

A Passage from China: An Archival Study of the Correspondence and Friendship between E. M. Forster and Hsiao Ch'ien

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Abstract

The friendship between E. M. Forster (1879-1970) and Hsiao Ch'ien (1911-1999) dates back to 1941 when the two men first met at the Tagore Memorial Meeting in London. Forster and Hsiao soon developed a close friendship, and they engaged in frequent correspondence until 1949 when, prior to returning to Shanghai, China, from Hong Kong, Hsiao decided to call a halt to his correspondence with all his friends in the West, including Forster. The two men never met again after Hsiao left England in 1944.

This paper offers an archival study of the manuscript material of the correspondence between Forster and Hsiao from 1941 to 1944. Additionally, this paper also serves as a scholarly record of the literary friendship between Forster and Hsiao. To discern the nature of the friendship between Forster and Hsiao, and to probe the contents of their conversations, the author studies Forster's letters collected by Hsiao in his *Friendship Gazette* and the two surviving hand-written letters from Hsiao to Forster. Hsiao's autobiography, essays, Forster's biographies, fiction, non-fiction, and works by other writers are also consulted.

The most salient point emerged from this paper is the literary discussion between Forster and Hsiao, particularly concerning Forster's novel, *Maurice*, which deals openly with a taboo, homosexual subject matter. It transpires that their respective moral ideologies and attitudes toward male same-sex love are far from similar.

Key Words: E. M. Forster, Hsiao Ch'ien, 20th-century English Literature, Biography

As we run down the slope of Hate with gladness
You trip us up like an unnoticed stone,
And just as we are closeted with Madness
You interrupt us like the telephone.

Journey to a War (Auden and Isherwood, 1939)

The friendship between E. M. Forster and the Chinese journalist Hsiao Ch'ien (January 1910 – February 1999) was brief but deep; it is practically unknown to many Forster scholars. Their friendship ended abruptly and was scarred by a misunderstanding that was never cleared up. The intervention of the Second World War and the political upheavals in post-war China proved to be too great a disruptive force and made the renewal of their friendship impossible. Their ill-fated friendship represents the sad irony of life's arbitrariness and the limits of liberal humanism central to Forster's fictional themes. This real life experience is uncannily reminiscent of the friendship between Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding in Forster's own novel, *A Passage to India*.

It is widely known that during E. M. Forster's lifetime he had two important cross-racial friendships. One was with an Indian, Syed Ross Masood, the other an Egyptian, Mohammed el Adl. Forster's relationships with Masood and el Adl are attentively documented in Forster's biographies.¹ The impact of these cross-cultural/racial friendships is undoubtedly profound. Both Masood and el Adl exerted tremendous influence on Forster's

¹ P. N. Furbank's two-volume biography (1977, 1978) is by far the most authoritative book available on Forster's life and work. Frances King's biography (1978) accentuates the particular social milieu of intellectual liberalism with which Forster and his fiction are axiomatically associated. Nicola Beauman published another biography of Forster in 1993. The book attempts to enable readers of Forster to gain a sense of personal closeness to the novelist himself, by initially addressing Forster throughout the book by his middle name, "Morgan," which was only used by friends who were close to Forster. Beauman's book provides some interesting insight into, and speculation about, the life and work of Forster. In 1995, 18 years after the publication of Furbank's first volume of *Life*, Mary Lago published a new literary biography of Forster. This book concentrates on fusing Forster's literary life with his work.

conception of male-male relationship, against his own English suburban upbringing, during the formative years of Forster's career as an active fiction writer.² Forster's acknowledgement of his friendship with Masood is more public, more demonstrative than that of his friendship—his first sexual relationship—with el Adl. The dedication in *A Passage to India*, published in 1924, reads: "E. M. Forster dedicated / *A Passage to India* / TO / Syed Ross Masood / and to the seventeen years / of our friendship" (1978). On the other hand, *Pharos and Pharillon*, published in May 1923, written immediately after el Adl's death in 1922 and published in May 1923, bears Forster's cryptic dedication, "To Hermes, leader of souls." This illusive acknowledgement is designed, according to Furbank, to be "a kind of tribute to Mohammed" (1978: 109).

It is, however, rarely mentioned that the novelist also formed a friendship with another oriental—the Chinese journalist and writer, Hsiao Ch'ien. Despite the closeness of their friendship, it is not mentioned in most of Forster's biographies. Likewise, there is no record of any correspondence between Forster and Hsiao in the published two-volume collection of Forster's letters (Forster, 1983, 1985). The only exception is a reference in passing in the second volume that records a meeting between Forster and Hsiao. In a letter to Jack Sprott on 20 September 1941 to report on the PEN Club's 17th International Congress a week before, Forster reports his meeting Hsiao by saying: "I made two contacts in the PEN. sense - Hsiao Chien of whom I shall see more [sic]" (Lago and Furbank, 1985: 195). An editorial note states: "Hsiao Ch'ien (1911-) was at King's College from 1942 to 1944, when he started a Chinese news agency in London. He left for Shanghai in March 1946; in 1980 he was reported alive and well" (1985: 197). This note is the only reference to the meeting between Forster and Hsiao published in English. Furthermore, no other

² In "Syed Ross Masood" (1937), Forster remembers Masood as follows: "My own debt to him is incalculable. He woke me up out of my suburban and academic life, showed me new horizons and a new civilization, and helped me towards the understanding of a continent." Forster (1972: 285).

information regarding Forster's friendship with Hsiao can be found in the biographies and autobiographies of Forster's close friends and associates at the time. One is intrigued by the scant record of the friendship between E. M. Forster and Hsiao Ch'ien.

The present paper offers, first of all, a record of this Anglo-Chinese relationship by presenting some hitherto unpublished manuscripts. It also seeks to explore various issues that arise from the essentially epistolary, archival material. The paper is intended to provide a foundation, a "missing" chapter, or an extended note, in Forster's biography, on which further studies on Forster and Hsiao respectively or comparatively can be based.

In researching the friendship between Forster and Hsiao, both the Chinese original of Hsiao Ch'ien's autobiography, *Yi ge Wei Dai Ditu de Luren: Xiao Qian Huiyilu* (Chinese original title is 《一個未帶地圖的旅人：蕭乾回憶錄》，1988), and its English translation, *Traveller without a Map* (1990),³ have been consulted. In his autobiography, Hsiao recounts his friendship with Forster in the section that documents his sojourn in England. In addition, unpublished correspondence in manuscript between Hsiao and Forster between June 1941 and February 1944 are also studied.⁴

³ The orthographical inconsistencies of Xiao Qian's name is a result of the use of the Wade-Giles and the Pinyin (phonetic spelling) systems for the romanisation of Chinese. "Hsiao Ch'ien" adheres to Wade-Giles spelling, whereas "Xiao Qian" conforms to the Pinyin system of Modern Chinese. In this paper, in order to retain the historical accuracy of the subject, the author has averted to the Wade-Giles's spelling for Hsiao's name throughout the text. Other Chinese names that appear in the correspondence between Forster and Hsiao also follow this system.

⁴ "HSIAO CH' IEN," Forster papers, courtesy of the Modern Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge (KCC). All future quotations of passages from letters written by Forster and Hsiao to each other are from this source and will be included in the text. When reproducing contents from Forster's letters to Hsiao, the author relies solely on, and endeavours to keep faithfully to, Hsiao's typewritten transcription from Forster's original. Regarding the inconsistency of punctuation, capitalisation, spacing between an end of a sentence and the beginning of a following one, and other minor typographical errors, the author has taken the liberty of correcting them. As far as the overall process of Hsiao's reproduction of Forster's letters is concerned, the author has attempted to

This paper can be roughly divided into two parts. The first half examines the friendship between Forster and Hsiao in its historical context. The second half provides a study of the contents of the two men's correspondence, not only probing the nature of their friendship but also addressing other social, political and cultural issues that concern both writers. A photographic examination of the physical presentation of the manuscript material used in this study is also included in the appendix at the end of this paper.

I. Friendship under Siege

Hsiao Ch'ien was a young man of 28 when he first arrived in London from China in 1939. It was the "phony war" period in Europe. Hsiao came to England with an initial duty of teaching modern Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. In 1939, the SOAS was evacuated from London to its temporary base at Christ College, Cambridge. In addition to his pedagogical responsibility, Hsiao was also instructed by the Chungking-based Chinese news agency *Ta-gung-pao* to set up an office in London to report war news from England. Largely through his second mission, Hsiao came into contact with the British organisation, the China Campaign Committee, which was supported by some British literary and political figures. These included "Victor Gollancz, publisher and head of the Left Book Club, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, the feminist and social activist Margery Fry,

preserve it by means of keeping Hsiao's own editorial corrections.

Symbols used throughout the quotations from Hsiao Ch'ien's *Friendship Gazette* and the hand-written manuscript of his letters to E. M. Forster in this paper are originally devised by Oliver Stallybrass for his transcription of the manuscripts of Forster's *Howards End* (Forster, 1973: xix-xxi). They indicate where the changes occur in Forster's manuscripts.

