

## **Class and Art in E. M. Forster's *Howards End*\***

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### **Abstract**

*Howards End* presents a world in flux and mobility in the advent of modernism where art and literature are tested for their ability to save the individual in the context of a quest for an English house, Howards End, which on a symbolic level represents not only the English but all humanity. Forster shows the world of literature and art in a very pessimistic and critical way with an emphasis on the lower-class' futile striving for art and culture and on the over determination of class differences even for a cultivated upper-class individual with socialist aspirations. The destruction of the lower class, represented by Leonard, by the two upper-class families, the Schlegels, representing the German idealism and the Wilcoxes, the brutal capitalists, shows that appreciation of art does not make the refined mind immune to sharing a common ground with the philistine upper-class. Forster suggests that literature does not have the power to change the society, and that class and gender hierarchy cannot be overcome by literature or art.

**Key words:** E. M. Forster, class, feminism, German idealism, German romantics.

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### E.M. Forster'ın *Howards End* Adlı Romanında Sınıf ve Sanat

#### Öz

*Howards End* sembolik olarak sadece İngiliz toplumunu değil bütün insanlığı temsil eden bir İngiliz evi bağlamında, modernizmin başlangıcında, karmaşa ve hareket halinde bir dünyada sanat ve edebiyatın bireyin kurtuluşunu sağlayıp sağlayamayacağını sorgular. Forster alt sınıfın sanat ve kültüre ulaşma çabasını ve sınıfsal farklılıkların sosyalist eğilimleri olan, kültür düzeyi yüksek bir üst sınıf bireyi üzerinde bile belirleyici olduğunu vurgulayarak, edebiyat ve sanat dünyasına karamsar ve eleştirel bir bakış sunar. Edebiyat ve sanatın hayat üzerinde fazla etkisi yoktur; olduğunda Tibby karakterinin gösterdiği gibi, gerçeklik karşısında körleştirir ya da Leonard karakterinde gördüğümüz gibi, bir insanı yok edebilir. Alman idealizmine gönderme yapan Schlegel kız kardeşler ile vahşi kapitalist Wilcox ailelerinin birlikte, alt sınıf üyesi Leonard'ın ölümüyle temsil edilen alt sınıfı yok edişleri, okuma ve sanata değer vermenin, ince bir zeka ve estetik anlayışa sahip olmanın, sanat ve edebiyat konusunda bilgisiz bir üst sınıfla aynı düşünce yapısını paylaşmasına engel olamayacağını gösterir. Forster edebiyatın toplumu dönüştürücü etkisi olmadığını, sınıf ve cinsiyet hiyerarşilerinin edebiyat ve sanatla ortadan kaldırılamayacağını öne sürer.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** E. M Forster, sınıf, feminizm, Alman idealizmi, Alman romantikleri.

*Howards End* presents a world in flux and mobility in the advent of modernism where art and literature are tested for their ability to save the individual in the context of a quest for an English house, Howards End, which on a symbolic level represents not only the English but all human society. Forster shows the world of literature and art in a very pessimistic and critical way with an emphasis on the lower-class' futile striving for art and culture and on the overdetermination of class differences even for a cultivated upper-class individual with socialist aspirations. Literature and reading does not have much influence over life, when it does, it blinds one to reality, which is Tibby's case, or destroys one, as Leonard's death signifies. The destruction of the lower class, represented by Leonard, by the two upper-class families, the Schlegels, representing the German idealism and the Wilcoxes, the brutal capitalists shows that reading and appreciation of art do not make the refined mind immune to sharing a common ground with the philistine upper-class. Forster suggests that literature does not have the power to change the society, and that class and gender hierarchy cannot be overcome by literature or art.

Art, literature, and reading are central issues in the novel as the name of one of the main families in the novel signifies, referring to German Romantic philosopher brothers, Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel and August Wilhelm Schlegel. Also, the main problem in the novel is a lower class member's, Leonard Bast's, desire for culture and literature. Views on art and literature, and their relation to life, particularly that of the German Romantics and Ruskin's, are tested in the conflict between three families, the Schlegels, the Wilcoxes, and the Basts, which reveals an antagonism between classes and men and women. What distinguishes the two upper-class families, the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes from each other is that the Schlegels represent the refined mind immersed in German idealism while the Wilcoxes represent the vulgar capitalist-imperialist greed and blindness which goes along with their abstaining from literature and art. This difference based only on the appreciation or disregard of literature is revealed not to be that big when these two families encounter a lower-class member, Leonard Bast,

