

Love and Death in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*

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Abstract. This study explores E. M. Forster's use of the universal archetypes of Love and Death in his novel, *Howards End*. Although these archetypes are opposing in their essence, they are inseparable, and greatly help the characters unify their inner and outer parts of their personalities and lives. The study also considers the major role of these archetypes in explaining Forster's ideals which are harmony, peace, connection and friendship among all people.

Keywords: Love, Death, Life, Archetype, Connection.

1. Introduction

In *Howards End*, Forster manipulates the archetypes of love and death, which are considered as the universal archetypes in realm of psychology and literature. The life begins in the womb of the mother and ends by returning to earth that stands for the maternal womb of nature. The ultimate goal of love and making love is to give birth to a child. So, love and birth are interlinked to each other. In other words, life comes from love, and there is no love if the life does not exist. Just opposite of love and life is death. Death is unknown and mysterious. It deals much more with the unconscious rather than the conscious. Thus, it is frightening and horrible to individuals. Man can overcome this fear of death through love. Love and death are two opposite poles of human life.

2. Love

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 worlds. Without love, there is no kind of connection. Making a connection depends greatly upon love between two persons. Margaret is Forster's agent in order to represent this belief. Before her marriage, her sister, Helen, asks her whether she loves Mr. Wilcox, and Margaret answers honestly, "no, but I will" (Forster, 1984: 181). But, after marriage, traces of love are obvious in all Margaret's deeds:

Margaret greeted her lord with peculiar tenderness on the morrow. Mature as he was, she might yet be able to help him to the building of the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion. Without it we are meaningless fragments, half monks, half beasts, unconnected arches that have never joined into a man. With it love is born, and alights on the highest curve, glowing against the gray, sober against the fire (Forster, 1984: 194).

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She tries to make Mr. Wilcox accept all the opposing parts of his personality. Her love for Mr. Wilcox is an effort for keeping connection. Margaret makes a balance between the inner and the outer life through her love. Her sense of proportion creates her relationship with Mr. Wilcox. Through Margaret's attitude, Forster states his motto:

She need trouble him with no gift of her own. She would only point out the salvation that was latent in his soul, and in the soul of every man. Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its highest. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die (Forster, 1984: 195).

It is crucial for a person to connect the persona and the shadow in close harmony in order to become a whole. Forster sees life steadily and as a whole through connection, "Connect — connect without bitterness until all men are brothers" (Forster, 1984: 281). Forster's ultimate hope is to create brotherhood among all men. Margaret tries to make a connection between the outer and inner worlds through love. When Mr. Wilcox asks her to be his wife:

An immense joy came over her. It was indescribable. It had nothing to do with humanity, and most resembled the all pervading happiness of fine weather. Fine weather is due to the sun, but Margaret could think of no central radiance here. She stood in his drawing-room happy, and longing to give happiness. On leaving him she realized that the central radiance had been love (Forster, 1984: 172).

This "radiance" originates from the source of Margaret's psychic energy: Love. Her happiness originates from her love. Here, Margaret's libido manifests itself as a desiring and willing source. It creates the god-image by the use of the archetypal patterns. Beer says, "Her state of inward happiness and reconciliation is like a stream, but it owes its existence to a 'central radiance' in her relationship with Henry which follows Forster's familiar mythological pattern by relating the god of love to the sun god" (1962: 124). Margaret feels the sun god within herself. Like the sun god, the god of love shines within her. Seneca says, "God is near you, he is with you, he is within you," (quoted in Jung, 1956: 86). In the First Epistle of John, it is written "he who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (quoted in Jung, 1956: 86), and also, "if we love one another, God abides in us" (quoted in Jung, 1956: 86).

Margaret's quest into the unknown can be interpreted as a search for the meaning of life. Her quest for order and meaning leads her to marriage with Henry Wilcox. Her relationships and marriage with Mr. Wilcox seem very strange since they have completely opposing characters. In Mr. Wilcox and his inability to have contact with the inner life and with people, Margaret sees something hidden:

It was hard going in the roads of Mr. Wilcox's soul. From boyhood he had neglected them. 'I am not a fellow who bothers about my own inside.' Outwardly he was cheerful, reliable, and brave; but within, all had reverted to chaos, ruled, so far as it was ruled at all, by an incomplete asceticism (Forster, 1984: 194)

Margaret is aware of what she is doing, and whom she is marrying. She is in a need of connecting with the outer world she has never experienced. Love is the best way of connecting and reconciling the opposites.

