosexuality, in accordance with the phallic mark that constitutes desire, is constituted on the side of desire, while female homosexuality [...] is orientated on a disappointment that reinforces the side of the demand for love” (p. 1310). Indisputably, the desire, as Lacan reveals, is the desire of the Other. On the subject of desire, Freud also describes “desire to be” and “desire to have” as the narcissistic and anaclitic libido respectively. Sheikh (2017), in his work, elucidates the Freudian concepts; to him, whereas narcissistic desire is “the desire to be manifested in the

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<sup>4</sup> Narcissus, a hunter and son of the river god Cephissus and nymph Liriopé, was famous for his beauty. Yet, he looked at those who loved him with contempt. When Nemesis, the goddess of retribution and revenge, noticed his pride, she punished Narcissus for his behaviour. She directed him to a pool where he saw his own reflection on the surface of the water and fell in love with it. He was fascinated by the image of himself which is reflected on the river. Without understanding that it was just an image, he dived into the river until he drowned.

form of identification”, anaclitic desire is “to possess the object of the desire as a means for jouissance” (p. 7). More explicitly, Freud (1914) characterizes “the active anaclitic object-love as typically masculine” while the “passive narcissistic object-love as typically feminine” (p. 88-89). Accordingly, Freud also differs the passive and active aims of libido; whereas the passive libido means “the desire to be the object of the Other’s love or the Other’s jouissance” the active libido is “to become the Other or to possess the Other as an object of jouissance” (cited in Sheikh, 2017, p. 7). Besides Freud, Lacan has also contributed to the concept of “desire”, which is later classified by Mark Bracher in his work *Lacan, Discourse, and Social change* (1993). According to Bracher (1993), passive narcissistic desire means that “One can desire to be the object of the Other’s love” whereas active narcissistic desire refers that “One can desire to become the Other” (p. 20–21). Moreover, to him (1993), active anaclitic desire refers to “One can desire to possess the Other as a means of jouissance” while passive anaclitic desire means “One can desire to be desired or possessed by the Other as the object of the Other’s jouissance” (p. 20–21).

With these concerns in mind, Lacanian narcissism plays a significant role in forming the identities of the characters in *Maurice*, particularly that of the Maurice himself as a protagonist. Nevertheless, Maurice has experienced passive narcissistic desire of the symbolic order at the very beginning of the novel. His unavoidable incentive for finding Risley implies that he desires to be the object of the Risley’s love. What he actually wants is to be admired, recognized and idealized by Risley, a homosexual whose attributes are overtly displayed in homosocial settings. Besides, passive narcissistic desire is mostly concerned with the ultimate authority in any given society with the symbolic Other such as God, nation, nature, society and so on. Similarly, the symbolic Other for Maurice is the God himself because he is commonly presented as a man who is deeply tied to the principles of Christianity at the very beginning of the novel. In one case, Maurice has had the fiercest debates with the ones who refuse Christianity and eventually, he utters, “if a man had doubts [sic.] he might have the grace to keep them to himself” (Forster, 1971, p. 43). Thus, the symbolic Other, namely the God in this case, loves Maurice because of the fact that God loves the pious people. Yet, in the course of the novel, it becomes obvious that Maurice moves from piety to homosexuality because of his afflicted spirituality. In other words, Maurice transforms from passive narcissistic desire to active anaclitic desire, that is, he desires to possess the Other successively; Risley, a relative of the Trinity College’s dean firstly, and later, Clive, a student from the Cambridge and last of all Alec, a man who works for Clive for the sake of satisfying his jouissance. Indeed, all these three men act as the objects of jouissance for Maurice. At the

end of the novel, it becomes rather evident that the journey of Maurice from adolescence to adulthood presents his spiritual maturity from compulsory heterosexuality to voluntary homosexuality in order to satisfy his *jouissance*. Notably, a relatively brief explanation on the aspects of psychoanalysis by including Freudian and Lacanian concepts is given so far. Thus, the rest of this paper unveils the secrecy of homosexuality and discusses the implications of homosexuality in Maurice through Lacanian analysis, as the title of this paper suggests.