who is destroyed by the alliance of the two upper-class families. The epitaph of the novel, 'only connect' which is flagged by the elder sister Margaret Schlegel, arises as the explanation of this accomplice between the refined and philistine mind though from a different perspective than that of Margaret's. This connection can be discussed in terms of the views of literature in the novel. *Howards End* shows how the Schlegel sisters' interest in literature and art, in contrast to the Wilcoxes' anti-intellectual mind shape their relation to the world, and Leonard Bast's striving to gain culture despite the obstacles that his class sets. Forster offers a satirical and ironic look on art which reveals the belief in the influence of art on life to be a naïve one in a world that is footed on economy. The readers in the novel are either losers like Leonard, imprisoned in the interests of their class like the Schlegels or blind, incapable and inactive ones like the younger brother, Tibby Schlegel.

The Schlegel sisters' view of literature is influenced by German Romanticism, especially, as the name refers to, by the Schlegel brothers. The allusion to German Romantic philosophy is also conveyed by the father Schlegel who abandons Germany when he is disillusioned by Germany's imperialistic policy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Schlegel sisters inherit from their father the fascination by the Romantic idealism and belief in art's superiority over the vulgar practicalities of daily life which specifically consist in the financial obligations and responsibilities. Since the art and literature at stake is specifically the Romantic view of literature, to look at some of the basic beliefs of the German Romantics which followed on Kant's aesthetic theory will be helpful to understand these sisters and how they come to be the accomplice of the Wilcoxes whom they criticize severely. For Kant, art and aesthetic experience has a special status among other types of experience, which needed to be clarified back then to advocate art as not a tool for a purpose- religious or political. Though Kant argued that art does not fulfill a purpose or have a function, paradoxically, he stressed that aesthetic experience without being didactic can create awareness in one of moral responsibility not because it teaches moral rules but because this experience reveals the inward order which is the evidence of human dignity (Shiner 2001: 146-149). Aesthetic experience helps us realize our moral nature independent of

the external nature and laws which for Kant could not determine human action and choices. Without denying the existence of these external laws, Kant argued against the idea that human beings were subjected to these laws for human beings had the capacity to reason and choose within the frame of morality and principle. Isaiah Berlin emphasizes that freedom of choice and capacity to follow principles free from necessity for Kant was very important since he believed that being subject to nature would make a human being no more than a slave to necessity without any morality at all (Berlin 2004: 95-100).

Despite Kant's critical distance from the Romantics, his insistence on the subjective aspect of knowledge and experience, and on the freedom of the subject initiated the Romantic philosophers to develop this subjectivity into extreme ends. For Schiller, for instance, the power and desire to overcome and supersede nature and external laws is what makes a human being. The freedom to stand against necessity finds its best course in art where imagination and ideals produce the superior and free individual. Schiller believed that art as a kind of game allows creating rules and ideas that individuals can own as their own creation and thereby establish a harmonious and free life. In short, in Schiller's view, art is not only a domain of pleasure but an active domain that can transform the individual and society (Berlin 2004: 101-110). For Friedrich Schlegel, too, aesthetic experience and creation has a distinguished place in human existence for it allows one to achieve a unity overcoming the antithetical appearances and disharmony in life (Lange 1955: 6-7). Victor Lange states that Schlegel believed that imagination can create a cosmos that consists in a different set of meanings and unification (Lange 1955: 7-8). Art is allotted a place distinct from nature and life by virtue of its being superior to the material existence.

These views of art, in a general sense, apply to the Schlegel sisters' expectation from culture and art as they do not see the external laws related to economic realities as limiting or determining whereas they view art as liberating from the limitations that life sets over one's relations and understanding. This investment in imagination that transcends the external laws, though, does not mean that the Schlegel sisters are blind to the fact that economy determines one's life. In the debate society, they discuss how to rescue the lower-classes from inhumane

conditions in order to elevate them intellectually. Like the German Romantics, they are hopeful about art's power to change the world and to bring unity against the disharmonies in the world. This view constitutes the ground for their socialism as well. Their interest in the lower-class and their encouraging Leonard's striving for culture reflect their belief in art as the domain of unity and equality.

