

61. Howards End: Capitalism “What big mouth you have ...”

Dilek TÜFEKÇİ CAN¹

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Abstract

Howards End (1910), a novel by E. M. Forster, revolves around three families, namely the rich capitalists Wilcoxes, the half-German intellectual Schlegels and the impoverished couples the Bast from lower class, in the Edwardian society in England at the very turn of the 20th century. The novel, which is commonly considered to be the masterpiece of Forster, undoubtedly depicts the inevitable effects of capitalism on the identities of characters with a focus on modernity in the Edwardian culture where the earlier certainties of the Victorian period are continually questioned. Thus, this paper attempts to unveil identities of characters who are in the grip of capitalism by decoding their insights, particularly on two modes of capitalism: private ownership and capital accumulation through the lenses of Marxism. Forster, by juxtaposing the characters from three different classes in the society, namely the capitalist upper-middle class, the intellectual upper-middle class and the working class, thought-provokingly presents the impacts of capitalism on the identities of the characters from a wide variety of perspectives. As a liberal author, Forster reveals the inevitable cultural change in the Edwardian society due to the destructive effects of both modernity and capitalism in *Howards End*. In this paper, it is concluded that the perspectives of the characters in the novel about capitalism, particularly in regard to capital accumulation and private ownership, vary from each other due to the different classes they belong to. Moreover, it is also concluded that the working-class are the ones who are exploited by the upper classes, including the intellectuals in the capitalist system.

Keywords: E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, capitalism, modernism, identity

Howards End: Kapitalizm “Ne kadar büyük ağız var ...”

Öz

E. M. Forster tarafından 1910 yılında kaleme alınan *Howards End* adlı roman, 20 yüzyılın başlarında İngiltere’de Edward dönemi toplumunda yaşayan zengin kapitalist Wilcox ailesi, yarı Alman entelektüel Schlegel ailesi ve alt sınıfa ait yoksul Bast ailesi olmak üzere üç aile etrafında döner. Genellikle, Forster’in başyapıtı olarak kabul edilen bu romanda, karakterlerin kimlikleri üzerinden moderniteye vurgu yapılarak kapitalizmin kaçınılmaz etkileri, Viktorya döneminin eski yargılarının sürekli sorgulandığı Edward dönemi kültürü içinde anlatılır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma kapitalizmin pençesindeki karakterlerin kimliklerini, özellikle onların kapitalizmin iki biçimine, yani özel mülkiyet ve sermaye birikimi ile ilgili görüşlerini ele alarak Marksist yaklaşımla çözmeye çalışmaktadır. Forster kapitalist üst-orta sınıf, entelektüel üst-orta sınıf ve işçi sınıfı olmak üzere toplumdaki üç farklı sınıftan karakterleri bir araya getirerek birbirinden farklı bakış açılarıyla kapitalizmin etkilerini karakterlerin kimlikleri üzerinden düşündürücü bir yaklaşımla anlatır. Liberal görüşlü bir yazar olarak kabul edilen Forster, *Howards End* adlı romanında hem modernite hem de kapitalizmin etkisi

¹ Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi ABD (Balıkesir, Türkiye), tufekci@balikesir.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8067-6032 [Araştırma makalesi, Makale kayıt tarihi: 23.06.2021-kabul tarihi: 20.09.2021; DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.990751]

nedeniyle Edward toplumundaki kaçınılmaz kültürel değişimi de ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmada, karakterlerin farklı sınıflara ait olmaları nedeniyle özel mülkiyet ve sermaye birikimi ile ilgili bakış açıların birbirinden farklılık gösterdiği sonucuna varılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, işçi sınıfının entelektüel sınıf dahil olmak üzere üst-orta sınıf tarafından sömürüldüğü sonucu da çıkarılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, kapitalizm, modernizm, kimlik

Introduction

Modernism, a term which arguably includes a combination of a period, style and genre, stems from ‘modern’, that is, from the Latin ‘modo’, which means current. Modernism itself is used as a term to denote changes in regard to its amalgamation of a period, style or a genre. Moreover, as the term itself is elusive in some sense, particularly in literary criticism, the disagreement about when modernism starts has remained as a debatable issue since that time. On the issue of impact of modernism, Virginia Woolf’s claim “on or about December 1910 human character changed” (1978, p. 421) in her essay entitled *Character in Fiction* clearly indicates the inevitable transformation of the individuals at the very beginning of the 20th century. Namely, the date she refers coincides with the publication of *Howards End*.