- (1) \ . . / words between oboli inserted by Hsiao, unless indicated otherwise in brackets.
- (2) < . . . > words between angle brackets deleted by Hsiao.
- (3) < . . . > \ . . / (a) words deleted, then reinserted, by Hsiao; or (b) words between oboli substituted by Hsiao for words within angle brackets.

Harold Laski, the Labour Party theorist, and Arthur Clegg, reporter on foreign affairs for the British Communist Party organ the *Daily Worker*" (Kinkley, 1990: 84-85). The China Committee was campaigning on behalf of China in her War of Resistance against Japanese military invasion. Before long, Hsiao became a principal speaker for this Committee, and he was frequently invited to give talks on China and modern Chinese literature in London and various other venues in England.

At the time that Forster mentioned his meeting Hsiao to Sprott, Forster in fact had met Hsiao on an earlier occasion. Hsiao's autobiography records that he and Forster met for the first time on 9 May 1941 at the Tagore Memorial Meeting, which was organised by the English PEN Club (Kinkley, 1990: 111). Forster, together with the Soviet ambassador to Britain, Ivan Maisky, was invited to give a talk for this occasion. Hsiao had attended as a guest representative from China, sitting alongside Forster amongst the other speakers. One of the invited, Kingsley Martin, who knew Hsiao was an admirer of Forster's novels and respected Forster for his anti-imperialist sentiment in *A Passage to India*. Martin took the opportunity to introduce Hsiao to Forster. On the same occasion, Hsiao was also introduced to other British literary figures such as H. G. Wells, Stephen Spender and John Lehmann. But it was Forster with whom Hsiao established a strong, emotional affinity.

Soon Hsiao became Forster's protégé, a frequent guest at the Reform Club and Forster's London flat in Chiswick. Hsiao was also invited twice to stay at West Hackhurst, Forster's family home in Dorking, Surrey, shared with his mother and the housekeeper Agnes. Both women welcomed Forster's Chinese friend with warm hospitality. Indeed Hsiao, an orphan himself, regarded Alice Forster and Agnes as his own family. For instance, Alice Forster wrote Hsiao a letter on 11 January 1942, in which she speaks to Hsiao with motherly affection, saying: "I am so glad you were happy with us. I hope you will come again soon. We < shall > all indeed enjoyed your visit. Most kind of you to send me the very

interesting 'Dragon Book' and the lotus seeds. We have not opened the box yet but shall do so _____ [Hsiao's blank spaces] when Morgan comes back from London" (KCC).

In 1942, Hsiao Ch'ien decided to resign from his teaching position at the SOAS, and moved back to London to pursue a postgraduate degree at Cambridge. He entered King's College, Cambridge, under the recommendation of Arthur Waley and E. M. Forster himself. In the summer of 1942, Hsiao took up his residence at King's College and began his studies. He was to read "British psychological fiction," and was recommended to read novels by D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster under Dr. George Rylands's supervision (Kinkley, 1990: 101). Hsiao remained in residence until the early summer of 1944, when he was summoned to report from the European front line.

In Hsiao's memoirs, he suggests that his friendship with Forster remained active until he decided to call a halt to his academic career at Cambridge and to resume his work as *Ta-kung-pao's* war correspondent, travelling with the United States's Seventh Army in France and Germany. After the war, between 1946-48, Hsiao worked as the literary editor and the chief columnist for international affairs for *Ta-gung-pao* in Shanghai, until the worsening political situation prompted Hsiao to leave Shanghai for Hong Kong in June 1948 (Kinkley, 1990: 168). It is unfortunate that, owing to the unpredictability of his future under the Communist regime that had just defeated Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist army, Hsiao resolved to terminate all his overseas connections before he returned to China in 1949. Hsiao recalls in his *Traveller*: "[B]eing aware of what had happened in Communist Europe, I wrote to all my overseas friends in September 1949 . . . to ask that they cease communicating with me . . . that they were not to send me so much as a Christmas card" (Kinkley: 1990: 117-118). Hsiao himself hoped that the journey would be the end of his hitherto perpetual search for a permanent home, reminiscent of Rickie's plight in Forster's *The Longest Journey*. Unfortunately, Hsiao's home-coming ended with tragedy.

1949 marked for Hsiao the beginning of a series of turmoil that eventually terminated Hsiao's friendship with Forster. The two men had no chance to renew their friendship before Forster's death in 1970 and Hsiao's own in 1999.

During their eight or so years' friendship, from the summer of 1941 to the autumn of 1949, according to Hsiao, some 80 letters, postcards and telegrams were dispatched from Forster to himself. In response, he wrote long replies back to Forster. Unfortunately, a large number of Forster's letters do not survive, and it seems highly likely that almost all of Hsiao's letters to Forster were destroyed, together with numerous others by Forster himself, on two particular occasions. One occasion was in 1945 after the death of Forster's mother, and the other before Forster took up his Honorary Fellowship to reside in King's College, in November 1946.

The portions of Forster's letters to Hsiao Ch'ien survive largely through luck. According to Hsiao, some 80 of Forster's letters had travelled with him throughout the turbulent war years, treasured and safely guarded, until they were destroyed at the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in 1966. There might have been a chance to save all those letters. In the early 1960s, Hsiao had tentatively proposed to his superior at People's Literary Publishing House that he would like to exchange with a British library all the letters that Forster had written to him in return for books. Fearing that a friendly gesture to a capitalist country might provoke the authorities and invite condemnatory criticism, Hsiao's superior not only decided to abort Hsiao's plan but also, subsequently, barred Hsiao from accessing western publications (Kinkley, 1990: 119). Having been classified as a Rightist element, Hsiao's family home was searched and all the letters, together with other essays that he had written during his studies at Cambridge, were burned. As Hsiao himself puts it: "[W]hen the Great Calamity (the Cultural Revolution) swept across the whole scene, those letters were not of course spared" (Kinkley, 1990: 119-120).

How then did the preservation of Forster's letters to Hsiao come about? Hsiao records in his memoirs that during the winter break (possibly during the Christmas holiday) at Cambridge in 1943, he set out to type up some 40 letters that Forster had written to him since June 1941. Hsiao might have continued until the time when he had to leave England in the summer of 1944. Hsiao's collection was entitled *Friendship Gazette* (Kinkley, 1990: 113). He intended to make two copies only, one for himself, and the other for Forster. Fortunately, one copy has been preserved and it forms part of the "Hsiao Ch'ien" material in the Forster papers at the Modern Archive Centre at King's College, Cambridge. During the research for the present paper, the author wrote to Hsiao himself for information regarding the whereabouts of his copy of *Friendship Gazette*. Hsiao replied to say that he did not possess a copy, explaining: "if I had, it would [have been] destroyed during the Cultural Revolution" (Hsiao, 1998). When he revisited King's College in 1984, Hsiao was presented with a photocopy of his own *Friendship Gazette*. The letters that Hsiao quotes in his autobiography come from this source.

By contrast, Hsiao's letters to Forster were less fortunate. Apart from the lucky preservation of *Friendship Gazette*, there are only two letters from Hsiao to Forster in this group of Forster papers. The survival of these two letters is something of a mystery. It is likely, given Forster's custom of keeping the correspondence that he valued the most, that Forster might have kept these two letters as a memento of his friendship with Hsiao. However, Hsiao himself seems to have been convinced that none of his letters had survived. Hsiao's autobiography reveals that he did once have the chance to discover the fate of his letters to Forster. Hsiao records that whilst attending the annual meeting of British Sinologists in 1984, 40 years after his departure from England in 1944, he was invited to revisit his alma mater. Hsiao must have put his query to the then College Archivist Dr. Michael Halls. But Hsiao was only to be disappointed, recording in his autobiography: "[N]ot a single letter from me was found among the papers that he [Forster] left"

(Kinkley, 1990: 119).

Hsiao has speculated on the disappearance of his letters to Forster. According to Hsiao, he feared that Forster might have destroyed his letters out of disillusionment with Hsiao himself. Hsiao suspected that Forster's disappointment might have resulted from receiving Jack Sprott's return of Forster's private letter and a new book (possibly *The Hill of Devi*, published in 1953) he had sent to Hsiao in 1954. In that year, Jack Sprott was a member of the British Cultural Delegation to visit mainland China, and he was entrusted by Forster to contact Hsiao, who was then working as an active journalist and a deputy chief editor of *People's China*. But Hsiao's earlier association with England had made his situation extremely precarious indeed. Hsiao recalls his nervous meeting with Sprott, saying: "Surprisingly, since I was already in serious political trouble, I was allowed to go to a reception held by the visiting delegation. When the chance came, as we clinked our glasses in a toast, Sprott whispered 'Morgan has a new book he wants me to give you, and a letter. I'll give them to you once we can meet alone'" (Kinkley, 1990: 118). "But in 1954," Hsiao continues, describing his immense angst, "when I already knew only too well the political difficulties I was in, how could I dare arrange a private meeting with a foreigner? Later I might well have to confess all sorts of shameful things I had supposedly plotted with him in secret" (Kinkley, 1990: 118).⁵ Indeed, Hsiao reveals more specifically later in his book his perilous circumstance, saying:

When a film about the life of the educator Wu Xun was criticised in 1951 for its unrevolutionary attitudes, it was

⁵ In the Chinese text, Hsiao notes in brackets: "During the Cultural Revolution, I witnessed some people getting into trouble for showing reciprocal courtesy to foreigners. Those unfortunate people were then asked to confess what nonsense they had been talking to the foreigners, and what sort of shameful conspiracies they were supposed to be engaging with the foreigners. Some people even lost their lives for their alleged secret dealings with foreigners" (the author's translation; 《旅人》, 1988: 196).

clear that we intellectuals with foreign training were in fact the target.