The sisters' name also refers to Friedrich Schlegel's lover who was also an important intellectual figure and famous with her sexual freedom in Jena, the centre of romantic philosophers at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Margaret especially seems to be derived from Friedrich Schlegel's lover and a writer, Dorothea Veit-Schlegel who was an eminent figure in Jena with her scandalous life and her novel *Florentin* which praises the subjection to male dominance though Martha B. Helfer argues to the contrary. Helfer suggest that Dorothea Veit-Schlegel's writing reflects the occupation with writing as a woman writer while on the surface it seems to affirm subjection to male-dominance (Helfer 1996: 146). This uncertainty in Dorothea Veit-Schlegel's position only strengthens the similarity between her and Margaret when one considers that Margaret's subjection to Henry Wilcox is very much dubious and unconvincing. Margaret's short-lived obedience in her marriage ends in her rebuking Henry for his hypocrisy when he denies Helen permit to sleep in his house for one night and afterwards, the marriage continues on Margaret's terms while Henry is imprisoned in the house.

Although there are big differences between the sisters, Margaret and Helen, it is still possible to draw some common traits and see them as "composite Indiagod" as Leonard sees them (Forster 1987: 146). They are interested in the personal relationships, and spirituality and they are not good at the practical sides of daily life. However, there are contradictions that mirror the contradictions of the Romantic philosophers. The Romantic philosophers' elaborations on the subject, the belief in art's power to transform life and the individual, or the overcoming of dualities like nature and culture, male and female appear naïve at best when one considers their firm confidence in their own morality and capacity to understand their own imaginary constructions without questioning their own subjective place in the socio-economic structure. Class and gender are packed in the vague concept of external laws and oppositions to be reconciled in art that they believed they

were immune to by virtue of their rebellious spirit, creativity, and imagination. Yet, they were men and though as Isaiah Berlin mentions most of them started life from lower-class which, along with Germany's political and economical turbulent state at that time, is the cause of their occupation merely with the inner world, they ignored the fact that economic structure determines one's conception of truth (Berlin 2004: 54-59). This disregard as to one's own place in the social structure which works by being internalized by the individuals characterizes the Schlegel sisters as well, and this is how Forster brings them to a similar if not the same level with the Wilcoxes.

The differences between the German-rooted Schlegels and the English-rooted Wilcoxes which is at the heart of the novel is the superficial clash between idealism and materialism, particularly German idealism and the middle-class materialism that finds the aim and satisfaction in life in accumulating property and expanding land. Beginning with this conflict which reveals itself in the two families' involvement with and at the end, destruction of a third family, the lower-middle class Basts, Forster shows that these two lines are actually accomplices which is again disclosed in their relation to the Basts. Despite the Schlegels' embracing literature as a way of escaping the vulgar and shallow life as embodied in the Wilcoxes, Forster shows that their devotion to ideals and art does not make much difference in their lives. To begin with, the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels are of the same class, the upper-middle-class, and more importantly, though the Schlegels do not have to work thanks to their inheritance, both of the families' income comes from England's imperialist activities. The emptiness and terror that the Schlegels discern in the Wilcoxes is actually the emptiness rooted in the Wilcoxes' involvement and welcoming of the economic laws of the English society while the Schlegels are for creating internal laws and life. Indeed, the Wilcoxes do not recognize any other law than the economic laws which turn them into brutal colonialist expanding their domination not only in England by buying houses but also in Africa and Cyprus as the representatives of the English colonial spirit of the time as Robert Green also notes (Green 1969). They are characterized by their practical minds, as Margaret puts it, their disdain for emotions and aesthetics, and with the strength of their will as the name Wilcox suggests - "will" as the mental

power that directs and controls actions, and an allusion to the will to power, the quality in the superman of Nietzsche who is above the common humanity and its laws, and exists by his deeds rather than as a subject. Thus, the will driving England, the boat in the imperialist cox's hands towards the First World War, do not have any investment in German idealism whose main problematic was the consciousness and the process of construction of knowledge of oneself and the world in consciousness. Yet, while the Wilcoxes own a rubber company in Greece, the Schlegels live on their investment in foreign capitals -the investments which do not fail in providing them with more than enough money. Therefore, the Schlegels are as intelligent in business as the Wilcoxes.

