



LITERARY MUSIC IN THE WORKS OF E. M. FORSTER 'HOWARDS END'

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Abstract

E. M. Forster is famous novelist of English literature. He writes about realistic novel which compile with music. This paper is briefly introduction of music in the works of E. M. Forster's *Howards End*. Forster's novels reflect a broad vision of human experiences, which not only enriches the Edwardian literary tradition, but it also adds a significant milestone in the tradition of world literature. His literary creations, though they articulate the various socio-cultural problems, Forster is conscious about the equilibrium of the didacticism and the entertainment value. Forster began to write English fiction in the first decade of the 20th century, when the new dimensions of fiction was entering in the field of literature. It leans towards human and melodrama. Forster also deals with Fantasy and Prophecy which deal with the theme of the novel. These things from the thematic point of view are explored in the following novels which are highlighted in the research paper.

Keywords: E. M. Forster, Music, Symbolism, Humanity.

Introduction to E. M. Forster: Edward Morgan, the son of a talented architect, was born in London on New Year's Day (1st January) in 1879. He died on June 7, 1970, at Coventry, Warwickshire. His father passed away in October 1880 and his mother, Alice Clara, who was a daughter of a drawing master, moulded the personality of Edward and took all his responsibilities on her shoulder. Subsequently, Edward remained devoted to her mother and had taken to his aunt, Marianne Thornton, who helped Alice financially to shape her son's career. Moreover, the boy was a favourite nephew of the eighty-three-year-old Marianne Thornton and brought up in a family, which was dominated by women. Unfortunately, his great-aunt Marianne Thornton died and she left eight thousand pounds in trust for him. The income from this capital paid for his education and made his career as a writer possible. She left him a legacy that enabled him to attend Cambridge and travel afterwards. He enjoyed a happy and overprotected childhood in the company of his mother and grandmother. After the death of his grandmother, Forster and his mother became very close to each other. They moved to Rooksnest soon after his fourth birthday. It was a pleasant house near Stevenage in Hertfordshire, where Forster spent happy and secure childhood as well as composed long stories and developed a passion for instructing others which never left him. He was not sent to the school instead he was taught at home by visiting tutor. His mother was in no hurry to send him to school. However, when he was eleven, the question of his schooling could no longer be postponed, and he was sent to an elementary school at Eastbourne, where he was unhappy and homesick. In a letter written to his mother towards the end of the first term, he shows a remarkable capacity for self-analysis and self-expression:

I have never been like it before, but it is not at all nice. It is very much like despondency; I am afraid I shall miss the train in the morning, afraid you will not meet me, afraid I shall lose my tickets; these are instances of the kind of state of mind I am in . . . The worst of school is that you have nothing and nobody to love. (34)

He was a British novelist, essayist, and social and literary critic. In 1953 he was awarded the Order of Companions of Honour and in 1969 given Queen Elizabeth's Order of Merit.

Key Themes of Forster's Novels Five novels were written by Forster during his life. They have special characteristics which dominated all his novels; humanism, irreconcilability of class difference, sexuality and symbolism. The first key theme of Forster's work is humanism. His humanist attitude is expressed in the non-fictional essay *What I Believe*. His views as a humanist are at the heart of his work, which often depicts the pursuit of personal connections in spite of the restrictions of contemporary society. Edward was President of the Cambridge Humanists from 1959 until his death and a member of the Advisory Council of the British Humanist Association from 1963 until his death. The next second key theme of Forster's is the irreconcilability. Forster's two best-known works, *A Passage to India* and *Howards End*, explore the irreconcilability of class differences. *A Room with a View* also shows how questions of propriety and class can make connection difficult. The novel is his most widely read and accessible work, remaining popular long after its original publication. His posthumous novel *Maurice* explores the possibility of class reconciliation as one facet of a homosexual relationship.

Forster is noted for his use of symbolism as a technique in his novels, and he has been criticised (as by his friend Roger Fry) for his attachment to mysticism. One example of his symbolism is the wych elm tree in *Howards End*; the characters of Mrs Wilcox in that novel and Mrs Moore in *A Passage to India* have a mystical link with the past and a striking ability to connect with people from beyond their own circles.



Forster's Novels Forster had five novels published in his lifetime. Although Maurice appeared shortly after his death, it had been written nearly sixty years earlier. A seventh novel, *Arctic Summer*, was never finished. His first novel is *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905). Next, Forster published *The Longest Journey* (1907). Forster's third novel, *A Room with a View* (1908), is his lightest and most optimistic. His other novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View* can be seen collectively as Forster's Italian novels.

Howards End (1910) is an ambitious "condition-of-England" novel concerned with different groups within the Edwardian middle classes represented by the Schlegels (bohemian intellectuals), the Wilcoxes (thoughtless plutocrats) and the Basts (struggling lower-middle-class aspirants). It is frequently observed that characters in Forster's novels die suddenly. This is true of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End* and, most particularly, *The Longest Journey*. Forster achieved his greatest success with *A Passage to India* (1924). *Maurice* (1971) was published posthumously. It is a homosexual love story which also returns to matters familiar from Forster's first three novels, such as the suburbs of London in the English home counties, the experience of attending Cambridge, and the wild landscape of Wiltshire.