In the novel, the confrontation of Maurice with the Other through mirror plays a significant role in excavating homosexual identity as far as Lacanian psychoanalytic criticism is concerned. Because the imaginary order of the self is shaped in the mirror stage. Therefore, when Maurice is confronted with the mirror, the mirror itself acts as a place where his imagination, deception and image are reflected. The mirror stage is the first phase of Maurice’s ego in the identity formation process. Remarkably, with the help of a mirror, Maurice is able to distinguish the differences between his apparent image and his reflected one. Instantaneously, he realizes that neither his reflected image nor his psychological situation do not match each other, and eventually such a confrontation leads to his alienation in Lacanian terms.

In *Maurice*, as emphasized earlier, the mirror symbolically plays a vital role in Maurice’s life. When he looks at the mirror, he fears that the apparent image will not confirm his emotional situation. Because he believes that the reflected image itself in the mirror is nothing to do with his own emotions, namely his homosexuality. So, the reflection in the mirror leads to his alienation from his identity. Specifically, the mirror reflects Maurice’s double as a homosexual. Only if Maurice accepts his position as a homosexual, does he face his real self in the mirror satisfactorily, as narrated in the following paragraph:

The trouble was the looking-glass. He did not mind seeing his face in it, nor casting a shadow on the ceiling, but he did mind seeing his shadow on the ceiling reflected in the glass. He would arrange the candle so as to avoid the combination, and then dare himself to put it back and be gripped with fear. He knew what it was, it reminded him of nothing horrible. But he was afraid (Forster, 1971, p. 23).

Forster wisely uses the technique of dreams in his novel in order to unveil the homosexual orientations of his characters. Because he realizes the fact that to what extent the repressed desires emerge in dreams. Likewise, Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* reveals that dreams act as a kind of “safety valve for the over-burdened brain” (1913, p. 66) and relieves the mind, because they allow discharge of energy from the unconscious mind. By

presenting Maurice while dreaming in his adolescence period, Forster attempts to expose the unspeakable situations, which emerge in the unconscious mind, through the use of dreams, each of which gives Maurice a detailed description of his in-betweenness, namely between his apparent and homosexual self:

In the first dream he felt very cross. He was playing football against a nondescript whose existence he resented. He made an effort and the nondescript turned into George, that the garden boy. But he had to be careful or it would reappear. George headed down the field towards him, naked and jumping over the wood-stacks. ‘I shall go mad if he turns wrong now,’ said Maurice, and just as they collared this happened, and a brutal disappointment woke him up (Forster, 1971, p. 25).

The quotation above clearly indicates that Maurice cannot cope with his dreams. He both desires and fears to have any physical contacts with the same sex. Thus, he subliminally creates a “nondescript” existence, namely an amorphous one whose figure is in a state of transformation from ambiguousness to definiteness, in the form of naked George in this case. On the issue of dreams, Booker pronounces that “Dreams have a special importance in psychoanalysis because they represent a leaking of the unconscious mind into consciousness, providing a potential window onto the normally inaccessible id” (Booker, 1996, p. 30). As for the second dream, it is somewhat different from that of the first one because of the fact that the second one gives Maurice much more *jouissance* than the first one. As the explanation of Booker confirms, Maurice’s dream reveals his unconscious mind by reaching his inaccessible id, as narrated in the following quotation:

He [Maurice] 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 nor crossness could part them, because ‘this is my friend.’ Soon afterwards he was confirmed and tried to persuade himself that the friend must be Christ (Forster, 1971, p. 26).

In his second dream, just like in his first dream, Maurice dreams of an amorphous figure whose facial expressions are ambiguously drawn and whose voice is hardly heard. He only fantasizes that the amorphous image gives him joy and satisfies all his demands, whether be they spiritual or physical *jouissance*. Still, imagining such a figure satisfies him and fills him with great enthusiasm. In Lacanian terms, what Maurice feels is a kind of *jouissance*, as has already been revealed. Unlike his first dream, this image does not turn into George or a friend. Then, he makes himself believe that this image can only be Christ himself. As a man who

“held [the view that] unorthodoxy to be bad form” (Forster, 1971, p. 43) and who dislikes those who are not Christian, Maurice feels deeply guilty because of his homosexual orientations. The Lacanian interpretation of the dreams reveals that the frustration of the self with his physical appearance propels the identification of the self with his apparently unified image of the mirror reflection. In other words, the “I” that forms Maurice identity is haunted by the contrary image of the fragmented body, which “usually manifests itself in dreams when the movement of the analysis encounters a certain level of aggressive disintegration in the individual” (Lacan, 1949, p. 1288). Evidently, Maurice is in conflict with himself over his identity.