The contradiction in the Schlegels' critical stance against the imperialism of the Wilcoxes was already apparent in the father Schlegels' life considering the fact that he settled in another imperialist country, England, as a reaction to Germany's imperialist policies. Like the Romantics, the father Schlegel fights for the vague ideal of freedom but does not consider the end or rather, the fact that the establishment of ideals requires a far more clear aims and labor not to mention the necessity to devise an alternative economic structure for those ideals to survive on. Also, what enables Ernst Schlegel to lead a life of imagination is his wife's money. Like their father, the sisters can 'rent to the ideal' the things that they inherited from their mother whose fortune enabled her husband to live for his ideals (Forster 1987: 55). This fortune which shows the idealism's dependence on materialism enables the father Schlegel, as it does his daughters, to reject materialism. Although they are aware of the fact that the middle class is rising on the work of the lower classes, they do not see how they themselves are involved in the exploitation of the lower class. That their investments bring money- even more than their aunt's- means that someone else is working for their comfort. Thus, although they are not aware, they are exploiting the lower class just like the Wilcoxes. Unlike Helen who is more flighty and is represented as the embodiment of extreme end of idealism, Margaret is aware of this common ground that they share with the Wilcoxes. She tells Mrs. Munt that 'you and I and the Wilcoxes stand upon money as upon islands' and that they do not have the right to despise the Wilcoxes (Forster 1987: 72). Her sympathy for the Wilcoxes is

due to her belief that “they [the Wilcoxes] have formed our civilization” (Forster 1997: 112). In that sense, Margaret is a more down-to-earth woman, and this is why she decides to marry Henry Wilcox, however, her awareness does not mean that she is either materialist or idealist. Margaret achieves the epitaph of the novel, “to connect;” not only the Wilcoxes’ aggressiveness in the world and their hypocrisy in their conservativeness in their private lives but also her idealism and economy. Therefore, Margaret is more checked in her belief in literature whereas Helen does not realize fully this connection between literature and economy.

In his reading of *Howards End* in terms of Ruskin and Mathew Arnold’s view of literature and culture, Pat C. Hoy II states that the Schlegels’ ideals are tested in relation to Leonard Bast (Hoy II 1985: 222). The Schlegel’s interest in the lower-class and their encouragement leads Leonard to see the embodiment of his longings in the Schlegel’s house and life, but as the name of this house suggests, the Wickham place, this illusion brings his doom which was already always nearby to this lower-class member. The Wickham place, alluding to the villain of *Pride and Prejudice* is the modern evil that accommodates the intellectual women who can afford to lead a life of culture (Austen 1994). Forster, in 1910, foresees how women of intellect alongside means can duplicate masculine power and aggressiveness; however, apart from their financial power, it would not be fair to see the Schlegel sisters as masculine. Leonard Bast’s centrality becomes clear in the accomplice between the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes as the upper-class’ feeding on England’s imperialist economy and as the exploiter of the lower-class despite their claimed differences. Leonard’s losing his job upon Henry’s false speculation about the company’s future is partly the Schlegel’s fault since they venture on warning Leonard without having full knowledge about the situation. Afterwards, Margaret disappoints Helen when she ignores his situation for the sake of the security of her marriage. Margaret’s down-to-earth approach makes her leave her ideals aside while Helen raids on Charles’ wedding to encounter Henry with the Basts though in vain. Nevertheless, neither of the sisters is of any help to Leonard, and this shows that whether the brutal capitalists or the idealist and cultivated, the upper-class does ruin the lower-class. Indeed, it is their involvement with Leonard that reveals the personal responsibility and connection

in the social inequality, which Helen realizes at the end. She feels guilty about her own part in Leonard's death, yet she is unable to feel anything (Forster 1987: 327). Margaret, on the other hand, accepts these incidents as the proof of variety and difference in life. In her confidence, Margaret surely sounds cold and cruel, yet, as she tells earlier, she is going for proportion as 'a last resource' since the better alternatives failed (Forster 1987: 83). In other words, she makes do with what she can, and what she can is to take care of Helen, her child, and Henry in Howards End.

The violence at the heart of society with its values and structure defined by the hierarchy of class and gender cannot be reconciled through literature and culture as promoted by the Schlegels or as pursued by Leonard. The Schlegels have the means to secure themselves a limited space like the debate societies where they can as women of culture and upper-class gain respect and find fulfillment on their secure financial standing. There seems to be a basic connection that idealism and romanticism fails to do, which is the connection between literature and life. Literature seems to usually occupy a separate place in our lives whereas it can ruin lives by creating and triggering desires –as Madame Bovary's case shows, or begets social movements, which are not rare incidents.