According to Peter Childs, modernism, commonly considered “as either a time-bound or a genre-bound art form” is “often primarily located in the years 1890-1930, with a wider acknowledgement that it develops from the mid-nineteenth century and begins to lose its influence in the mid-twentieth century” (2017, p. 18). On the other hand, “modernity”, a term first used by Baudelaire in the mid-nineteenth century in his essay “The Painter of Modern Life” is roughly described as the fashionable in art, in opposition to eternal. In Madan Sarup’s work, modernity is defined as “the era of the bourgeoisie, of the primacy industrial production” and additionally, it is emphasized that “Later, with the technological revolution, social reproduction replaces production as the organising principle of society” (1993, p. 163). In his work, Childs also attempts to reveal “modernity” with its relation to “modernism” in the following quotation:

In relation to modernism, modernity is considered to describe a way of living and of experiencing life which has arisen with the changes wrought by industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation; its characteristics are disintegration and reformation, fragmentation and rapid change, ephemerality and insecurity (2017, p. 16).

Correspondingly, modernity as an umbrella term not only involves new understandings of time and space but also includes many interpretations about speed and mobility; communication and travel; chaos and cultural revolution. Undeniably, modernity is both a conclusion of the past and a herald of the future. Thus, E. M. Forster as an Edwardian modernist criticizes Victorian middle-class mores and explores various possible stances towards life of the modern period in *Howards End*.

Apart from its distinctive definitions in relation to many other disciplines, the one which is also put forward by Marx is the key factor why this article questions modernity in relation to capitalism through the eyes of the Edwardian characters. Because “For Marx, modernity is a constant impulse to renewal engendered by the dynamics and crises of capitalism” (Childs, 2017, p. 42). By diving the history into two, particularly pre-modern and modern periods, Marx asserts the idea that society experiences “constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation” (Marx & Engels, 2016, p. 34) through the means of capitalism. Indeed, “Marx sees capitalism as driven to creation and recreative destruction, renewal, innovation and constant

change; which are also the dynamics of modernism” (Childs, 2017, p. 42). Then, *Howards End* as an Edwardian novel questions capitalism through the lenses of modernity.

Thus, with the emergence of modernity, a new approach to the social issues is introduced in many art forms including literature. Moreover, the literary texts, which emphasize the collapse of the individuals in personal, spiritual or social spheres, have most probably arisen partly, due to the emerging influence of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the writer of three-volume masterpiece *Das Kapital* (1867). Furthermore, the works such as *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *German Ideology*, both of which Marx collaboratively produced with Frederick Engels, have also showed how societies have been structured to promote the interests of the economically dominant class. Predominantly, Marx and Engels in the first part of their work *Communist Manifesto* emphasizes that the polarities will activate culture of modernism in the next century. According to Marshall Berman, the subjects such as “insatiable desires and drives, permanent revolution, infinite development, perpetual creation and renewal in every sphere of life” have become the main focus of the period with “its radical antithesis, the theme of nihilism, insatiable destruction, the shattering and swallowing up of life, the heart of darkness, the horror” (1983, p. 102), all of which may commonly considered as the aspects of modernity. The issues Berman enumerated one by one are seen to have been reflected relatively in Forster’s *Howards End*.

As the quotation by Berman reveals, Marxism has continuously had a remarkable influence upon the conceptualisation of modernism. Explicitly, modernism has never been separated from capitalism as suggested by philosophers such as Georg Lukács, Soren Kierkegaard, Walter Benjamin, Thomas Carlyle, Bertolt Brecht, August Strindberg, Theodor Adorno, Herman Melville, Henrik Ibsen and Charles Baudelaire. Moreover, modernism, that is characterized as a literature of crises, is placed at the very core of capitalism. According to Childs, the texts such as “E. M. Forster’s *Howards End*, T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, D. H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love*, and W. B. Yeats’s *The Second Coming*” reveal “the fear of crisis” and “longing for rejuvenation” (2017, p. 39) through the means of modernism. Accordingly, identities of the characters in *Howards End* can be said to have been deeply affected by the newly introduced means of modernity. In *Howards End*, Forster as a realist author presents his characters with their human-like qualities. However, he uncovers distinctive aspects of characters and discovers how these characters appreciate capitalism. By presenting his characters from different classes in the society, he takes the issue of capitalism by focusing on modernity.