Helen Schlegel writes a letter to her sister Margaret describing *Howards End*, a charming country house in Hilton, outside of London. It is the family home of the Wilcox family, a couple the Schlegel sisters met while traveling in Germany. Margaret has stayed at home in London with their sickly younger brother Tibby whose hay fever, which also afflicts some of the Wilcoxes, prevents them from joining Helen. Helen is enchanted with the place and the family. Paul, the Wilcox's second son, arrives. He and Helen form an attraction. The two share a kiss under the wych-elm one night. Helen writes Margaret declaring that she has fallen in love with Paul. Margaret is surprised, but their aunt, Mrs. Munt, is alarmed by the sudden development. As Margaret is stuck in London with Tibby, it is agreed that Mrs. Munt will go to *Howards End* to speak to Helen, although her real motive is to put a stop to the engagement. Margaret warns her aunt to speak only to Helen. Mrs. Munt takes a train, but before she arrives, Margaret receives a telegram from Helen saying it is all over between her and Paul.

Unfortunately, it is too late to tell Mrs. Munt, who ends up running into Charles at the station. He offers to drive her to *Howards End*. In the car, thinking that he is Paul, she brings up the engagement. Charles responds angrily, claiming Paul is in no position to marry anyone, and Mrs. Munt is offended. Helen meets her aunt and tells her that the relationship with Paul is over, and begging her not to tell anyone. Mrs. Munt cries, and Charles shouts for Paul. Mrs. Wilcox calms the situation, and it seems that she knew what was going on all along, although no one mentioned it to her. Back at the Schlegel home, Wickham Place in London, the Schlegels attend a concert at which Margaret makes the acquaintance of Leonard Bast. Helen leaves early, overcome with emotion at a Beethoven symphony, and takes Mr. Bast's umbrella by accident. Margaret perceives that Mr. Bast suspects them of stealing the umbrella, and although she is affronted, she gives him her own card with her address so he can collect the umbrella. After the performance he walks with her to Wickham Place, but feels nervous and refuses to come in for tea.

When the Wilcox family move into the apartment across the street from Wickham Place, Mrs. Munt worries, but Helen denies that she is tempted in the least by Paul. She travels abroad with her cousin, Frieda. Mrs. Wilcox visits Wickham Place, but Margaret writes her to say she thinks it best if they don't see each other. Mrs. Wilcox is offended. She had simply called to say that Paul has moved to Africa. Margaret realizes that she has made a mistake and apologizes in person. The two women become friends. Mrs. Wilcox invites Margaret to help her with her Christmas shopping. On the trip she learns that the Schlegels' lease on Wickham Place will end in a couple of years. The thought of their leaving their home upsets Mrs. Wilcox, who invites Margaret to visit her beloved country home, *Howards End*. Margaret asks if she could do it another time, offending Mrs. Wilcox, for whom the home is a sacred space.

Shortly before Christmas Mrs. Wilcox grows very sick, and she writes a note to her husband that she wishes to leave the place to Margaret. Mrs. Wilcox dies. Mr. Wilcox receives the note. In consultation with his children, they decide to burn the note, questioning the mental fitness of Mrs. Wilcox when she wrote it. The children suspect Margaret of influencing their mother when she was weak in order to take the house from them.

Two years later, Jacky Bast, Leonard's wife, a former prostitute who pressured him into marrying her, shows up at Wickham Place. She has found the card Margaret gave Mr. Bast years ago, and as he didn't come home one night, she suspects he may be there. The next day he comes by to explain. He says his wife was alarmed because he stayed out all night, walking in the great outdoors. He was inspired by a number of books romanticizing adventures in nature. The sisters are taken with his description of the experience, as well as by the sentiment that motivated him. Mr. Bast, a clerk for an insurance company, is keenly aware that the Schlegel's independent wealth and cultural knowledge puts them in a higher social class. He aspires to improve himself through reading and listening to music. During the visit, he alternates between feeling awkward about their class differences and thrilled by the opportunity to discuss books and ideas with them.



Later that night, at a ladies discussion group on the social obligations of the rich to the poor, they use Mr. Bast as an example of the poor who deserve to be helped. After the meeting they happen upon Mr. Wilcox. When they share Mr. Bast's story, Mr. Wilcox asks about his employment. Mr. Bast is a clerk at an insurance company. According to Mr. Wilcox Mr. Bast's company will soon go out of business. The Wilcox sisters decide to warn Mr. Bast, and he takes their advice, eventually securing another job at a bank, although it pays less. With their lease running out, Margaret is trying to find a new place, but she agrees to meet Evie and her fiancé, Mr. Cahill, for tea. It turns out to have been orchestrated by Mr. Wilcox who appears and sits next to Margaret. It occurs to Margaret that he may be courting her. At the end of the summer, the Schlegels take their annual trip to Swanage to visit their aunt, Mrs. Munt. After they arrive, Margaret receives a telegram from Mr. Wilcox offering his Dulciestreet home for rent if she will come and see it immediately. As he shows her around the house, he proposes to her. She later accepts much to the resentment of the Wilcox children and to Helen's disappointment. It comes out that Mr. Wilcox no longer thinks Mr. Bast's old company is so bad after all, and the Schlegel sisters are upset that they led Mr. Bast to take a lower paying job for no reason.