Though literature does not transform the Schlegels' upper-class life, it raises in these women gender-consciousness. Through reading and art, the Schlegel sisters become the supporters of social reform, equality, woman suffrage, and socialism, which are apparent in the fact that they are not inclined to get married and have children, and their antagonism against men which is another reason for their looking down on the Wilcoxes manifests their feminist aspirations. Helen differs from Margaret in her more clear position against men when one considers that she chooses to be a single mother and live with 'the crude feminist' Monica in Italy - as Forster describes. Yet, even though Margaret's affection for the brutal imperialist makes her suspicious as a gender-conscious woman, her protection of Helen and siding with her against the Wilcoxes when they go down to Howards End to 'hunt' Helen shows that their reading has changed their relation to men though it is not possible to say the same in their relation to women when we consider their relation to Jacky. Although they are aware and want to make Henry

aware too, that Jacky is the victim of the upper-classes, the fact that they do not take much interest in her, moreover, the fact that Forster does not represent her fully as a character indicates that the category of women includes only upper-class women. The problem is the representation and perception of Jacky as a passive victim or a sort of extension of Henry and Leonard, or as a woman character who has only the function of posing as the double to Helen who similarly has affairs out of wedlock but who can afford it.

Another character who represents another dark picture of the influence of culture is the young brother Tibby Schlegel. Tibby's culture appears to have turned him into an immobile, effeminate, passive creature. Tibby's response to art is also interesting as is depicted in the Beethoven concert. He approaches to music with a scientific method analyzing the structure of music mechanically. The instruments, their parts, the transitions are what interests him when listening to music rather than letting his imagination run wild with pictures aroused by the melody as Helen does. His lack of imagination and thought shows itself in the fact that he is disinterested and incurious about his sisters' lives. When this inactive boy enrolls at Oxford upon Margaret's encouragement, he finds the ideal place there detached from society.

For Leonard, literature is a means to improve and cultivate oneself but at the same time, it is mark of the class that he wants to leap up to. This belief in the moral aspect of literature has got a long history reaching back to the antiquity when Plato and Aristotle evaluated poetry in terms of its power over the public. Until the beginning of formalist criticism in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literary criticism focused on the effects of literature on the reader, which evolved around the question of moral principles promoted and/or pleasure derived from the work of art. Like Karin Littau, Jane P. Tompkins also notes this shift in criticism as one from reader-oriented towards text-oriented criticism of formalism (Littau 2006; Tompkins 1980). When Leonard tells Jacky that he means to be a better person by reading Ruskin, he is following the 'delectare, docere, movere'<sup>1</sup> principle of ancient rhetoric tradition that emphasize the effects of the reading over the reader as opposed to the Schlegel sisters' approach to literature which privileges the writer

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<sup>1</sup> To teach, to delight, to move.

and imagination (Forster 1987: 65; Littau 2006: 86-87). Leonard's expectation from culture follows the criticism of Ruskin, Mathew Arnold, who views art as a way to elevate intellect and knowledge, and as the vehicle for spiritual progress or T.S. Eliot, to name only a few, which saw art a neutral domain that educates people (Arnold 1993: 1398). Forster shows the fruitlessness of Leonard's endeavor when literature and Leonard's inhuman living conditions are contrasted. The failure of this belief and particularly Ruskin's ideal is shown with the parodic description of Leonard's flat in Ruskin's language in his letter to his brother who is a lay-reader: "Let us consider a little each of these characters in succession; and first (for of the absence of ventilation enough has been said already), what is peculiar to this flat, its obscurity" (Forster 1987: 62). Leonard is deluded by the capitalist economy's illusion, which Forster calls 'the angel of Democracy,' that any one can climb the ladder and become rich while this economy ensures that there is always poverty to enable the accumulation of property in the hands of a minority and that there is unemployment to ensure competition and lower salaries (Forster 1987: 58). Thus, Leonard thinks anyone, himself, too, could have that 'luck' which he thinks enables some to rise and gain culture. This naivety makes his striving for culture indeed tragic because of his blindness to the fact that culture is like money the privilege of a minority. Nevertheless, Leonard's reading of Ruskin is significant in that his choice also implies his antagonism to the modern work life which for Ruskin imputes mechanical labor on the lower-classes and workers. Ruskin argued that lower-classes should be given the chance for thoughtful invention. In *The Stones of Venice* Ruskin celebrates the principles of society and labor implied in Gothic architecture in contrast to modern division of labor which bestows the use of invention and thought only on the middle and upper-classes whereas the lower-class is required only to show full obedience to instructions. Here, when dismissing Ruskin's ideal that workers can recover their humanity through having the freedom to invent and use their faculty in their work which now demands mechanical labor and slave-like obedience, Forster is pointing out to the problems inherent in the futility of the belief in the cultivating power of labor and art (Ruskin 1993: 1285- 1289). Ruskin's language which becomes parodic when used for the daily needs is for the taste of upper-classes or at least of the middle-class and is of no use to Leonard.

