



## ELEMENT OF LOVE: E. M. FORSTER'S *HOWARDS END*

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**Abstract:** *Howards End* focuses on the need of connection. It presents the theme of familial connections, migration, love, death and identity. Love plays an important role in this novel. Forster weaves the theme of the love in its entire association, which range from simple man-woman relation to healthy connection between people and communities. In *Howards End*, also Forster's message of love is explicit, persistent and at times positive. Simply this theme suggests the key words "Only Connect."

**Key words:** *Love, Relationship, Symbol, Harmony.*

*Howards End* is a significant novel written by E.M. Forster. It was published in 1910. The novel focuses on the need of connection. It presents the theme of familial connections, migration, love, death and identity. The brilliant themes of the novel make it relevant even in the 21st Century.

One of the recurrent themes in Forster's fiction is love. Forster weaves the theme of the love in its entire association, which range from simple man-woman relation to healthy connection between people and communities. In *Howards End*, also Forster's message of love is explicit, persistent and at times positive. Simply this theme suggests the key words "Only Connect." Obviously, *Howards End* is all about love and of kinds of love: love between sister, love between husbands and wives, love for home, love for one's country, extramarital love and love for anything to everything. Forster believes in love as a unifying power, which connects the two opposing characters in his novel. Love as a universal archetypal symbol unites the opposites. It is like a bridge between the outer and inner words. Without love, there is no kind of connection. Making a connection depends greatly upon love between two persons.

Love between Margaret and Henry Wilcox is a significant part of the novel. Henry is introduced Margaret thorough the letters of Helen to her from *Howards End*. Helen has praised Henry, though he

has spoken much against woman. Margaret first time Henry meets in Germany and has developed their relations into friendship. They are living in same locality, hence, the contact between them became recurrent. Initially, Margaret respects Henry for his property and class. Henry is married so love is beyond the imagination of Margaret and Henry. Meanwhile, Mrs. Wilcox dies and Forster generates an opportunity to bring these two important characters in the novel. Brander remarks, "Meanwhile, Forster still has the task of bringing Margaret and Henry Wilcox together, and he uses this scene to do it." Forster has created the scene of the conversation between Bast and Margaret, Henry is disturbed and frenzied to propose her. He puts forward the proposal of marriage and gets response. Though Margaret does not love Henry, she conveys her acceptance of proposal. She wants to connect the Schlegel's to the Wilcoxes.

The negotiation never lasts long but it converts in to love. Margaret prefers him because he has the patronizing tone and protective attitude which he exercises in his dealing with women. Finding these characteristics fatherly and charming, Margaret is flattered with the 'real man.'

Margaret meditates honestly and answers negatively when Helen asks her whether she really loves Henry. Though, she is not ready to accept him, she is confident of when she accepts Henry's

proposal. Margaret's refusal exemplifies that Henry's character is not excellent which forces Margaret to postpone her acceptance. She thinks that she knows her future husband's limitations and that she can make him a better man than he is. When Henry gets her first kiss, she remains uneasy and she thinks about Henry that. "Mature as he was, she might yet be able to help him to the building of the rainbow bridge that should connect us with the passion." (HE 135) Further, Margaret settles on to change his personality as she insists to coax the person who is just ideal.

Margaret finds love as a medium of harmony. Consequently, her tendency to plunge her personality in the interest of harmony is visible during the courtship, as when she acts as if to agree with Henry's opinion which suppresses her own ideas, and pretends surprise at his proposal of marriage. Even after their engagement and marriage. She continues to play role of submissive. As a true beloved and wife Margaret obeys the expectations of her husband. Moreover, she tries to give him the kind of woman that he desired. Henry appreciates having a wife who reads poetry and concerns herself with social issues. Thus, Margaret moulds herself as submissive wife and beloved for the love of family.

The ending of the novel also projects the theme of love. Margaret uses her intelligence to reconstruct a family at Howard End. This reconstruction initiated by Margaret symbolizes a new healthy world, made possible by forgiveness. Throughout the novel Margaret emerges Forster's agent of ideal love who continues to prove that without love there is no true connection. In her relation with Mr. Wilcox, she tries to make him accept all the opposing parts of personality through genuine love. Her love for Wilcox is an attempt for keeping company and connection. She also finds balance between the

inner and outer life through her love. Thus, Forster articulates through life and relationship of Margaret that love is not only a means to connect to other minds by overlooking the faults of the past but also a spiritual means of connecting one's inner and outer lives. In the words of *Nicola Beauman* "One of the most remarkable aspects of *Howards End* is its modernity. This is not just modernity of tone of voice, as in the Clough influenced *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, but Modernity of theme" (Beauman 221). Forster uses symbol to show the progress due to machine. The pattern of the novel is brilliantly expressed. The story is full of symbolic events. The use of symbol decorates the novel and adds the new dimensions of the story. The novel symbolises very realistically the ancestral property that passes from generation to generation. The *Howards End* is not merely a house but a vivid symbol also. The structure of the novel is well designed. The characters are both in the individual and types.

Moreover, Leonel Trilling remarks that "Howards End is undoubtedly Forster's masterpiece" (Trilling 99). Without doubt, Forster uses symbols in this novel very graphically.

#### Summary:

In short, we can say that Forster focuses the theme of love in this novel very brilliantly. By blurring the boundaries between, genders, social classes, cultures and the inner and outer spaces, he tries to amplify the message that human beings have to connect to their own inner lives in order to find lasting relations in the society. He explores the important themes in the novel such as love, gender, familial linkages, capital accumulation, placement and migration to support the basic message of the novel- 'Only Connect.' His art of expression is vividly reflected in this novel. Symbols play a significant role to show the theme of love here very graphically.

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