In the novel, Clive, Maurice’s platonic partner, is also presented as a homosexual boy who is “[d]eeply religious, with a living desire to reach God and please Him” at the very beginning of the novel, but regrettably, “he found himself crossed at an early age by this other desire, obviously from Sodom” (Forster, 1971, p. 67). More explicitly, Forster narrates Clive’s adolescence period in order to make the readers appreciate how he has turned into homosexuality. Firstly, Clive falls in love with a cousin, a young married man in his puberty, and then he leaves Christianity. Because he believes that such actions are all considered as sinful acts, which are completely unacceptable and immoral in terms of Christianity. As indicated, “Clive has a firm belief that Christianity will never compromise with him as the church’s interpretation is against him. Besides, he knows that there was David and Jonathan” (Forster, 1971, p. 68), who are arguably considered as homosexuals in the Bible as well<sup>5</sup> (Horner, 1978, p. 33). Obviously, Clive, who rejects his religious belief due to his homosexual desires, is largely agnostic. In this novel, rejecting Christianity is regarded as a first step towards salvation by the homosexuals in general sense. In the later parts of the novel, it is seen that Maurice just like Clive rejects the doctrines of Christianity only to satisfy his homosexual desires.

In the scene, where Clive meets Risley, another boy from Trinity College, Clive recognizes that Risley is also stimulated just like himself. So, Clive feels pleased to know that there are “more of his sort” (Forster, 1971, p. 68) around him. Yet, he only finds himself thinking of Maurice more vividly than any other men in his surroundings. But, to him, Maurice is “a man who only liked women” (Forster, 1971, p. 69) at the very beginning of the

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<sup>5</sup> See Bible part Samuel 18: 1-4 “After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt”.

novel. This is what he believes as far as he takes into account the physical appearance of Maurice, which is captivating at first glance. Unlike Maurice, Clive is presented as a small and weak man physically. Even if he is presented with all his deficiencies, “Clive, initially the embodiment of Cambridge, is presented as blond, aesthetic and intellectual, suggesting less public-school Englishness than what it was asserted against [...]” (Hartree, 1996, p. 131). As a homosexual, Clive is also frequently presented in dream-like situations. The illusions and images in his dreams are the leakages of his homosexual orientations in his subconscious mind, as revealed in the following quotation:

[Clive] ‘Maurice’

[Maurice] ‘Clive...’ [...]

[Clive] ‘Maurice, Maurice, Maurice ... Oh Maurice ’–

[Maurice] ‘I know.’

[Clive] ‘Maurice, I love you.’

[Maurice] ‘I you.’

They kissed, scarcely wishing it. Then Maurice vanished as he had come, through the window (Forster, 1971, p. 70-71).

In the novel, Maurice is nonverbal compared to Clive, particularly when he is articulating his love to him. Moreover, he feels terribly surprised when Clive pronounces his own feelings and obliges him to admit his confessions. Their first physical proximity and spiritual intimacy can be considered as a mutual interaction rather than a sexual affair. Yet again, Clive firstly mentions homosexuality to Maurice in the academic spheres and introduces him to read the ancient Greek writings about same-sex love. In the course of time, their friendship improves, and Maurice enjoys Clive’s company in time. However, Clive, whose mind is confused a little bit about homosexual and heterosexual orientations, begins questioning his life and finds himself in search of reaching his real identity. More explicitly, after Clive has recovered from his physical illness, he goes through agony in search of finding his own identity. And then, he decides to go to Greece to reconstruct his life from the bottom. While Maurice resists at the idea of going to Greece, Clive feels a strong desire to go there. In the novel, the characters are in a dilemma about whether to become heterosexual or homosexual. What Forster attempts to do in *Maurice* is to advance the idea of homosexuality “as an immutable biological component to the central characters’ sexual constitution” (Wilper, 2016, p. 116) through Maurice. Unlike Clive, Maurice is much more inclined to homosexuality.