Similarly, his reading of Carlyle also indicates his class-consciousness and explains his antagonism towards the Schlegels which he reveals when for example he scorns their inviting him to tea after he recovers his umbrella thinking that they are not decent ladies (58). Both Ruskin and Carlyle in different ways criticize the unjust economic structure and propose ways to change society. Especially reading the passionate socialist Carlyle shows Leonard's affinity to socialism. Though the language of literature and politics proves inapplicable to his daily life, the ideas Leonard gets from his readings awakens objections to his fate in this modern world which has reduced the villagers of the pre-industrial society to half-visible workers without a full life in the industrial era. This influence of reading on lower-classes and women, or underprivileged groups makes reading a dangerous activity for the dominant classes. Reading which was looked on critically and even forbidden in servants in the eighteenth century can induce women and lower-classes to question the inequality from which they suffer and show ways to change society. Leonard does not seem to be far on this line for if he were, he would be more political. Instead, his weak class consciousness makes him desire the privileges of upper-classes, which accounts for the futility of his endeavors for capitalism makes sure that there will be always poverty if there is to be a wealthy minority.

Still, despite Leonard's deficiency in analyzing his situation which makes him only desire to climb up the social stairs, it is after all Leonard who can see his connection to the so-called external structures in his relation to Jacky and Helen. After his having sex with Helen, he becomes affectionate to and has sympathy for Jacky which proves that he now understands men's responsibility in ruining Jacky. He identifies with Henry and seeks redemption and decides to go to Howards End to apologize from Helen. Nevertheless, his awareness about his own part in the destruction of women like Jacky who do not have the means to live independently as Helen does only brings his doom. It is tragic and ironic that the Schlegel books complete his death after Charles attacks him with the sword of the idealist father Schlegel even before he could utter a word. This scene shows Forster's pessimistic view of art to the full extent; idealism, books, art do not bring salvation to the lower-classes who must continue their mechanical labor

and stimulate the imagination of the idealist romantics by virtue of their being far-way from their lives. The Schlegel sisters can in no way share a life with a lower-class member and Leonard's only contribution to the upper-class and the English society is his sperms for his child with Helen will inherit Howards End after all.

Among these characters who show the fruitlessness of literature and art, Forster puts forward Mrs. Wilcox as the embodiment of morality and hope. Mrs. Wilcox appears only in the beginning of the novel, but she has a central role in that it is her house that is at stake throughout the novel and it is her will after all that is realized when Margaret really inherits Howards End. She is presented as an isolated, mystical creature among the Wilcox men playing games and pursuing material ends. She has nothing to do with art or culture as is shown at the lunch with Margaret's intellectual friends in London. Yet, she is wise in a very vague sense. She disappoints her family in their belief in her obedient self-sacrificial character shocking them –and the reader- when she leaves her house to Margaret. She seems to represent another form of society when we consider the significance of the house and her will. She inherited Howards End from her grandmother. The ancestors of the house include females until Tom Howards who was a colonizer, too but “he was the last of them” and with him “Howards Ended” as Dolly puns on the word (Forster 1987: 203-204). Howards End was a farm house when Henry married Ruth but as soon as Henry takes over the management from the female line, he starts making changes in the house and these changes show that what Henry was trying to do is to colonize the house and destroy femininity. First he destroys the kitchen, the women's place and turns it into a hall and thus depriving it of privacy and opening it to the males as well. He also had his eyes on the wych-elm and vine tree but could not win that point and contents himself with the garage that he builds over the roots of the wych-elm tree. He even forced Ruth to change her religion, though she managed to attend to her church using her child -the weapon of a woman, and Charles and Dolly give her a name “mims” (Forster 1987: 81). On the other hand, despite her obedient appearance, Mrs. Wilcox fights back with hay in her hands that makes everyone ill but does not harm her. Her last retaliation comes after she dies; she leaves the house to Margaret on the hope that Margaret can protect the house from men. Mr. Wilcox is at a loss at her wife's will which is very unbusinesslike unlike his way of