We criticised our own moderate reformism time and again at meetings large and small. I who had studied in England, the headquarters of Fabian socialism, had to humble myself with particular thoroughness (Kinkley, 1990: 180).

The unpredictable fate of Hsiao Ch'ien in the early years of the People's Republic of China is clearly indicated by the above passages. It is then not surprising that out of bad conscience Hsiao should have conjectured: "[W]hen Sprott returned to England and returned the book and letter to Forster with the seal unbroken, not only must it have seemed a blow to him personally - perhaps it lessened his very faith in human nature" (Kinkley, 1990: 118). Looking back to his friendship with Forster when writing his memoirs, Hsiao concludes: "After attentively listening to Sprott's account, he [Forster] no doubt cast them into the fireplace as he quivered with grief and anger. I can almost hear him now, calling out to me from the next world: So these are the Chinese - the courteous and conscientious Chinese" (Kinkley, 1990: 119).

Hsiao's fears were eventually to be proven unnecessary. When the author approached Forster's official biographer P. N. Furbank to shed light on this matter, Furbank replies: "[A]ccording to the Inventory of Forster papers at King's College drawn up by Elizabeth Ellem, there are two surviving letters to Forster from Hsiao" (Furbank, 1998). Indeed, as the author's research demonstrates that both letters have survived in their manuscript form in the Forster papers at the Modern Archive Centre. Furthermore, Furbank recalls that whenever he discussed Hsiao with Forster, "he [Forster] spoke of him [Hsiao] with affection, and it would have been most unlike him to have destroyed Hsiao's letters out of pique or resentment" (Furbank, 1998).

The preservation of the existing correspondence between Forster and Hsiao supports Furbank's views; it shows that Forster treasured his friendship with Hsiao. Clearly, Forster wanted the

record to be saved. The surviving correspondence between Forster and Hsiao discloses some little known facts about Forster as a private person and a novelist.

II. Letters from England

Delving into the correspondence between E. M. Forster and Hsiao Ch'ien helps to reveal the practical and personal circumstances surrounding their friendship, as described in Hsiao's autobiography. The most salient features of the correspondence between Forster and Hsiao are their ability to transcend racial, cultural and political barriers that would otherwise have conditioned their friendship during a time of international distrust and conflict. Additionally, their correspondence also reveals their repeated debates on the future of the modern world, and their discussions on literature.

Prior to his meeting Hsiao, Forster's contact with China was largely infrequent and indirect. Italy, India and Egypt attracted more of Forster's attention. They inspired and informed his literary imagination. However, reading Hsiao's autobiography, one is struck by the friendship that soon developed between Hsiao and Forster. Although the letters in Volume I and II of *Friendship Gazette* are usually short and uneventful, they are by no means without good humour. The ten letters and postcards in Volume I show that Forster is immensely interested in meeting Hsiao, despite Forster's confusion over Hsiao's name. In the first two letters, 9 June 1941 and 19 September 1941, Forster addresses Hsiao as "Dear Mr. Hsiao," and "Dear Mr. Chien," respectively. In the third letter, dated 27 September 1941, having addressed Hsiao as "Mr Chien," Forster confesses, "I am actually not sure by which name I should address you. So you see how ill prepared---alas!---am I to take my Passage to China as yet" (KCC). Forster's tone is nonetheless courteous and friendly. The contents of Volume I are mostly about arrangements for meetings between Forster and Hsiao. The venues are usually Forster's London flat in

Chiswick, the Union Club, or Forster's Surrey home, West Hackhurst.

It appears that by the summer of 1942, Forster is already on very friendly terms with Hsiao. Forster begins to address Hsiao more affectionately by calling him "My dear Hsiao Chien" (KCC). Their respective cats are also frequently mentioned. In a letter dated 27 February 1942, Forster addresses Hsiao and his cat as follows: "My dear Hsiao Chien: (My dear Rhea)" (KCC). Referring to a planned visit by Hsiao and his cat to West Hackhurst in the same letter, Forster makes a joke of his childhood nickname. Forster writes: "Although when I was a schoolboy fifty years ago, my nickname was '<Mocox>' \MOUSE/ [correction is possibly made by Forster's own hand with a fountain pen in blue ink], I shall not feel any danger in such a visit! No, I shall feel the purest pleasure" (KCC).

Forster's friendly greetings are echoed by the affectionate endings of his letters. Instead of using "Yours sincerely" (KCC) or "Yours very sincerely" (KCC), as Forster consistently uses in his correspondence between June 1941 and February 1942, Forster demonstrates more emotional closeness to his Chinese friend at the time of international confrontation. "Yours ever" (KCC) appears in a letter of May 1942, and "Affectionate wishes for 1943" (KCC) in his last letter to Hsiao in 1942, on 26 December. At this stage, Forster still signs his letters with "E. M. Forster" (KCC). This is to be replaced by "With love" (KCC) in letter no. 30, 10 March 1943. In the same letter, Forster also appears to address Hsiao as "My dear Chien" (KCC). By the summer of 1943, Forster had begun to address Hsiao in the same tone that he used to speak to his Bloomsbury and Apostolic friends. Forster ends his 7 July 1943 letter (no. 36) with "With love / Yours always, E. M. Forster" (KCC), and his 19 July 1943 letter (no. 38) with "With love / Yours ever, / Morgan" (KCC).

By contrast, Hsiao appears to be more reserved, which is a result of his deep respect for Forster as his senior and better. Hsiao persistently addresses Forster as "Mr. Forster" (KCC) almost

throughout the entire period of their correspondence. At one point, Forster appears to request that Hsiao abandon his formality. Writing on 7 July 1943, Forster suggests: "I have been wishing, too, that you would call [me] something instead of 'Mr. Forster', but it is for the caller rather than for the callee to settle such a question. What do you think?" (KCC) In the second, dated 25 November 1943, of the only two surviving letters that Hsiao writes to Forster, as a matter of courtesy Hsiao eventually addresses Forster in an ingenious way as per Forster's plea. Hsiao has opted for an alternative approach to resolve his dilemma. His solution is certainly unconventional from both British and Chinese points of view. Hsiao has cleverly fused intimacy with humour and reverence, beginning his letter with "My dear Morgancius" (KCC). "Morgan" is, as it appears to be, only used by Forster's close friends. But it is too tempting for Hsiao to resist a jest. To Morgan, Hsiao attaches a suffix "cius" to optimise Forster's position and place him on an equal plain with the celebrated Chinese thinker, Confucius. It is safe to speculate that Forster must have been tickled, and indeed impressed, by Hsiao's subtle wit.

In their correspondence, one detects that Forster also displays a great deal of trust in his Chinese friend. Forster does not appear to be hesitant to share his private life with Hsiao. On the contrary he seems to take pleasure in introducing Hsiao not only to his own family, but also to his closest friends. In a letter, dated June 1942, Forster appears to arrange a meeting for Hsiao to meet his friends, including Bob Buckingham and Joe Ackerley. In this letter Forster writes:

Dinner next Sunday, 14th. Mr. Buckingham has been in since I began this letter. He is coming on Sunday to the flat and we very much wish you could join us in it for an informal meal. I am asking Mr. Ackerly [sic] also. The flat is 9, Arlington Park Mansions, Chiswick, W. 4. (Tel: CHI 2407)–close to the Chiswick Empire on Tumham Green. The hour of the meal would be 7.0[.] Do come if you can–send me a line to West Hackhurst as soon as you can conveniently (KCC).

After his transcription of letter no. 16 (postcard), dated 12 June 1942, Hsiao recalls in his explanatory note about the dinner which was: “[h]eld at Arlington Mansion, with Bob Buckingham, John Hampson, Joe Ackerly [sic] present. My first night in that enchanting flat, with a rickey [sic] table lamp which either refused to be on or insisted on remainig [sic] lit. Mr[.] Forster cooked a glorious breakfast” (KCC). Hsiao’s second note describes vividly this meeting and his feelings: “Change at Shepherd Bush, alight at Chiswick Park Station, where Mr. Forster stood patiently <by> \on/ the pavement. Before entering the flat, I was taken over the Bridge of Heaven, had my first bird[’s]-eye-view of south-western London” (KCC).