That August, family and friends travel to the Wilcox's country home Oniton, a large country estate, for Evie's wedding. On the way there, the car carrying the ladies runs over an animal. The ladies are herded into another car before they realize what has happened. When Margaret hears a girl scream, she demands that Charles turn the car around. He ignores her repeated commands, and she leaps from the car, injuring her hand. She later apologizes, making it seem as if she is embarrassed by her impulsive action, although she has no regrets about it. She is learning how to manipulate men for her own purposes. After the wedding, she and Mr. Wilcox see a few new people arrive. It is Helen and the Basts. She claims to have found the Basts evicted and starving after Mr. Bast lost his job. Helen wants Mr. Wilcox held responsible for this course of events. Margaret says she will handle things with Mr. Wilcox and urges Helen to find rooms for them at the nearby hotel. When Mr. Wilcox approaches the house, Jacky recognizes him. It becomes apparent that she once had an affair with Mr. Wilcox, who reacts in anger. Margaret, although shocked, decides to forgive Mr. Wilcox. At the hotel, Helen learns more about the Basts, including Mr. Wilcox's past with Jacky. She is overcome with compassion for Mr. Bast, and the two have sex. In the morning, Helen leaves. She visits Tibby at Oxford, where he is a student, telling him about the problem with the Basts. She tells him to send half of her money to Mr. Bast, and that she is about to go abroad. Mr. Bast refuses the money, and when Tibby goes to the Bast's address, he finds they were evicted and have disappeared. In September, Wickham Place is demolished, and the Schlegels accept Mr. Wilcox's offer to store their things at Howards End.

Helen stays away for eight months and sends little information in her letters to Margaret. Margaret and Mr. Wilcox marry in a small ceremony. Margaret and Tibby become concerned about Helen the longer she stays away, especially when she avoids visiting, even when it is feared Mrs. Munt is dying. Helen sends word that she is in London, asking where the family's things are stored as she would like to get a few books. Now scared that Helen might be insane, Tibby and Margaret ask Mr. Wilcox for advice. He makes a plan to trap Helen at Howards End with a doctor in tow, against her will if needed.

Margaret changes her mind about the plan when she sees how Mr. Wilcox disregards her about the situation. He tries to leave her behind and confront Helen without her, but she manages to jump in his car just as he is leaving for Howards End. She rushes to the porch of the house ahead of Mr. Wilcox and the doctor and discovers the reason for Helen's secrecy and absence. Helen is pregnant. Margaret pushes her inside the house and tells the men to leave, which they do, although it angers Mr. Wilcox. Helen wants to stay the night at Howards End before leaving for Germany permanently the next day. Margaret knows the plan will displease her husband and his children, but she asks Mr. Wilcox anyway. He denies her request, refusing to see any connection between his past with Jacky and Helen's condition. Margaret condemns him for his hypocrisy and lack of empathy. The two sisters spend a peaceful night at Howards End.

In the meantime, Charles has been busy trying to figure out who must be held accountable for fathering Helen's child. He learns the truth from Tibby, who inadvertently reveals Mr. Bast's name by recalling the friends Helen was with at Evie's wedding. Charles heads to Howards End first thing in the morning. In the days previously, Mr. Bast, wracked with guilt at his indiscretion with Helen, had been trying to find Margaret in order to confess about sleeping with Helen. He eventually shows up at Howards End the morning after the sisters have slept in the home. He calls out to Margaret. Charles picks up a sword and hits Mr. Bast across the shoulders with the flat end of it. The blow causes Mr. Bast to have a heart attack and die. Margaret tells Mr. Wilcox she is leaving him and will go with Helen to Germany. Mr. Wilcox tells Margaret that Charles will be charged with manslaughter. When Charles is convicted and sentenced to three years in prison, Mr. Wilcox's spirit is broken. He asks Margaret to care for him. Fourteen months pass, and Margaret lives at Howards End with Helen, Helen's son, and Mr. Wilcox. Mr. Wilcox tells his children that he is leaving the house to Margaret and, after she dies, to her nephew. Margaret learns of Mrs. Wilcox's bequest, and she is touched. An abundant hay harvest comes in.

Forster limits his argument specifically to the personality of the creator but his understanding seems to have significant implications regarding narrative techniques, fictional form and characterisation of characters.



Conclusion

The novel ends with the promise of connection but the reconciliation is schematic and not wholly satisfying— Margaret and Helen each revealing that their powers of love are limited. The effect of the whole is of the greyness of everyday life. Cyrus Hoy comments that the hope of permanence seems in this work precarious because the presentation of the flux of the encroaching city is so "horrendous." The presentation of the "reality" of flux and the stress on the value of compromise account for the unimportance of the symbolic moment in this novel. This paper explores the knowledge of different writing styles of literature. E. M. Forster writes about literary music in the famous novel *Howards End*.

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