In the later parts of the novel, the concept of mirror functions not as an alienating but as a familiarizing effect for Maurice as a grown-up man. For instance, when Maurice notices his nude reflection in the mirror, this time he familiarizes himself with the reflected image. In other words, he is much more self-satisfied with his twenty-three years than those of his adolescence period. He sees “a well-trained serviceable boy and a face that contradicted it no longer” (Forster, 1971, p. 102-103) in the mirror. He also thinks that virility has harmonized both him and Clive, and he is “strong enough to live for two” (Forster, 1971, p. 103). As far as Lacanian mirror concept is concerned, it is rather perceptible that Maurice is satisfied with the image which is reflected into the mirror. He feels no alienation. That means that he is able to identify himself with the one he has seen on the mirror and with the one he has felt emotionally. On hearing that Clive is on the verge of changing his sexual orientation, Maurice asks a basic question: “Can the leopard change his spots?” (Forster, 1971, p. 113), the answer of which he knows pretty well. Just like the leopards are unable to change their inherently acquired characteristics, Maurice knows that Clive will be unable to change his homosexuality because of the *jouissance* he has already experienced.

After Clive returns from Greece, he decides not to take any homosexual actions on his term. Furthermore, he contemplates that marrying someone may eventually better his life. Then Clive marries and he calls Maurice to invite him to a dinner party with his prospective wife, Lady Ann one day. Initially, Maurice prefers not to attend the dinner but subsequently, he changes his mind and resolves to join the dinner. Here, Forster wittily uses the effect of mirror in order to show the confrontation of Maurice’s identity with his reflected image once more. The mirror which appears at the shop behind the counter plays a significant role in the (re)identification process of Maurice himself. The Lacanian mirror is deliberately inserted into the scene where Maurice goes for a shopping to buy a present for the new couple. Maurice experiences the confrontation of his apparent image with his reflected one on the mirror. Because the mirrors which are placed in some certain contexts are functional, particularly in displaying the conflict between soul and image. Maurice, as a homosexual man whose lover prefers to get married with a woman, unconsciously looks at the mirror. Instantly, something in the mirror catches his eye, namely his own reflection. He looks his reflection in the mirror and notices “a solid young citizen” with an appearance that is “quiet, honourable, prosperous without vulgarity” (Forster, 1971, 135). However, in a moment he realizes the reality and utters himself, “Was it conceivable that on Sunday last he had nearly assaulted a boy?” (Forster, 1971, 135). The image reflected on the mirror becomes a reminiscence of his offences, namely his having a sexual intercourse with a boy named Dickie, Dr. Barry’s young

nephew. Moreover, he cancels all his arrangements in his business to be with the boy who becomes a substitute for Clive for a very short period of time. But the mirror at the shop reminds him of who he actually is. In reality, the reflection on the mirror uncovers all his offences in the near past as it reflects that he is the one who is responsible for assaulting a boy. The confrontation of the self with the image on the mirror acts as experiential knowledge for Maurice. Immediately after his confrontation with the mirror at the shopping desk, he contemplates of finding a medical help for his illness, namely for his failure to kill his lust to men. Only in this way, he supposes that he will “keep away from young men” (Forster, 1971, 136). Through the mirror, he realizes a kind of alienation effect once more.

The encounter of Maurice at the shop behind the counter with a mirror implies Lacanian ego of the individual in the mirror stage. Maurice attempts to connect his apparent self namely, a man who is young, honourable and prosperous at first sight, with his emotional reality, namely a man who is decent, immoral and offensive in the later phases. In the first mirror stage, he suffers from a sense of alienation. Then, he undergoes another stage, as Lacan calls it as symbolic stage, where he is confronted with “twofold alienation”. Maurice realizes the Other who is with him, it is the society where the Other speaks with him. Because he imminently notices the effect of the society in his inner self; that is to say, being with a younger boy sexually is an unacceptable act in the eyes of the society. After he has experienced the symbolic stage, he goes through the real stage, where the elements of his desire are reflected in his speech, that is, in his linguistic discourse. In reality, this stage, which is to do with the unspeakable past, is thoroughly connected to the mirror stage. In short, when he is confronted with the image in the mirror and when he asks himself whether it was imaginable for him to assault a boy on Sunday, he uses a kind of linguistic discourse which reflects his unspeakable desire.