Volume III of *Friendship Gazette*, by contrast, is impregnated with more serious conversations, one of which is on China and its future. During Hsiao’s sojourn in Britain, there was a growing interest in establishing mutual understanding between Britain and China. This anti-colonialist attitude towards China resulted from the work of liberal thinkers such as Bertrand Russell and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, with whom Forster was closely associated. By 1943, Forster was not unaware of what had been done for China by his friends, such as Russell, Dickinson, W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. Here we diverge temporarily to take a look at the intellectual response to China issues before the Forster-Hsiao friendship began.

Before setting foot on Chinese soil in the early summer of 1912 (the first year of the Republic of China), after his trip to India with Forster and Robert Trevelyan, Dickinson had impersonated a “John Chinaman” in his *Letters from a Chinese Official* (1906). In his book, Dickinson criticises western materialist-orientated civilisation from the viewpoint of a fictitious Chinese. Dickinson’s profound, emotional and spiritual affinity with China is remembered by Forster, who writes:

If Dickinson visited America in the hope of self-development and India from reasons of curiosity, it was in a very different spirit that he approached China. He came to her as a lover,

who had worshipped from afar for years. In a life which contained much disillusionment, China never failed him. She stood firm as the one decent civilisation, and when he mourned over her it was not because she had disappointed him but because he had lived to see her destroyed by the violence and vulgarity of Europe (1973: 117).⁶

Dickinson's is "an impersonal love; no private relationship coloured it" (1973: 117), as Forster points out. Despite his admiration, Dickinson does not appear to have translated his emotional response into a more philosophical and critical scrutiny of Chinese society and her embedded problems, to which Russell by contrast paid enormous attention.

Russell approached China with a particular interest in probing more seriously her social and cultural conditions. Between October 1920 and July 1921 Russell was a "Sometime Professor of Philosophy in the Government" at the University of Peking. This post facilitated his close observation of Chinese society.

⁶ Dickinson's own response to China is illustrated in a letter that he wrote to Forster on 8 June 1913. It is worth quoting at length to demonstrate Dickinson's spiritual exultation when he eventually arrived in China. It is not difficult to tell how spiritually enlivened Dickinson must have felt. Dickinson reports:

China is a land of human beings. India, as it glimmers in a remote past, is supernatural, uncanny, terrifying, sublime, horrible, monotonous, full of mountains and abysses, all heights and depths, and for ever incomprehensible. But China! So gay, friendly, beautiful, sane, hellenic, choice, human. Dirty? Yes. Peking, the last day or two, is all but impossible even in a rickshaw - pools, lakes, of liquid mud. One understands the importance of the sedan chair, and the wall side 150 years ago in Europe. Poor? Yes. But never were poor people so happy (I speak with all the superficiality you care to credit me with). A Chinese house in Peking is beyond description exquisite: its court yard, with trees and flowering shrubs, its little rooms and hall, paper-windowed, perfect in proportion and design, its gaily painted wooden cloisters. And you approach them by a slum. A level, rational people--a kind of English *with* sensitiveness and imagination. An immense background, I admit, of ghosts and devils--just to add spice to life--one prays to them, when things go a bit wrong, otherwise one laughs at them. No reaches into the infinite, but a clear, non-restricted perception of the beautiful and the exquisite in the Real (122-23).

Having returned to England, in 1922 Russell published his philosophical study, *The Problem of China* (1922).⁷ In Russell's book, he openly dismisses the prevailing sentiment of racial superiority over the Chinese at his time in Europe, arguing:

It would be futile to attempt to strike a balance; whether our present culture is better or worse, on the whole, than that which seventeenth-century missionaries found in the Celestial Empire is a question as to which no prudent person would venture to pronounce. But it is easy to point to certain respects in which we are better than old China, and other respects in which we are worse. If intercourse between Western nations and China is to be fruitful we must cease to regard ourselves as missionaries of a superior civilization, or, worse still, as men who have a right to exploit, oppress, and swindle the Chinese because they are an "inferior" race (10-11).

Expressed many decades before post-colonial discourse became an academic discipline in its own right, Russell's words still ring very true in the political contention between the West and China at the present time. Russell's book departs from a personal level to try to understand China and her predicament of finding her national identity and positioning herself in the modern world. The post-imperial Republic of China stood precariously at the crossroads between nationalism and communism and between modernisation and cultural conservatism. China's dilemma not only intensified her own political instability internally; whether or not China could successfully transform herself into a modern state would also in turn decide whether or not she could survive international animosity.

Some 18 years after Russell's arrival in China, Auden and Isherwood embarked on a journey, in January 1938, to China to

⁷ The book is designed to raise awareness and consciousness in the West of the question regarding what should be done in China to avoid a potential cultural catastrophe of ancient Chinese civilisation in the face of military and technological advancement from the West and from China's neighbouring nation, Japan.

observe the Sino-Japanese War that had broken out in August 1937. *Journey to a War* (1939) was the direct result of Auden and Isherwood's voyage to China. The book is dedicated to Forster, and its dedication poem, "To E. M. Foster," despite its ostensible purpose as a tribute to Forster, whom Auden and Isherwood admired and respected, alludes to Forster's somewhat inert participation in the moral response of the British intelligentsia to the Chinese plight. However, on a personal level, Forster remained loyal to his Chinese friend, Hsiao Ch'ien. In his relationship with Hsiao, Forster indefatigably kept up his roles as a personal friend, literary advisor and a moral supporter throughout Hsiao's stay in England. Indeed, through his personal friendship with Hsiao, Forster tried to comprehend the psyche of the young intellectual elite, such as Hsiao himself, in their quest for Chinese modernity.

Support to China from the British intelligentsia during Hsiao's period in England was in comparison greater than that during Dickinson and Russell's time. In the early 1920s, the tension between the moral conscience of individuals and the economic interests of the Empire was generated by two factors. One was the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellions, the other the question of how the Boxer indemnity should be spent.⁸ By the

⁸ When Dickinson and Russell were initially selected for the Committee under the China Indemnity Bill by MacDonald's Labour Government, the Chinese government had authorised Russell to invite people of his own choice from China to be the two Chinese members of the same Committee. Dr. Hu Shih and Ting Wen-kiang (V. K. Ting) were invited. Russell has written in his autobiography that the British government should follow suit as the American government had done to transfer the money paid by the Chinese government into promoting the interests of the Chinese people. The American government resolved to use the money to help the Chinese government modernise the educational system in China, and to consolidate educational qualities for Chinese students who were studying in the United States. Russell writes: "At last it was decided that, instead of a punitive payment, the Chinese should make some payment which should be profitable to both China and Britain." However, Dickinson and Russell were replaced and their work was undone when the Conservative Government regained power.

early 1940s, it appeared that support for the Chinese cause became more politicised and organised. It is true that Dickinson, Russell, Auden and Isherwood sought first-hand contact with China and the Chinese people by placing themselves amongst the “natives.” Their respective experiences with China subsequently constituted the moral bases of their arguments. However, it would be unfair to conclude that, by contrast, Forster’s allegedly passive role was inconsequential. Being profoundly sceptical about “Great Men”⁹ and public success in the first place, Forster deeply distrusts forces, violence and even causes. Additionally, given his own familial circumstances, keeping his support on a personal level would appeal to Forster more. Hsiao documents in his memoirs that on one occasion Forster asked Hsiao to endorse a cheque to the Chinese Red Cross, “so that,” Hsiao remarks, “he [Forster] could ‘pay [his] respects to China’” (Kinkley, 1990: 114). In addition, Forster kept in touch with other Chinese intellectuals who were visiting and studying in Britain. In letter no. 8, dated 23 December 1941, Forster mentions a date, 14 January 1942, when he will have an official engagement. Hsiao, in his editorial note, explains that this is a “P. E. N. Lunch commemorating the presidency of Dr. Hu Shih” (KCC). Hu was arguably one of the most instrumental figures in inaugurating modernisation in China by means of the “Literary Revolution” throughout the May Fourth Era between 1917 and 1927 (Fairbank, 1983: 466). It is a shame that there is no record of any correspondence between Forster and Hu Shih in Forster’s papers at King’s College, Cambridge.

Whilst the China Campaign Committee and intellectuals such as Russell and Dickinson were actively working on behalf of and for the interests of the Chinese people in China, Forster chose to stick to his iconoclastic belief in personal relationships, as propounded in his “What I believe,” written in 1938. In “What I Believe,” Forster remarks: “How, then, can we put any trust in

⁹ In “What I Believe” (1972: 65-73), Forster asserts: “No, I distrust Great Men. They produce a desert of uniformity around them and often a pool of blood too” (1972: 70).

personal relationships, or cling to them in the gathering political storm? In theory we cannot. But in practice we can and do" (1972: 65). Similar sentiment about the problematic relationship between individuals and the State is also suggested in Forster's novel *Howards End*. Writing to Hisao on 9 February 1943, Forster reiterates his point, saying: "My hope[s] for Social Reform, such as they were, have certainly been dashed since I wrote the book, and I have now become an Anarchist but one who finds it easier to suffer than to destroy, and who still clings to personal relationships and finds them clinging to him" (KCC). When greater causes were initiated by his Apostolic predecessors for what they believed was the good of the masses of China, Forster, already an old man of sixty and profoundly sceptical about patriotism, stood firmly on the personal level; he remained unreservedly helpful to his Chinese friend.