As has already been stated, modernism, generally accepted as a cultural phenomenon which is placed among realism and postmodernism, leads to both social and economic upheavals because of mass commodity culture. Precisely, Peter Childs expounds the triad of modernity, Marxism and capitalism in the following quote:

Modernity, in classical Marxism, is a double-edged phenomenon in which capitalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie eliminated feudalism and brought enormously significant forms of communication, transport and production but also created a serially exploited proletariat which would eventually overthrow it (Childs, 2017, p. 40).

As the quote above indicates, it is the working class which would end capitalism as it is successively exploited by the bourgeoisie. Besides, in his essay entitled “The Discipline of Aesthetic”, Jürgen Habermas also reveals to what extent the modernist culture is influential in the lives of the individuals:

Modernist culture has come to penetrate the values of everyday life; the lifeworld is infected by modernism. Because of the forces of modernism, the principle of unlimited self-realization, the

demand for authentic self-experience and the subjectivism of a hyperstimulated sensitivity have come to be dominant (2001, p. 1751).

As implied, modernity has affected the cultural codes and societal norms deeply in the Edwardian period. It may also be inferred that modernity have had an immense impact on the ways of people’s life. Moreover, the relationship between modernity and capitalism is so ambiguous that it is arguable whether modernity is the foundation of capitalism or vice versa. As known, capitalism, an economic system which is based on generally the private ownership of the means of production and their profit, includes a number of characteristics such as private ownership, capital accumulation, market competition, commodity production, and so on, as a result of rapid improvement in industrialism.

In *Howards End*, Forster purposefully exposes how both females and males are deeply affected by the abrupt emergence of capitalism, which demolished the feudal mode of production. Correspondingly, this paper attempts to unearth the perspectives of the characters about capitalism, particularly in regard to capital accumulation and private ownership and to interrogate whether their perspectives vary from each other due to the different classes they belong to.

***Howards End* within the Triad of Modernity, Capitalism and Liberalism**

In *Howards End*, Forster, while crafting his characters, threads their destinies together unexpectedly around the issues of capitalism. He firstly attempts at conducting negotiation between the classes in regard to ethics and capital order; and then he indicates his uneasiness about different modes of capitalism such as ownership, accumulation, commerce, commodification and production in the Edwardian society. These different modes of capitalism have paved the way for the emergence of new cultural forms, by which the Edwardian society was deeply affected. Before identifying the perceptions and attitudes of characters, Raymond Williams’ perspectives on culture are presented. Because the characters who are struggling for modernity acquire their reformed culture through enculturation and socialization processes in the novel. Correspondingly, Williams acknowledges that there is more than one single culture in a given society, and also adds that “We need a common culture, because we shall not survive without it” ([1958], 1961, p. 304). As indicated, whole life is characterized by the nature of social relationships, which are formed by the interactions of alternative cultures to make a common culture. In the same work, Williams describes the common culture as an organic growth monitored or observed by its members. Furthermore, to him, the dominant culture is not the only culture in the cultural territory even if it has been the most powerful by far. Namely, he adds that there have always been “residual or emergent strains within a culture that offer alternatives to the hegemony” or “the dominant culture” ([1958], 1961). Explicitly, the Bastas as the representatives of the working-class people in *Howards End* are under the strong influence of dominant culture, that is, the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels, who are the most powerful ones. The dominant culture affects the debased culture, namely the working-class in *Howards End* with their beliefs, views, perspectives and manners because of its cultural habitus. In the novel, Leonard Bast is presented as a man who has been deeply affected by the way the Schlegels live. For instance, after Leonard goes to the Concert Queen Hall and meets with the Schlegels, as one of the sisters Helen takes the umbrella of Leonard at the concert mistakenly, he says to himself, “If only I had a bit of luck, the whole thing would come straight... But of a heritage that may expand gradually, he had no conception; he hoped to come to Culture suddenly, much as the Revivalist hopes to come to Jesus. Those Miss Schlegels had come to it; they had done the trick [...]” (*HE*, p. 35). On the other hand, according to Helen, Leonard seems to be interesting, but he is poor, and “He is married to a wife whom he doesn’t seem to care for much [...]. He lives a life where all the money is apt to go on nonsense and clothes” (*HE*, p. 95).