Forster deliberately creates a scene where Maurice and Risley accidentally meet each other at the Tchaikovsky’s Pathetic Symphony concert. This scene may be regarded as the encounter of the homosexuals in a place where the symphonies make a great contribution for the comprehension of their own homosexual identity. According to Sinfield (1994), Risley “likes Tchaikovsky and knows he was homosexual” additionally, he knows “how to be queer” (p. 140). In a societal context, the encounter of Maurice and Risley, which also includes the act of gazing, symbolizes Lacanian mirror stage because both Maurice and Risley are the reflections of each other just like a mirror. Alban (2017) explicitly narrates the role of society, which acts as a mirror in creating self, by emphasizing the fact that “we create a complete and

controlling sense of self through the image returned to us in the mirror. We form ourselves through the image we see, as well as from external projections of ourselves” (p. 31).

Forster deliberately uses the Pathetic Symphony of Tchaikovsky by referring to the terms such as “pathique” or “pathic”, both of which means a “passive homosexual”, a concept defined “as a man or a boy upon whom sodomy is practiced” (Martland, 1999, p. 139). It is rather obvious that music has a great impact on the lives of the homosexuals as well. When Forster feels some difficulty in expressing the “unspeakables” of the society, he wisely uses the impact of music as a technique just like he uses the dreams for his own purpose, that is, a technique which makes the unspeakable ones more conceivable, perceptible and recognizable for the readers. In the following quote, Keeling explains how Forster consciously uses music to interpret the referential medium of the non-linguistic elements:

[...] for Forster, the fact that music is non-linguistic endows it with special expressive, (re)presentational capacities. But, despite his insistence that music’s meaning is non-referential, in the very act of acknowledging that music has meaning that is somehow more real than those meanings articulated through words, Forster also acknowledges the interdependence - thus the referentiality - of all meanings, regardless of the medium of “language” used to convey them (Keeling, 2003, p. 89).

As the quotation above implies, music has an effortless effect for Forster to interpret his own opinions on homosexuality through the characters. At the Tchaikovsky’s Pathetic Symphony concert, Risley warns Maurice not to attempt heterosexuality without feeling it by heart and gives an example from the life of Tchaikovsky by adding that, if he dares to do this, it would be a great mistake. Because Risley actually wants to remind Maurice of the cultural codes of the Edwardian society, as far as Lacanian symbolic stage is concerned. Furthermore, Risley gives some information about Tchaikovsky who “had fallen in love with his own nephew and dedicated his masterpiece [Symphonie Incestueuse et Pathetic] to him” (Forster, 1971, p. 141). The linguistic discourse of Risley explicitly unveils Lacanian real stage, where an individual’s unspeakable desire is presented. After their non-verbal talk on homosexuality, Risley does give Maurice the address of a doctor who is good at hypnotizing the homosexuals.

Maurice decides to find a medical help for his illness, which is heavily dealt with his lust for young men immediately after his encounter with Risley and his self-realisation through the mirror reflected. Because he knows the pain of separation from his homosexual identity. Maurice’s growing sense of unease, despair and disappointment particularly about his homosexual orientations is explained by Freud in his work entitled *The Ego and the Id*