Instead of interpreting situations purely from a westerner's point of view, Forster sets out to seek Hsiao's opinions on questions of the relationship between the East and the West. During his two years at Cambridge, Hsiao was frequently invited to give talks on China in London and elsewhere. Hsiao's topics included Chinese culture, literature, and the relationship between spiritual China with the industrial West. In his memoir, Hsiao recalls that his most important lecture was "The Dragon Beards Versus the Blueprints: An Apology for Modern China" (1944: 21-29),¹⁰ which was delivered at the Wallace Collection, London, at the end of 1942. Hsiao has quoted in his autobiography how Forster thought of writing something on China following his earlier writings which were inspired by Italy, India and Egypt. In his letter to Hsiao on 1 May 1943, written partially in response to Hsiao's lecture, Forster remarks: "It made me sad for I felt that I was too old to 'take on' China, and that, better than Italy (my first love), India, or France, could it have been taken on by me" (KCC). Nevertheless, Forster was enthusiastic about Hisao's topic.

¹⁰ Ch'ien Hsiao (1944: 21-29). Hsiao dedicates *Dragon Beards* to Forster and Arthur Waley.

It seems that Hsiao believes a certain degree of material advancement is a prerequisite for sustaining and perpetuating spiritual refinement. In “Dragon Beards,” Hsiao argues there is a practical and urgent need for China to adopt the Western style of modernising the country by means of promoting science and democracy; both concepts were personified as “Mr. Hsai” (Science) and “Mr. Deh” (Democracy). They were goals to be pursued as the basis for Chinese modernisation during the May Fourth Era. In so doing, the old Chinese civilisation could be regenerated to survive the modern world of industrialisation and technology. Hsiao argues that the West should not discourage China from modernising itself lest radical reforms cost it the spiritual quality that, Russell has argued, has higher value than Western materialism. Russell is one of those chief objectors to China’s total westernisation. Hsiao disagrees with Russell, arguing that China would never lose its spiritual legacy and some day, when China has reinvented itself, it might exercise its influence to encourage other nations to pursue spiritual refinement. By using football as an emblem of modernity, and playing football as an allegory for China’s taking part in the modern world, Hsiao concludes:

[O]ur friends in the West need not worry about those dragon-beards. They are our inheritance and they run in our veins. But Westerners will only make us angry if they ask us to throw the football into the Yellow River; in a world of force, fear and frustration, everyone must play football or perish. But when real peace and security are assured, may we all return to our respective dragon-beards (1944: 29).

Like Russell, Forster is also attracted to the question of to which direction the pendulum should swing between the spiritual and the material for China, and indeed, for humanity. But Forster is circumspect about such a prospect so confidently envisaged by Hsiao, asking, in his letter to Hsiao on 1 May 1943: “What will the road back from the blue prints to dragon beards be like? And is there any evidence, in past world history, that any country has ever found the road?” (KCC) It is unfortunate that there appears to be

no extant evidence of Hsiao's reply to this question.

Indeed, correspondence between Forster and Hsiao suggests that both men frequently engaged in discussions about the conflicting ideologies of spirituality and materialism. The question of whether or not China should follow the path of the West into industrialisation also appears in his correspondence with Hsiao. The question of the future of the modern world and its impact on personal freedom in spiritual and emotional liberation as a free-thinking/acting agent is a central theme of Forster's fiction. Hsiao, having experienced poverty, social turmoil and injustice since early childhood, argues with Forster from the perspective of Chinese social realism (profoundly influenced by Ibsen's work) in favour of material improvement in China. In his student essays on Forster's fiction Hsiao more than once comments on Forster's treatment of the subject of poverty. In a letter, dated 29 May 1943, Forster writes to provide some feedback on one of Hsiao's essays by saying:

[I]t has made me realise that I took up poverty as a subject. Bob, who grew up in it (except for good food which they all sc\r/ounged [hand-written insertion by Forster] somehow) says that one can't guess what it is like, and that <they> the poor are far too shy and wary to let one know. He says John Hampson knows, and I should have thought George Gissing did in a slightly earlier generation of novelists (Dickens did) (KCC).

In his memoir, Hsiao recalls: "I had evidently in another essay found fault with his understanding of the lower classes, and accused him of never having experienced true poverty" (Kinkley, 1990: 117). One can presume that Hsiao may be alluding particularly to the poverty-stricken and jobless lower-class character, Leonard Bast, in *Howards End*. Forster replies, in his letter of 7 July 1943:

I have been considering what you said about poverty and your misery and "crime" in China. Why am I ashamed to hear of such things? Not because I am shocked by them, as

you suggest, nor because I feel I cannot IMAGINE them, because they emphasise a defect in my mental equipment. For an instant they become real, then they fall back again into words, "Barefoot and without a crust to eat, he. . . ." etc. It is an extra barrier too to realise that European poverty is nothing to Oriental.--I am very glad that you mentioned this subject to me and I hope <that> you will do so again (KCC).

Forster also acted as a source of encouragement to Hsiao during this period of Hsiao's stay in England when he was frequently engaged in giving talks on China and preparing his talks to be published. In letter no. 10, dated 31 December 1941, Forster writes: "Thank you so much for the proofs. I was much interested in the Essay and will talk it over when we meet" (KCC). Hsiao notes that the proofs in question are those of his *Etching of a Tormented Age: A Glimpse of Contemporary Chinese Literature* (1942). In one of those letters in Volume IV, Forster appears to decline Hsiao's request to pen an introduction for a collection of Hsiao's short stories, *The Spinners of Silk* (1944). Forster, acknowledging the fact that by then Hsiao was already well known among the intellectual circles in Britain, writes: "I don't want to write an introduction to the stories. It is so difficult to do this well and unpatronisingly, and I only make attempt when the author is so unknown that a second name would draw attention to him" (KCC).

In literary matters, Forster acted as an advisor to Hsiao. In his autobiography, Hsiao recalls: "Forster very generously provided materials and support while I was studying his novels at King's College from 1942 to 1944" (Kinkley, 1990: 115). For instance, Hsiao points out: "He [Forster] also gave me some of his essays and little booklets that had been published in Egypt and India, but never in Britain. . . . Unfortunately all these perished, along with my diaries over the years and many bundles of letters, in the great red conflagration of the Ten Lost Years" (Kinkley, 1990: 115). Forster's letter (no. 24), dated October 1942, also reveals their discussions about "modern writings" (KCC) and how Forster sets

out to enhance Hsiao's critical competence in English literature. In letter no. 24, dated October 1942, Forster is recorded as saying: "I'm <able> \unable/ so far to see that "Modern Writing" is a subject, at least in English, and I am studying how to say this <sensibly> \suitably/. I am giving you a "lead in" as I think it is called, and hope you will take it up ardently" (KCC). In fact, it seems that Hsiao was for some reason not very enthusiastic about Forster's offer. In his note explaining Forster's idea of giving him a "lead in," Hsiao writes: "Which I artfully evaded by hiding myself behind a sout [sic] student, so that when Mr. Forster more or less called upon me, I was quite at large in the Old Combination Room, Trinity, studying the seams of a brown sport jacket" (KCC). In spite of Hsiao's unenthusiastic response, the two men did embark on more serious literary discussions.

Hsiao points out in his biography that whenever he wrote an essay on Forster, he always forwarded a copy to Forster himself for comment. On *Howards End*, Hsiao suggests from his self-confessed oriental perspective of the "social function of literature and . . . the exchange of feelings between author and reader" (Kinkley, 1990: 101), that its theme "is an attempted reconcili-ation - or at least compromise - between upper-class intellectuals and the lower-class working people" (Kinkley, 1990: 115). Forster replies in his letter no. 29, dated 9 February 1943, defending his idea of connecting the seen (the Wilcoxes) and the unseen (the Schlegels) by arguing: "There WAS intended to be a Wilcox-Schlegel synthesis at the close, and it was not impossible, in 1910, to locate such a synthesis in the country which was then emotionally (and it seems economically) distinct from the town" (KCC). Nonetheless, Forster does agree on one point, admitting: "But you are quite right in finding the synthesis unsatisfactory, and I only wish that the Something Else [tragedy, as Hsiao explains in his editorial note] for which you look was there" (KCC).