By penning such a social novel, Forster reveals the importance of culture and society in the Edwardian period in (re)shaping the characteristics of the modern men and women. Apart from this, he also exposes his own inclinations to liberal humanism in this novel. Many scholars indicate Forsters’ liberal humanistic perspective by attributing either him or his works as “liberal form of humanism” (Smith, 1966, p. 109); “liberal utopianism” (Martin & Piggford, 1997, p. 21) and “liberal society” (Kermode, 2009, p. 21). However, the term liberty and its demarcations are elusive as Eccleshall asserts, “liberty is a flabby and ambiguous concept which yields neither a settled meaning nor consensus about the conditions in which it is secured” (1986, p. 2). Moreover, Jonathan Rose explicitly states that “[f]or all his gentle liberalism, Forster embraced the class prejudices of modernist intellectuals” by describing *Howards End* as “fragrant with nostalgia for a rigid social hierarchy” (2001, p. 402). Furthermore, Firchow’s sharp remark denotes that Forster is “... fundamentally an Edwardian Liberal, which means that he is against foreign engagements and embroilments, for free movement and free trade, against Great Britain and for Little England” (1981, p. 53). Yet, Forster’s liberal humanistic perspective is presented through the conflict among the classes in *Howards End* with a focus on the aspects of modernity.

Including contemporary liberalism, Forster also evaluates “many of the ingredients of the New Liberal programme” (Medalie, 2002, p. 7) in *Howards End* and reflects the path of achievements implied by the aforesaid programme, which includes social amelioration and democratic government. On the issue of its modernist perspective, Medalie pronounces that

The novel deprecates many of the phenomena that constitute modernity, including the increase in population, the growth of suburbs, the attempts to democratise ‘culture’, the ascendancy of the plutocrats and even the proliferation of motor cars. Like many other modernist or proto-modernist works *Howards End* presents modernity as a crises and apocalypse, something which must be opposed (2002, p. 7).

Howards End displays modernity with its negative effects on the lives of the characters. Indeed, many aspects of modernity are presented through the eyes of the characters. For instance, in one night, the characters experience how their conventional houses are demolished and large blocks of flats are rebuilt instead. Moreover, the city dwellers witness the struggle of the rural people for becoming urban citizens, but in vain. Thus, the characters in the novel are not only portrayed with their distinctive reactions to modernity but also with their awkward reactions to the forms of capitalism in the Edwardian society.

Capitalism: Private ownership and capital accumulation in *Howards End*

The following part unveils how modernity affects the perspectives of the characters in relation to the modes of capitalism such as private ownership and capital accumulation. Generally considered among one of the most important modes of capitalism, private ownership has always had a great impact on the lives of the characters. On the close connection of modernity and capitalism, Jorge Larrain elaborates Marx’s idea: “For Marx, what was the basis of modernity was the emergence of capitalism and the revolutionary bourgeoisie, which led to an unprecedented expansion of productive forces and to the creation of the world market” (2000, p. 13). As indicated, modernity and its close connection with capitalism may also have consequential effects in the lives of the characters in *Howards End*.

As far as capitalism is concerned, the classes in *Howards End* are distinctively divided into three main strands. One is the Schlegels, the upper-middle class intellect; the other one is the Wilcoxes, the upper-middle class capitalist; and the last of all is the Basts, the working-class. Each member in these classes is seen to have been affected by capitalism because of their perspectives to modernity, but relatively different from one another. In the novel, on the one hand, the characters are desperately trying to rebel

against the newly adopted cultural codes of the Edwardian society because of their quest for modernity. On the other hand, they mostly fail in appreciating the new social order. Yet, the characters perceive and receive the effects of capitalism in relation to the classes they belong to.

The first mode of capitalism, namely "private ownership" or in other words, private property is known as a legal ownership of property by legal entities excluding governmental ones. Private property is considered as binary opposition of public property. Among the items of property ownership, the consumption goods, commercial property and capital goods can be given as examples. Yet, in Marxian notion, the concepts of private property and personal property are completely different from each other. Whereas the private property is the means of production which is based on an economic enterprise, particularly on production and wage labour, the personal property is the production of consumer goods or goods produced by an individual.

In the novel, the Wilcoxes generally control money and exert power in the capitalist system as their prosperity mostly depends on "production of imperial spaces abroad" (Thacker, 2000, 45) in a company called the Imperial and West African Rubber Company. By the words "imperial spaces," the British exploitation of the natural sources of the colonial countries is meant. Among the Wilcoxes, Henry Wilcox is the one who "successfully manages commercial activities both in England and in Africa" (Sidorsky, 2007, p. 253). As inferred, the property ownership of the Wilcoxes commonly depends on the commercial property of the imperial countries. In other words, the Wilcoxes, whose capital wealth of income producing assets are gradually valued in foreign investments, become wealthy by their new investments of property in the mainland, that is, in England.