(1960). To him, considering sexuality as an illness is to do with moralistic framework of guilt. Namely, because of the intense prohibition on love accompanied by any kinds of threats, usually in the form of death in the Edwardian period, the homosexuals are commonly forbidden to love and to be loved. On the issue of prohibition, Judith Butler (1993) in her work *Bodies That Matter* reveals that “Once this prohibition is installed, then, body parts emerge as sites of punishable pleasure and hence, of pleasure and pain. In this kind of neurotic illness, then, guilt is manifest as pain that suffuses the bodily surface, and can appear as physical illness” (p. 64). As is highlighted, Maurice feels guilty because of his homosexual orientations, so he investigates doctors to be cured from his illness, which he believes the symptoms of it is rather connected to his pathological depression. Thus, the prohibitions on homosexuality in the society are generally considered as the introjection of the homosexual cathexis. The ego-ideal, which controls the ego’s self-respect, in Freudian terms, involves the prohibition on homosexuality. Yet, Judith Butler associates the Freudian prohibition with sexual desire with this statement: “This prohibition against homosexuality is homosexual desire turned back upon itself, the self-beratement of conscience is the reflexive rerouting of homosexual desire” (Butler, 1993, p. 65), as it happened to Maurice. Because at the end, his quest for his actual identity becomes so perceptible that he prefers being homosexual rather than heterosexual.

With Alec Scudder, a man from the working class, Maurice reaches his ultimate aim, which can be regarded as a concession among his soul, body and image. Because, what makes Maurice more humane rather than pathetic is to respect his own actual identity by following his own desires, as indicated in the following quotation:

In a lifetime individual continually change objects and goals in their Desiring quests ... But no object – be it personal thing, sexual activity, belief, that the loved person onto whom one projects Desire and narcissism serves to give proof of the image and pathos of existence (Ragland-Sullivan, 1986, p. 81).

In the novel, Maurice attempts to find his real identity and allows his subconscious self to surpass his hidden self. Maurice realizes that he is homosexual. In order to satisfy his body and mind, Maurice prefers to be with Alec Scudder, a man whose reflected image satisfies Maurice. Thus, he decides to enter into the “greenwood” with Scudder even if he knows that they will be convicted of homosexuality according to the English laws. By this way, they both challenge the cultural codes and societal norms of Edwardian England, including the laws. However, in order to live a happy life in the woods, they have had to pay the price for it by becoming woodcutters and by living in a forest “far from the madding crowd”. As seen,

*Maurice*, what Paul Peppis defined as Forster’s “homosexual bildungsroman”, ends with the departure of Maurice with his male lover Scudder from England. Maurice and Scudder prefer retreating to the utopian space of England’s greenwood, where they think they would be safe. According to Peppis,

Forster’s Maurice declines to represent any utopian state, only gesturing toward it - Maurice and Alec end up nowhere... That Forster refuses to render the greenwood is critical, perhaps the novel’s most significant formal feature; Maurice thus rejects not just social accommodation and the genre of the bildungsroman but representation itself (Peppis, 2014, p. 140).

*Maurice*, as the latest novel by E. M. Forster, unveils the secrecy about homosexual love in the Edwardian period. In line with the explanation by Markley below, it is obvious that Forster, indeed, has paved the way for the reassessment of the gender and sexual issues in the society through his own style:

[...] like Wilde, Housman, and other homosexual artists writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporary cultural mores did not deter him [Forster] from also developing in his mainstream fiction new ways to express homoerotic desire and to dismantle and reassemble traditional power structures relating to gender and sexuality (Markley, 2001, p. 288).

### Conclusion

In the novel, the “mirror, mirror on the wall” unquestionably reveals who real Maurice is, just like it reveals “who the fairest of them all is” in the story of Snow White. With regard to Maurice’s homosexuality, it can be asserted that all the men, at least three men, with whom Maurice has had sexual intercourses, whether be they platonic or sexual, are the apparent objects of Maurice’s desire, specifically the objects of his *jouissance*. Thus, the subject, namely Maurice himself is in pursue of satisfying his own desires, by following from one object of desire to another. The mirror, in some certain stages, reflects Maurice’s spiritual development from compulsory heterosexuality to voluntary homosexuality. Unquestionably, the novel unveils Maurice’s search for his actual identity, which is reflected through Lacanian mirror. Maurice undergoes all Lacanian periods such as imaginary order, symbolic order and real order in order to form his actual identity. Besides Lacanian mirror, the music and dreams also play a significant role in forming his own identity as homosexual. It is concluded that neither the cultural codes nor the societal norms have a great impact on the identity formation process of the protagonist. Rather, Maurice follows his own desires for the sake of (re)forming his sexual identity.

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