At first, Helen fails to see this fact. According to George H. Thomson, "Helen's divided nature reveals itself in her confusion and error. But the division is apparent only in a sexual context. When she returns to Margaret's love and the strong associations of the past, intelligibility and joy triumph" (1967: 178). Helen achieves her wholeness through love, and she overcomes her past faults through connection. Margaret helps her to make this connection between her both inner and outer lives.

3. Death

The death of Mrs. Wilcox helps Margaret to understand the necessity to connect the inner and the outer life, "She saw a little more clearly than hitherto what a human being is, and to what he may aspire. Truer relationships gleamed. Perhaps the last word would be hope — hope even on this side of the grave" (Forster, 1984: 107). Mrs. Wilcox's death has a great effect on Margaret's feelings and thoughts. The idea of death changes her outlook toward the world and life. It strengthens her connections with life and people. Mrs. Wilcox's message is the hope of a connection between the outer and the inner life "on this side of the grave" (Forster, 1984: 107). Margaret receives the same message when she first sees Howards End and its wychelm tree. The union of the house and the tree in the garden of Howards End tells her that what she needs is, "hope on this side of the grave" (Forster, 1984: 215). Power of death increases the sense of connecting the outer and the inner life "on this side of the grave" (Forster, 1984: 215) in her. The idea of death answers to the question of the value of life, and joins one to life. When man confronts the idea of death, he sees the emptiness of his ambitions. It leads man to reinforce his relationships with the people around him. It increases his sense of love and connection.

While discussing this paradox with Leonard Bast, Helen states:

I love death — not morbidly, but because He explains. He shows me the emptiness of money. Death and Money are the eternal foes. Not Death and Life. Never mind what lies behind Death, Mr. Bast, but be sure that the poet and the musician and the tramp will be happier in it than the man who has never learned to say 'I am I' (Forster, 1984: 249).

Her mind is constantly preoccupied with the ability to say "I". The self archetype which unites the personality attains a new manifestation through the idea of death. In order to achieve self realization, man needs to cooperate with other people. This cooperation depends largely upon the idea of death. A person who cannot say "I", and does not know his unconscious self, cannot make a good connection with other people. In order to improve his relationships and feel more harmony with himself and people, the saving power of death is essential for man. Helen insists on this point:

Death destroys a man; the idea of Death saves him. Behind the coffins and the skeletons that stay the vulgar mind lies something so immense that all that is great in us responds to it. Men of the world may recoil from the charnel-house that they will one day enter, but Love knows better. Death is his foe, but his peer, and in their age-long struggle the thews of Love have been strengthened, and his vision cleared, until there is no one who can stand against him (Forster, 1984: 250).

Although Margaret acts as an agent who keeps the connection between different parts and characters in the novel, we cannot ignore the role of death in her life. The death of two major characters has a great influence on Margaret and can be considered as a warning for her. This warning appears firstly from the death of Mrs. Wilcox and secondly from the death of Leonard Bast. The saving power of death functions to enhance life by making human beings aware of the spirituality as well as the materialism. It promises "hope this side of the grave" (Forster, 1984: 345). Leonard's death is especially very important in strengthening Margaret's thoughts and beliefs:

Here Leonard lay dead in the garden, from natural causes; yet life was a deep, deep river, death a blue sky, life was a house, death a wisp of hay, a flower, a tower, life and death were anything and everything, except this ordered insanity, where the king takes the queen, and the ace the king. Ah, no; there was beauty and adventure behind, such as the man at her feet had yearned for; there was hope this side of the grave; there were truer relationships beyond the stars that fetter us now. As a prisoner looks up and sees stars beckoning, so she, from the turmoil and horror of those days, caught glimpses of the diviner wheels (Forster, 1984: 345).

The life of the other characters emerges from Leonard Bast's death. His death increases the value of life in other characters, and it includes life within itself. Human life is like a container which includes both life and death within itself. This container is the symbol of wholeness because in which we have the unification of both opposing universal archetypes of life and death.

4. Conclusion

Connection and friendship, which are the lifelong concerns of Forster, are the dominant themes of *Howards End*. He greatly believes that the archetypes, especially the universal archetypes of love and death, help the human being to unite with his own nature and to understand the other people. Harmony, peace, connection and friendship among all people are the sublime values which help mankind to find a meaning in life. As a consequence, we can regard *Howards End* as the story of modern man's quests in order to find his self, then his attempts to connect and appreciate the other people through understanding the real meaning of love and death.

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6. References

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