The most intriguing feature of the correspondence between Forster and Hsiao is their repeated discussions of Forster's novel, *Maurice*. Some of their discussions touch upon issues that Forster

had never discussed before with his other British friends and critics. Hsiao recalls his reading of *Maurice* as follows: “He [Forster] let me read his novel about homosexuality, *Maurice*, which was locked in a safe and not to be published until a hundred years later” (Kinkley, 1990: 117). Nothing else about *Maurice* is commented on by Hsiao in his *Traveller*. However, two letters in the correspondence between Forster and Hsiao contain hitherto unpublished records regarding Forster’s suppressed novel. The first letter is written by Forster on 1 May 1943, obviously as a response to an earlier critical comment on *Maurice* by Hsiao. The other one is Hsiao’s reply on 6 May to Forster’s letter of 1 May. The contents of both letters shed some intriguing light on our understanding of the evolution of, and particularly Forster’s own views on, *Maurice*. It is, however, necessary to widen our investigation to cover some earlier letters from Forster to Hsiao.

During the 57 or so years of *Maurice*’s underground life, Forster himself showed the book to a few close friends. Despite the fact that Forster and Hsiao had just known each other for just over a year, it appears that some time at the end of 1942 and at the beginning of 1943 during Hsiao’s residence at King’s College, one way or another, he must have learned of the existence of Forster’s *Maurice*. In a letter from West Hackhurst, dated 9 January 1943, and written as a reply to possibly an earlier request from Hsiao, Forster generously offers his *Maurice* to Hsiao to read. Forster says: “As for my unpublished novel, you are welcome to read it whenever you like. It is <almost> \ALMOST/ publishable, but not quite. There is a Ms down here if you would care for it at any time” (KCC). Another letter, dated 10 March 1943, however reveals that Forster is writing to suggest a meeting for Hsiao to collect a typescript of *Maurice* from West Hackhurst. Forster suggests:

Could you fix to come on here from the Shiffolds for a night on Monday March 29th. . . . On the Tuesday, after lunch, I have to visit the S. L. Unit, and you could go to town--<enjoying> \carrying/ with you the typescript of

MAURICE.

My mother has been quite ill, but is much better now
and very anxious that you should come (KCC).

As the proposed date for the meeting approached, Forster wrote again on 25 March: "So looking forward to Monday we hope you will be able to come over to lunch by a morning bus. I shant [sic] have to go to the S. L. Unit on Tuesday and perhaps we shall be able to go to London together" (KCC). Although there is no external evidence to suggest that Hsiao did collect the typescript of *Maurice* on 29 March, and although the passing remark in Hsiao's autobiography does not suggest any definite date or location, it is safe to assume that he acquired the typescript of *Maurice* on that occasion. Over a fortnight later, Forster writes to Hsiao again, on 17 April 1943, and includes a postscript which reads: "Shall be interested when we meet what you think of *Maurice*" (KCC). In the same postscript, Forster goes on to express his views on *Maurice*: "It seems to me in retrospect very English, and there is no harm in that, but for the moment I am tired of what is very English" (KCC). Hsiao must have replied to tell Forster what he thought of the novel; it is unfortunate that this letter does not survive. In Forster's letter of 1 May, he writes to thank Hsiao for his "long letter," now missing, which must have been written between 17 April and 1 May as his initial response to *Maurice*. Forster starts off with his concern with the practical problems of showing *Maurice* to the public. Despite his satisfaction with the artistry of the novel and his unaltered wish to publish it at a more suitable time, Forster could also envisage an enormous fuss upon the novel's publication. The consequence would have proved to be too devastating to those people closest to Forster. Readers should take into consideration that only a few letters before, Forster is recording the rapid deterioration of his mother's health (Alice Forster died two years later on 11 March 1945). In addition, Forster's companion, Bob Buckingham, was still serving in the Police Force (which had a long homophobic tradition). Besides, in 1943, Buckingham was also a husband and a father of a young son

of ten. Forster, always protective of his friends, naturally thought the time unsuitable for *Maurice's* publication.

Although Hsiao's long letter has not been preserved, we can get some ideas, by studying Forster's reply of 1 May, about what Hsiao might have commented on *Maurice*. As regards his response to Hsiao's remarks, Forster picks up three major points and says:

Meanwhile, note (i) as you already have, <there> \that/ there is emotional kinship with the LONGEST JOURNEY the L. J. is a more poetic work and is less successful one. (ii) that MAURICE works out in a particular direction the thesis of the importance of personal relationships generally laid down in *Howards End*. (iii) that having got this theme generally [and] particularly off my chest, I was, I think, set free to do the broader and less personal canvas of A PASSAGE TO INDIA (KCC).

This passage reveals Forster's own expectations for *Maurice*. Forster wants to achieve a synthesis of two early novels, *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*. He hoped to write *Maurice* in such a way that it would also convey his plea for greater tolerance of difference in a morally stifling society, as suggested in *Howards End*. This synthesis should not be achieved at the expense of the poetic quality that is prevalent in *The Longest Journey*. Forster goes on to evaluate what has been achieved in *Maurice*, analysing the book as follows:

Trying to judge the work, I am fairly well satisfied with Part I, 2 and most of 3 but rather doubtful about Scudder. I could have created him better when I was older; his nobility develops rather too fast. His two unprintable chapters are all right though <are> \and/ have the right amount of sensuousness--ver <different> difficult not to put in too much of this or too little--and the blackmailing chapter, which took a lot of rewriting, satisfies me too--when we meet I'll show you a critical letter <from> Lytton Stre<t>chy [sic] wrote me about the book. Very intelligent. (KCC)

Philip Gardner has painstakingly researched the evolution of

Forster's *Maurice* (Kerz & Martin, 1982: 204-223). He utilises internal and external sources to identify various places where structural and textual alterations have occurred. Gardner suggests that the most significant changes took place in 1914, 1932 and 1959, when *Maurice* reached its final form. Forster's remarks regarding textual changes and the reworking of Scudder in parts three and four substantiate Gardner's claim. Furthermore, in the foregoing passage, Forster specifies where these chapters are. What Forster means by "His [Scudder's] unprintable two chapters" should be Chapter XXXVIII (leading chapter of Part IV) and Chapter XLIV respectively. The former concerns Scudder's climbing up, and slipping into, Maurice's bedroom at Penge to spend a night with him. The latter takes the reader to a London hotel where Maurice and Scudder spend a second night together after the "British Museum" chapter. This chapter, which depicts the crisis of a potential disintegration of the relationship between Maurice and Scudder at the British Museum, is what Forster describes as the "blackmailing chapter." Forster's letter to Hsiao seems to suggest also that, by May 1943, Forster was sufficiently satisfied with the major alterations to *Maurice*.

The immediate mentioning of Strachey's criticism on *Maurice*, however, further testifies that amendments had been made to comply with Strachey's criticism. As far as Hsiao's own opinions are concerned, they seem to agree with Forster's. Hsiao points out the similarity of emotional void in the respective lives of Rickie and Maurice, remarking in "The Important" section of his letter, dated 6 May 1943: "I did think of Rickie in reading *Maurice*, that frustration & loneliness" (KCC). Interestingly, despite the nearly universal dissatisfaction with the novel,¹¹ Hsiao finds one particularly positive feature in *Maurice*. Hsiao rather regards

¹¹ Amongst those who doubted *Maurice*'s artistic merit upon its publication, Cynthia Ozick's comments were most scathing and relentless. In her review of *Maurice*, "Forster as Homosexual," published in *Commentary*, October 1971, Ozick charges: "*Maurice* is not merely an idyll, not merely a fantasy, not merely a parable. It is a classical (though flawed and failed) fairy tale in which the hero is stuck with an ineradicable disability" (82).

Scudder as a more successful creation than Stephen Wonham in *The Longest Journey*. Hsiao points out: “Scudder seems to me more round & convincing than the half-brother of Rickie” (KCC).

In the same letter, Forster shifts his attention to the position of his own story of homosexual love in relation to similar works by writers in Britain and other nations. Forster draws comparisons between his own ideas about homoerotic writing and the existing ones of his contemporaries at home and abroad. In a new paragraph, Forster expresses his interest in hearing Hsiao’s opinions, asking: “[W]hether there is anything parallell [sic] in Chinese Literature?” (KCC) This is where the two men’s ideas depart. One can almost imagine the solid ground, “personal relations”—upon which friendship is built, begins to crack. In his reply of 6 May, Hsiao informs Forster by saying:

There is no law in China forbidding this more severely than seduction. In Shanghai & Tientsin, there are even such Brothels, who are know as “rabbits”. . . . One of the Emperors of ours was known to be fond of “plucking the flowers in the back garden.” In the Imperial court, there used to be dramatic repertories. The boys playing feminine parts used to be seduced either by their own co-actors or by men in the Forbidden City (KCC).