In the novel, the perceptions and reactions of the Schlegel sisters are remarkable when they are confronted with the wealth of the Wilcoxes. Unlike Margaret, Helen shows no enthusiasm for the value of the Wilcoxes' commodity. As the representatives of upper-middle class and intellectuals, Helen underestimates the value of commerce and financial exchange. She places much more importance to humanism than materialism. Whereas Margaret is strongly influenced by the means of capitalism of the Wilcoxes, Helen stays indifferent to their wealth. In other words, Helen shows no sympathy for the private ownership of the Wilcoxes. Furthermore, she has always been aware of Mr. Wilcox's excessive incentive for making more money. What is more, she informs her cousin by narrating how the Wilcoxes are zealous for amounting their capital wealth by increasing their income producing assets with these statements:

[...] the Wilcoxes collect houses . . . They have, one, Ducie street; two, Howards End, where my great rumpus was; three, a country seat in Shropshire; four, Charles has a house in Hilton; and five, another near Epsom; and six, Evie will have a house when she marries, and probably a pied-a-terre in the country – which makes seven. Oh yes, and Paul a hut in Africa makes eight (*HE*, p. 121).

As the quotation above uncovers, Forster consciously unearths the subject of private property in his novel by making references to capitalism. By doing this, he presents the attitudes and reactions of the upper-middle class to estate property and their obligatory relationships among each other around property ownership. For instance, the Schlegel sisters, who are deeply affected by the wide-scale and far-reaching transformations of the society, firstly face the impact of capitalism when they have to move from their houses at Wickham Place. Apparently, they have had to struggle with a number of factors related to real estate property such as the expiration of the lease at Wickham Place, impossibility of the lease renewal, the proprietor's decision on abolishing the Wickham Place, and Mr. Wilcox's intention about building modern flats, which mushroom in every corner of London. The conversation between

Mrs. Ruth Wilcox and Margaret indicates their own perceptions about the real estate property individually. The following extraction clearly shows to what extent Mrs. Wilcox have been affected by the approaching disposition of the young ladies from their houses because of the inevitable effects of capitalism:

[Mrs. Wilcox] “But couldn’t you get it renewed?” “I beg your pardon?” asked Margaret. “The lease, I mean.” “Oh, the lease! Have you been thinking of that all the time? How very kind of you!” “Surely something could be done.” “No; values have risen too enormously. They mean to pull down Wickham Place, and build flats like yours.” “But how horrible!” “Landlords are horrible.” Then she said vehemently: “It is monstrous, Miss Schlegel; it isn’t right. I had no idea that this was hanging over you. I do pity you from the bottom of my heart. To be parted from your house, your father’s house — it oughtn’t to be allowed. It is worse than dying. I would rather die than — Oh, poor girls! Can what they call civilisation be right, if people mayn’t die in the room where they were born? (HE, pp. 58-59).

As revealed in the quotation above, pulling down the houses and building new flats make more profit for their holders. In this case, the Wilcoxes get the most benefit from their investments as they commonly invest their money on private property, including buying and selling assets. Whereas Mr. Wilcox becomes greedy for the advantages of capitalism, the poor Mrs. Wilcox, as a representative of traditional Victorian woman, seems to have ignored her husband’s pragmatic and materialistic perspectives to the construction of new buildings and destruction of the old ones in London. Thus, she pities both Margaret and Helen Schlegels. In the novel, Mrs. Wilcox, the representative of “angel in the house”, dies unexpectedly and, in a short period of time, Mr. Henry Wilcox unexpectedly marries Margaret Schlegel. Their marriage may also be considered as a capitalist union of two distinctive families.

In the novel, the interpretations about capital value of Howards End as an estate also indicate that it has a high value among many other assets of the Wilcoxes. The following passage, which indicates whether Howards End as a property will be inherited by Charles, son of Mr. Wilcox, or not, exposes how Mr. Wilcox and Margaret handle the inheritance of Mr. Wilcox distinctively:

“Yes. Money, since you put is so frankly. I am determined to be just to all - just to you, just to them. I am determined that my children shall have me.”

“Be generous to them,” she [Margaret] said sharply. “Bother justice!”

“I am determined - and have already written to Charles to that effect -”

[Margaret] “But how much have you got?”

“What?”

[Margaret] “How much have you a year? I’ve six hundred.”

“My income?”