doing things. Her scribbling on a piece of paper distinguishes her from the serious Wilcoxes. This is inexplicable to the Wilcoxes, and shows us that they didn't have much knowledge about this woman. They understand when she dies: in Henry's words this is "a treachery"; she wants to get rid of the invasion of the male line in *Howards End* (Forster 1987: 108).

Presenting Mrs. Wilcox as the only wise character in this turbulent, chaotic modern life where people are uprooted and always on the move without a sense of solid standing, Forster points out to a different religion that can save the modern individuals. While Ruskin finds only slavery in Greek civilization, Forster recovers ancient religions to suggest a different ideal (Ruskin 1993: 1282). Elizabeth Hodge states that Forster constructs *Howards End* in view of Friedrich Schlegel's belief that literature has to create new mythologies and depict mythical reality against the dry materialism of the modern industrial world since reality and truth cannot be expressed in the realistic representation (Hodge 2006). Hodge sees *Howards End* as a symbolic novel based on the ancient gods and goddesses with whom she finds correspondence with the characters in the novel. From this perspective, the novel's belief in idealism lies in Forster's structuring of the novel on Friedrich Schlegel's view of literature but apart from this aspect, it is not possible to say whether *Howards End* promotes idealism or materialism, or achieve proportion as Margaret believes she did as a last resource at the end of the novel (Forster 1987: 83). This ambiguity is also observable in opposing views on whether Foster values idealism or materialism. While, for instance, Hoy II suggests that Forster promotes spirituality and idealism, Cyrus Hoy and Elizabeth Hodge find a reconciliation of dualities at the end of the novel. It is clear that Forster wanted to create harmony and combination as uttered by Margaret, but what appears at the end is not harmony but violence and contradiction again.

### **Conclusion**

Although Margaret uses the word proportion which means "symmetry, harmony, or balance" as her goal that she thinks she has achieved at the end, the ending of the novel does not prove her view with the picture of disinherited sons, murdered class, women like Monica and Jacky left in abyss. Helen is restored

to English society and society in general and Margaret to a legal position as a married woman. In this sense, the end is similar to the solution offered in *Pride and Prejudice*; a family is the condition for a house to continue its existence. Only this time the family has illegal extensions. The word proportion also implies a happy medium avoiding excess and in this sense, it can describe the picture in the end since the excessive ends are cured though it is not very promising and certainly does not reflect harmony. In this aspect, *Howards End* again resembles *Pride and Prejudice*: there is no harmony and peace that can come out of marriage institution but this institution is necessary for the survival of houses and civilization. Proportion also means "the significance of a thing or event that an objective view reveals". When we consider that in about three years, the Wilcoxes are replaced by the Schlegels in *Howards End* and the Wilcoxes ended, we are presented with the significance of accidental incidents like taking the wrong umbrella at a concert, in leading to big events like getting with a child. The overall picture Forster shows of the modern life implies that it is not reason and cause-effect relations that determine the course of life, and this is actually where hope lies. Margaret says that:

"Because a thing is going strong now, it need not go strong for ever [...] This craze for motion has only set during the last hundred years. It may be followed by a civilization that won't be a movement, because it will rest on the earth. All the signs are against it now, but I can't help hoping, very early in the morning in the garden I feel that our house is the future as well as the past"(Forster 1987: 329)

Here, Margaret expresses her hope in the failure of logic that life may not continue on a logical way, causes creating results and so on. The rational view of life is already undermined in the plot which hinges on coincidences and accidents. It is ironic but at the same time sad that Forster as writer demonstrates how useless and ineffective art and literature is to be a domain of change and hope. Still, when we consider that Forster depicts particular approaches to art and literature, German idealism, and that of Arnold, and Ruskin's for instance, it is possible not to overgeneralize Forster's negative attitude towards literature. Rather, Forster rejects the naïve belief that art can make people better morally which was already disproved with the case of Hitler who appreciated Wagner and Beethoven.

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