Hsiao goes on to say: “I know one novel (16th [this could be a slip of “19th”] cent?)¹² which has everything naughty, including between men & men” (KCC). But, fundamentally, Hsiao is rather dubious about homosexuality *per se*, suggesting: “1). < our > there is no philosophical background glorifying it [in China] as in the West, 2). If it happens, it is merely physical & it is more owing to circumstance than preference” (KCC). When researching the present paper, the author wrote to ask Hsiao about his initial reaction towards *Maurice*. Hsiao, mentioning the “blackmail scene” three times, replied: “I told him [Forster] the blackmail

¹² Answering one of the questions that the author asks him, Hsiao replies: “Forster did ask me whether homosexuality exist in China & I told him several 19th[-century] novels deal with it, but often as he-prostitute” (1998).

scene in *Maurice* [sic] should serve as a lesson to all homosexuals, hence, the novel is beautiful,” “I seem to have told him that the novel (especially the blackmail scene) discourages homosexuality. Hence, I regarded it as healthy,” and “I was shocked by the blackmail scene” (1998).

Hsiao's response to the homosexual element in Forster's *Maurice* demonstrates unequivocally that there is significant difference between the two men's views on male same-sex love. Forster and Hsiao differ from each other at least in two crucial points. Firstly, the difference between their respective understandings of male homosexuality, and secondly, their perceptions of the novel, *Maurice*. Hsiao's Chinese way of perceiving male homosexuality as “merely physical” and a product more of “circumstance than preference” is profoundly different from Forster's own ideal of homosexual union, particularly at the time of writing *Maurice*. Forster's ideas about male homosexuality are essentially inspired by asexual Platonic love, as suggested by Maurice's acceptance of *Symposium* (embodied by Clive Durham), and later influenced by Edward Carpenter's partnership with his working man lover, George Merrill (who inspired the creation of Alec Scudder). When composing *Maurice*, Forster was resolute that sexual desire *must* be included. Sex in *Maurice* is more than just part of the plot. It signifies Forster's defiant break from both the classical ideal and Christian teachings of “approved” and “appropriate” male relationships. This theme of moral and sexual liberation contrasts sharply with Hsiao's asexual and somewhat moralist views. It is clear that there is a considerable gap between Hsiao's perception of *Maurice* as a moral teaching against homosexuality and Forster's own idea of celebrating the possibility of homosexual union. However, there is no other record to document Forster's response to Hsiao's opinions on homosexuality. Perhaps Forster never commented on Hsiao's remarks, and it is unlikely that Hsiao's comments contributed to any significant plot change during Forster's revision of *Maurice*. By 1943, the novel had reached its final form - ending with the

union between Maurice and Scudder, based on mutual affection and sacrifice.

But, of course, their different opinions of homosexuality are not really of central importance in the conversations between Forster and Hisao. Forster is more concerned with the uniqueness of his approach to, and his treatment of, *Maurice*. Firstly, Forster points out: "I don't know \of/ anything in English, and rather think so solid and out of door an attempt., must be unique" (KCC). Forster's self-assurance is not entirely groundless. *Maurice* differs from its Victorian predecessors such as, supposedly, Oscar Wilde's *Teleny*, and from the age of his contemporaries, such as E. F. Benson's *The Inheritor*, in at least three ways. Firstly, Forster shifts his attention from a flamboyant aristocrat to a young man from suburbia. Secondly, Forster dislodges his protagonist from his bourgeois norms and comfort to a less predictable but more vibrant lifestyle of a working environment. Finally, and most importantly, *Maurice* differentiates itself from other fiction by the way the book concludes. Unlike other novels of a similar subject matter, which end either with tragic death or disintegration of some sort, *Maurice* depicts an eventual union between two men. This ending is new, but it received fierce criticism (see note 11). The happy ending proved to be too "new" and controversial for the critics. Their responses showed that conventional ways of evaluating fiction were no longer adequate when applied to a "new" novel such as *Maurice*. In his letter to Hsiao, Forster is adamant about the aestheticism of suburban normality in *Maurice*.

As you say, one characteristic of MAURICE is his maturity. And another is his liking for happiness and his dislike for self-pity. If I had had to end the book sadly or tragically [sic] for him, I should not have thought it worth writing. --We have in England (as in France) good studies of immaturity, some tiresome self-pitying, some tiresome proclamations of the Cause, and some pornography which, like most pornography, fail to be graphic (KCC).

Without identifying the particular novels that he is referring to,

Forster leaves very little for us to make out from the foregoing comment. Yet one can sense Forster's felt urgency to reconfigure what he considers the unhealthy portrait of homosexual life in fiction. *Maurice* sets out to refashion this insufficiently understood and much underrated form of literary writing. Forster sums up by insisting: "This sturdy suburb search for an *unpopular normal* is probably new" (KCC). In the context of literary criticism, *Maurice's* publication also initiated a belated change in evaluating literature that deals with homoerotic desire, paving the way for the eventual acceptance and proliferation of gay/queer studies as a respectable academic subject.

In Hsiao's letter of 6 May 1943, at a time when the Chinese Cultural Revolution could in no way be foretold, he remarks: "There is no hurry about Maurice [sic] as far as I am concerned, for 1). I still hope it will be published in my life time [sic] & 2). My study of you is a lifelong task, not confined to my residence here. So, I shall have plenty to do in the meantime" (KCC). *Maurice* was finally brought into light in 1971, not after one hundred years from 1943 as Hsiao had joked it would be in 1943. The story of the literary friendship between Forster and Hsiao, however, remained largely untold.

Hsiao Ch'ien has remarked in his *Traveller without a Map* that his "once intimate literary friendship" with Forster ended tragically. This tragic ending is twofold. Firstly, large amounts of Hsiao's personal studies of, and correspondence with, Forster are forever irretrievable. Secondly, their friendship was not renewed before Forster's death in 1970. Thanks to the publication of Hsiao Ch'ien's autobiographies, both the original texts in Chinese and the English translations, and the preserved correspondence in manuscripts between Forster and Hsiao, the story of the literary friendship between Forster and Hsiao can be documented. Mary Lago, in her *Calendar of the Letters of E. M. Forster* (1985), rightly reminds scholars of Forster that "one person's minor detail to be omitted may be another's crucial clue" (ix). Bearing Lago's remark in mind, one hopes Hsiao Ch'ien's biographies and the

correspondence between Forster and Hsiao will provide information for scholars to arrive at a fuller understanding of the two men's respective works and lives.

Although Forster never set foot in China, nor publicly campaigned on behalf of the Chinese during China's wars against foreign powers between the end of the 19th century and the end of Second World War, Forster remained a loyal comrade of his wartime friend, Hsiao Ch'ien. Forster knew only too well that international brotherhood was unlikely to last in the face of conflicting ideologies amongst nations. The only possibility of connection that could be ultimately achieved was between two individuals who were free from circumstances and ideologies. This is an ideal difficult to realise and vulnerable to circumstances. The friendship between Forster and Hsiao demonstrates so. Tony Davies has suggested that *A Passage to India* illustrates profound scepticism, arguing that it exposes "the impotence of humanist decency in the face of racism, and its unhappy but inescapable complicity with the realities of imperial rule" (1997: 43). Forster cannot change British imperial rule over India. There almost always will be Fieldings and Azizes who are self-conscious about their circumstances, and such psychology will definitely create tension in any attempt to establish connections between peoples of these two nations. "Not yet" (1978: 312), the narrator says at the end of *A Passage to India*. In a post-Cold War era, people still ask the same question: "Why can't we be friends now?" Nevertheless, a consoling note on the courage and integrity required to form a cross-racial/cultural friendship is all one can find in the correspondence between Forster and Hsiao. It seems fitting to conclude this paper with Hsiao Ch'ien's editorial note to Forster's letter no. 22, dated 22 September 1942. Hsiao pays his personal tribute to Forster's friendship, and indeed, comradeship, saying:

A Passage to India [sic] had been behind my mind ever since we met. To Mr. Forster, China may be a land with a great deal of personal relationship left; to China, Mr. Forster would be an altogether different westerner, neither pompous

like the admirals, nor complascent [sic] like the diplomats,
nor nagging as the missionaries, nor patronising like the
connoisseurs [sic], but a sensitive, humane, understanding
co-man (KCC).

Appendix: Friendship Gazette

Vital records about the correspondence between E. M. Forster and Hsiao Ch'ien can be located in two primary sources. One is Mary Lago's 1985 publication of *Calendar of the Letters of E. M. Forster*. In the section, "To HSIAO CH'IEN," Lago lists from the *Friendship Gazette* some 38 letters, 10 postcards and two telegrams, 50 items in total, from Forster to Hsiao. The other is the catalogue of Forster papers, listing correspondence and diaries, at the Modern Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge. Under the heading "Hsiao Chien," the archival description of its contents reads: "2 A[utograph]L[etters]S[igned] to EMF. 1943 / T [ypewritten]S[igned] transcripts of 47 letters from EMF and A. C. Forster, with editorial comments by Hsiao Chien, given title by him '[Friendship Gazette] [sic] vol. 1-1V'. 1941-44" (KCC). We shall now examine the entire corpus of the "Hsiao Chien" section of Forster papers.