[Margaret] “Yes. We must begin with how much you have, before we can settle how much you can give Charles. Justice, and even generosity, depend on that.”

“I must say you’re a downright young woman,” he observed, patting her arm and laughing a little. “What a question to spring on a fellow!”

[Margaret] “Don’t you know your income? Or don’t you want to tell it me?” (HE, pp. 128-129).

The quotation above shows the clear distinction between man and woman, particularly on being openness while having a conversation on financial issues. Whereas Mr. Wilcox tries to hide his real intention about allocating money to his heirs from his new wife, Margaret willingly prefers communicating with her husband. Their communication also displays how Mr. Wilcox treats his wife

unsympathetically when she questions a number of things about his justice, generosity, income and alike. Mr. Wilcox, as a cultural product of the Edwardian society, finds it rather implausible for a woman to interrogate a man's income and also ridiculous for a woman to be a plain speaker like her. Forster intentionally attributes a set of characteristics to Margaret for the sake of making the readers familiar with the modern aspects of womankind as well. As an intellectual, Margaret feels free to ask a number of questions which are commonly dealt with the matters of capitalism on the surface, but in its deeper meaning, these questions also suggest her attitudes on the struggle of becoming equal with a man. As a representative of "new woman", Margaret radically disregards the conventional expectations of her husband and tries to hold her rights of freedom of expression.

As for property ownership, the newly introduced motorcars are also the symbolic representations which are commonly considered as the implications of modernity. However, Forster purposefully unveils the negative effects of motor cars rather than their positive effects. He indicates their bad effects firstly, on the dwellings of the people; secondly, on the nature; and thirdly, on the health of the people due to the dust they send. In the novel, the speech around the dust, as emphasized by Thacker, is "part of an ongoing spatial conflict between the car as an emblem of the city, and the rural countryside that is being 'spoiled' by the malignity of modern machinery" (2000, pp. 43-44). In the novel, the quotation below straightforwardly shows how the individuals are over-exposed to the harmful effects of dust due to the consequences of industrialism:

[...] the cloud of dust that they [motor cars] had raised in their passage through the village. It was settling again, but not all into the road from which he had taken it. Some of it had percolated through the open windows, some had whitened the roses and gooseberries of the wayside gardens, while a certain proportion had entered the lungs of the villagers (*HE*, p. 12).

As stated, apart from "private ownership", Forster includes the concept of "capital accumulation" in his novel as a second mode of capitalism. Because he simply wants to show how greediness gradually increases because of the characters quest for modernity by questioning their incentives to invest. As indicated in the novel, nearly all characters are in pursuit of profit in capitalist system. Because the new economic system has greatly affected the people's way of life. The concept of "capital accumulation," which involves the investment of money with the intention of increasing the initial monetary value of any assets usually in the form of profit, rent, interest or capital gains, is presented through a number of incidents in the novel. What is significant about these newly emerged concepts is that they have profoundly changed the identities of the characters.

In *Howards End*, Forster presents "capital accumulation" in regard to its inevitable association with "money". Insomuch that, he employs money as a "shadow character" in the novel as revealed by Mary Gordon, "[it] is possible to say that there is a shadow-character in *Howards End*: his name is money" (2004, p. 94). Specifically, the money itself acts as a means or guiding force among the characters. Equally, Sugate also justifies the importance of capital accumulation with its relation to industrialism in the novel:

It seems that Forster portrays the social milieu of Edwardian period in which human life in England was crazy with the notion of *capital accumulation* [italics my emphasis]. Money and accumulation of wealth became the key factors for the new mundane generation of twentieth century. By and large, the same factors are still seen influencing the modern global scenario, too. With the emergence of industrial revolution in the early twentieth century, money reached every factor of society and hence, those, who were deprived of it got liberated from the dominance of upper-class (2012, p. 179).

