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MALE BONDING IN MAURICE AND E. M. FORSTER'S OTHER NOVELS

Abstract:

The main concern of this article is a close investigation into the male relationship in E. M. Forster's *Maurice* (written in 1913-14, published posthumously in 1971) and his other novels. This concern is expressed by the discussion of two major issues. The first one is Forster's intention in presenting two different modes of male bonding in *Maurice*. To address this issue, this article starts with a contrast and comparison between the two modes of male relationship in *Maurice*--the platonic mode between Maurice and Clive and the erotic mode between Alec and Maurice--customarily referred to as the homosocial mode and the homosexual mode. This article tries to view Forster's juxtaposition of the implicit and the explicit in the same novel as a process of unmasking his previous struggles and his eventual determination to assert his own sexual identity. The second issue then is to trace Forster's struggles embedded in his other novels, with the Rickie-Ansell bond in *The Longest Journey* (1907) as the most intense and repressed example. An intriguing but familiar maneuver commonly adopted by Forster to downplay male bonding in his other novels is to make it subsidiary to heterosexual love but, at the same time, to make it more romantic and sensual. The Rickie-Ansell relationship and Philip-Gino bond in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) are two prominent examples that manifest this kind of narrative tendency, tension, and peculiarity in Forster's portrayals of male bonding. All the above analyses aim to show that the overt homosexual proclamation in *Maurice* is not a rash decision but a triumph achieved by slow, unwavering degrees.

Keywords:

E. M. Forster, male relationship, *Maurice*, *The Longest Journey*