Two large, white paper pockets of A4 size, opening on the wider sides, contain correspondence between E. M. Forster and Hsiao Ch'ien, in this group of Forster papers. The first pocket contains a separate cream colour paper folder, in which Hsiao Ch'ien's typewritten transcription of Forster's letters and other epistolary material are kept. On the envelope itself, two archival notes, apparently written by different archivists, give brief descriptions of the contents of "Friendship Gazette" Volume I to Volume III, 1941-43, and Volume IV, 1944, respectively. Volume I to Volume III are recorded to include Hsiao's "letters from EMForster [28 letters & 10 postcards & 1 telegram] and ALForster [1 letter], from June 1941 to July 1943." Compared with the previous three volumes, Volume IV is described as "similar, with 8 letters from EMF, Sept[.] 1943 - Feb[.] 1944" (KCC).

Amongst all the recipients of Forster's letters, Hsiao Ch'ien appears to be the only person who systematically collects and annotates his letters from Forster. The device that Hsiao seems to

have employed for editing is to initially classify his material by numbering each individual item of the entire correspondence. Latin letters "A" and "B" are added to the numbers when duplicates of the same items appear. These are not many, and they do not cause any confusion. The entire contents are then grouped into four volumes in all in chronological order. Volume I contains seven letters and three postcards. The first item is a letter that Forster sent to Hsiao Ch'ien on 9 June 1941. The last one is a letter dated 31 December 1941. Volume II contains 12 letters, six postcards and two telegrams from Forster and one letter from Forster's mother. Volume II of "Friendship Gazette" begins with letter no. 11, dated 11 January 1942, and it ends with letter no. 26A, dated 26 December 1942. As far as Volume III is concerned, it seems that Hsiao intended to divide Volume III into two further parts, with Part I beginning from letter no. 27, dated 9 January 1943. After Hsiao's typewritten entry for letter no. 38, dated 19 July 1943, he inserts an editorial note at the bottom of that leaf to indicate: "\PART II/ VOLUME <FOUR> \THREE/ WILL BE ISSUED SOON AFTER NEW YEAR DAY 1944" (KCC). One assumes that Hsiao had intended to reproduce, after the New Year 1944, letters that he was expecting to receive from Forster between 19 July and 31 December 1943 for Part II in Volume III. But it turns out that there is never a Part II for Volume III. Hsiao appears to have abandoned his initial plan and continued his collection from Volume IV. Hsiao received only eight more letters from Forster between 19 September 1943 and 29 February 1944, all of which are collected into Volume IV of "Friendship Gazette." The title page of Volume IV reads: "'Friendship Gazette' / VOL. IV / SEPTEMBER 1943 TO MAY 1944" (KCC). The title shows that initially Hsiao was going to close this volume some time in May when he was expecting to complete his residence at King's College. This fact is indicated by Hsiao's editorial note under the title: "Still Printed & Published in D2, King's College, CAMBRIDGE" (KCC). Hsiao's additional note reveals that his editorial office of *Friendship Gazette* was to be relocated to 8

Arkwright Road in London on the 11th June 1944 “[p]robably until the conclusion of the 3rd front in Asia when the Editor expects to leave for his Peking” (KCC). But it appears that Hsiao did not have a chance to reach his scheduled date for the completion of Volume IV. The last entry in Volume IV is letter no. 46, dated 29 Feb. 1944.

As far as the presentation of the four volumes is concerned, there does not appear to be a uniform editorial methodology. There is a clear distinction between the physical appearance of the first three volumes and that of the last one. In order to save space, and one would expect, paper, all Forster’s letters appearing in the first three volumes of *Friendship Gazette* are by no means typed separately onto sheets of paper individually. Neither does each volume start afresh from a new leaf. Instead, Hsiao has type-transcribed those letters in single space continuously one after another, frequently though leaving one space between the individual items. Each item of the entire reproduction in the first three volumes is given the date of its composition. (One has to bear in mind that sometimes Forster put his letters aside before he finished composing, then at some time later he would again pick up where he had left off.) The address of the sender is, however, not included. But it is not difficult to work out by reading their contents from where the individual items could have been sent. One can assume that most of them were written from either the Reform Club, the Union Club, Chiswick or West Hackhurst. Volume IV of *Friendship Gazette*, however, has an entirely neater appearance. Unlike those in Volume I, II, and III, all the eight letters in Volume IV are type-transcribed in double space. Each letter begins from a fresh leaf. Most of them give not only the dates when the letters were written, they also reveal the sender’s address by the initials, “W[est]H[ackhurst]” (KCC).

The second pocket is the same sort of white envelope as the first one that is used to contain *Friendship Gazette*. This pocket contains the manuscript of the two hand-written letters from Hsiao to Forster. “7 Sheets” is written with a fountain pen in black

in the top-right-hand corner of the envelope. Just above the top of the bottom half of the container is the archivist's note which begins with the initials, "EMF," written and circled with what looks like the same fountain pen and ink. The second line reads: "Hsiao Chien III." The final line reads: "2 A[utograph]S[igned]L[etters] from Hsiao Chi'en to EMF, May & November 1943." Near the bottom-left-hand corner is Hsiao's full name written in capital letters with what looks like a ball-point pen or a roller-ball pen in blue.

The first of the two letters appears to be written on 6 May 1943. The letter itself is written with a fountain pen in blue that, as it looks, has gone pale. The letter is written both on the recto and verso with the writer's own page numbering starting from page two on the verso of the first leaf. There are ten pages altogether, although Hsiao's own page numbers run to nine only, on five leaves. The size of the page is 4.5" x 6.9". The material of the paper per se is slightly coarse, and the colour of the paper is pale cream. The letter was originally folded in half. The original envelope appears to have gone missing.

The second letter is dated 25 November 1943. Unlike the first one in size, it appears to be slightly larger. The material of the paper is similar. The colour is also similar to that of the first letter. There appears to be a penciled heading "HSIAO CH'IEN" at the top of the first leaf. In the top-right-hand corner, there is this new numbering to mark the first leaf of this letter as sheet six as a continuation from the final sheet of the first letter. Again, the letter is written double-sided with a fountain pen in the blue that appears to look darker than the blue ink of the first letter. This second letter is folded half first before it is folded again from both sides towards the centre. The recipient's name and address, "Mr. E. M. Forster / West Hackhurst / Abinger Hammer / Dorking, Surrey," are shown in the top-right-hand part of the verso of the final leaf.

As a result of this archival examination, it becomes clear that Lago's record in *Calendar of the Letters of E. M. Forster* corresponds with Hsiao's own reproduction of Forster's letters in

Friendship Gazette. Additionally, there are the letter that Alice Forster wrote to Hsiao and Hsiao's two letters to Forster, which Lago's *Calendar* does not document. By collating Hsiao's own entries and various other sources of records, one arrives at a precise figure of the total contents in this group—"Hsiao Ch'ien"—of Forster papers. In Hsiao's *Friendship Gazette* alone, there are 51 items altogether, including 38 letters (seven in Volume I, 12 in Volume II, 11 in Volume III, and eight in Volume IV), ten postcards (three in Volume I, six in Volume II, and one in Volume III), and two telegrams (both in Volume II) from Forster, and one letter from Alice Clara Forster. In addition, there are two manuscript letters from Hsiao to Forster. The numbers given on the envelope of *Friendship Gazette* and on the catalogue of Forster's correspondence and diaries in Forster's papers need updating.

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來自中國的訊息： 佛斯特和蕭乾之間友誼及書信文獻考據

連文山

摘 要

福斯特(E. M. Forster, 1879-1970)和蕭乾(1911-1999)的友誼可以追溯到一九四一年，他們兩位在假於英國倫敦舉行的泰戈爾紀念會上初次見面。之後福斯特和蕭乾的友情迅速發展，而兩個人也持續密切的書信來往。直到一九四九年當蕭乾要離開香港回到中國上海的前夕，才決定斷絕和包括福斯特在內的西方朋友之間的聯絡。自從蕭乾於一九四四年離開英國之後，他們兩個人便一直沒有再碰過面。

這篇論文對福斯特和蕭乾在一九四一和一九四四年之間的通信做一個文獻研究。除此之外，論文也為福斯特和蕭乾之間的文藝友誼提出一份嚴謹的學術記錄。在探討他們的友誼性質和談話內容時，作者詳細研讀了收藏於蕭乾編撰的《友誼通報》之內福斯特的信箋和兩封由蕭乾寄給福斯特的親筆原稿信。此外，作者也參考了蕭乾的自傳和論文、福斯特的傳記、小說及非小說作品，及其他作家的著作。

這篇論文中最引人注意的一點是福斯特和蕭乾之間的文藝談話，特別是有關於福斯特的小說《墨利斯》。該書公開探討同性戀這個禁忌題材。顯然地，他們兩位對男性同性愛的道德意識形態和態度大不相同。

關鍵詞：佛斯特、蕭乾、二十世紀英國文學、傳記