Forster purposefully presents to what extent the capital accumulation has to do with the capitalistic views of the characters. Besides, he also displays how the identity of the characters change for the sake of investing more money from their assets in the Edwardian society. As the following quote suggests, the effects of capital accumulation are visible in the changing appearance of the neighbouring area in the novel: “A block of flats, constructed with extreme cheapness, towered on either hand. Farther down the road two more blocks were being built, and beyond these an old house was being demolished to accommodate another pair. It was the kind of scene that may be observed all over London ...” (*HE*, p. 32). Such a description unambiguously exposes the change of the scenery in London for the sake of making more profit. As indicated, the people in Edwardian society give much more importance to the material gains as they are always inclined to convert their real estate properties into the ones which will most probably increase their capital values in the following years: “And again a few years, and all the flats in either road might be pulled down, and new buildings, of a vastness at present unimaginable, might arise where they had fallen” (*HE*, p. 32). Evidently, the transformations of the houses from conventional buildings into modern ones also denote how acquisitive the people in the Edwardian period are. These quotations remarkably reveal the zest of the upper-middle class Edwardian people for increasing their capital accumulation in order to gain much more profit. Interestingly enough, the Schlegels as the intellectuals of their time also seem to be rather inquisitive about the rapid change of their surroundings. They see that the owners rapidly demolish their houses for the sake of towering new buildings.

In the novel, the movement of capital from industrial to financial modes of accumulation is presented through the Schlegels as their aunt Mrs. Munt repetitively rebuked them for investing “Foreign Things, which always smash” (*HE*, p. 8) rather than the domestic ones. The Schlegels’ foreign investments increase admirably whereas their domestic investments decline gradually. According to Hobsbawm (1989), particularly after the 1900’s, the export of British capital was so high that more than half of all British funds were invested abroad. At the very beginning of the novel, Margaret’s conversation with her aunt obviously reveals the importance of money in a capitalist system with a focus on the poor:

‘Money pads the edges of things,’ said Miss Schlegel. ‘God help those who have none.’

‘But this is something quite new!’ said Mrs. Munt, [...]

‘New for me; sensible people have acknowledged it for years. You and I and the Wilcoxes stand upon money as upon islands. It is so firm beneath our feet that we forget its very existence. It’s only when we see some one near us tottering that we realise all that an independent income means. Last night, when we were talking up here round the fire, I began to think that the very soul of the world is economic, and that the lowest abyss is not the absence of love, but the absence of coin.’

‘I call that rather cynical.’

‘So do I. But Helen and I, we ought to remember, when we are tempted to criticise others, that we are standing on these islands, and that most of the others are down below the surface of the sea. The poor cannot always reach those whom they want to love, and they can hardly ever escape from those whom they love no longer. We rich can.’ (*HE*, pp. 42-43).

This conversation ends with Mrs. Munt’s saying, “That’s more like Socialism” (*HE*, p. 43) and Margaret replies, “Call it what you like” (*HE*, p. 43). One thing is clear in this passage, it is the power of money. The quotation above simply refers to the discrimination between the poor and the rich in relation to their incomes. As the upper-middle class people, the Schlegels are not even aware of the existence of their own money as it is something easily accessible for them. Moreover, they are able to satisfy their own desires with the money they have. Interestingly enough, among the members of the Schlegels family, none of them work. Rather, they invest money through stock market. And, when they come

across with someone staggering, only then, they can appreciate what it means being poor. Furthermore, they are all aware of the fact that the conditions of the poor are rather unendurable as they cannot make their own choices by their free will, even about their marriages. As inferred, where Jacky is bound to marry poor Leonard Bast, Helen feels free not to marry Paul, Mr. Wilcox's son, because of the social status she is involved in. However, more than the characters' social status, their wealth determines their own preferences.

In the novel, it is discernible that both of the families reflect different perspectives about the demolition of old buildings and their modification into more profitable and practical modern flats. For instance, the Wilcoxes are highly involved in the estate business. Because, for them, the houses are the commodities to be bought and sold for their material capital. On the other hand, for the Schlegels, the houses are much more than commodity. Margaret worries that "We are reverting to the civilisation of luggage, and historians of the future will note how the middle classes accreted possessions without taking root in the earth, and may find in this the secret of their imaginative poverty" (*HE*, p. 107). When the two families are compared, it is apparent that the Wilcoxes are ostensibly much more materialistic than the Schlegels.

In another part of the novel, the conversation between Henry and Margaret overtly reveals their own inclinations about the houses in Ducie street, which will be abolished soon. Whereas Margaret pronounces that "How sad! It's only a few years since they built those pretty houses", but in return, Henry responds, "Shows things are moving. Good for trade" (*HE*, p. 130). As stated, the perspectives of males and females are completely different from one to another. On the one hand, Margaret shows her dissatisfaction with the sights and sounds of the newly constructed appearance of the street, on the other hand, Henry is deeply concerned about the profits of these houses as commodities. Specifically, Henry only thinks of profit and loss. Besides, Margaret's response to Henry also indicates the collapse of the modern man in a modern society: "I hate this continual flux of London. It is an epitome of us at our worst - eternal formlessness; all the qualities, good, bad, and indifferent, streaming away- streaming, streaming forever. That's why I dread it so" (*HE*, p. 130). On the issue of capitalism, the Schlegels' views are epitomized by the conversation between Margaret's German nephew and his uncle:

"Do you imply that we Germans are stupid, Uncle Ernst?" exclaimed a haughty and magnificent nephew. Uncle Ernst replied, "To my mind. You use the intellect, but you no longer care about it. That I call stupidity." As the haughty nephew did not follow, he continued, "You only care about the things that you can use, and therefore arrange them in the following order: Money, supremely useful; intellect, rather useful; imagination, of no use at all" (*HE*, pp. 19-20).

The quotation above blatantly suggests that even if the Schlegels pretend themselves to be the intellectuals of their own time, they are also keen on arranging things in relation to their use order. To them, at the highest rank is money just like the Wilcoxes. In other words, money is ranked in number one, intellect is number two, and imagination is the last of all, that is, imagination seems to be useless at all for the Schlegels as well. Because the Schlegels are also under the strong influence of capitalism. Even if they have an intellectual background inherited from their ancestors, the perspectives of the characters on capitalism are also changing due to their gradual greediness for acquiring more money.

Apart from the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels, the Basts, as the representatives of working class with their debased cultural background, have always been under the strong influence of capitalism. And, they have had to struggle with the bad effects of capitalism. Because the Basts family, namely Leonard and Jacky, hardly ever satisfy their most basic needs such as nutrition. For instance, when Leonard is having his meal, he usually "manage[s] to convince his stomach that it was having a nourishing meal" (*HE*, p. 38), even if it is not enough for him. Moreover, let alone leading a comfortable life, the Bast family have had

to struggle to survive under the burden of the capitalist system. For instance, the following quote explicitly shows that in order to heat the house and to cook, the Bast family only has “a penny,” which indicates how hard they meet their ends: “Leonard tidied up the sitting-room, and began to prepare their evening meal. He put a penny into the slot of the gas-meter, and soon the flat was reeking with metallic fumes. Somehow he could not recover his temper, and all the time he was cooking he continued to complain bitterly” (*HE*, p. 37).

Unlike the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels, who invest through the means of private ownership and capital accumulation, the Bast family have never had the opportunity to invest in private property or capital accumulation. Undeniably, Leonard rents a furnished flat in which none of the objects are his: “He was renting the flat furnished; of all the objects that encumbered it none were his own except the photograph frame, the Cupids, and the books” (*HE*, p. 34). Correspondingly, the Basts can neither save nor keep any savings they have because of their income. Unquestionably, their *status quo* also determines their economic capital. Unlike the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes, the Basts are the couples whose roots are deeply connected to the rural places rather than the urban one. In the novel, Forster highlights the migration of the rural people who have agricultural ties to the urban places through the Basts. As known, the new economic system leads to more strain on the people who are forced to migrate from rural to urban places in England at that time. The Bast family is one of them. Leonard Bast, whose grandparents farm for a living as a man of agriculture in the previous social order, becomes the victim of industrialization and new economic system. Unlike his grandparents, Leonard has had to survive his life not on the cultivation, production and consumption of the land but on the other sources such as human relations. However, it does not become possible as he is fired. Nevertheless, according to Schlegel sisters, the condition of Leonard can be improved, as suggested in the following quote:

Something must be done for “Mr. Bast”; his conditions must be improved without impairing his independence; he must have a free library, or free tennis-courts; his rent must be paid in such a way that he did not know it was being paid; it must be made worth his while to join the Territorials; he must be forcibly parted from his uninspiring wife, the money going to her as compensation; he must be assigned a Twin Star, some member of the leisured classes who would watch over him ceaselessly (groans from Helen); he must be given food but no clothes, clothes but no food, a third-return ticket to Venice, without either food or clothes when he arrived there. In short, he might be given anything and everything so long as it was not the money itself (*HE*, pp. 89- 90).

Nonetheless, the good wishes of the Schlegels for Leonard do not prevent him from collapsing. It is rather clear that sooner or later Leonard will become unemployed as he is unable to adjust himself neither to the new working conditions nor to the modernity. The fact that Leonard has lost his placement in the new economic system also leads his displacement from his hereditary identity, as Forster noted, “One guessed him as the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization had sucked into town; as one of the thousands who have lost the life of the body and failed to reach the life of the spirit” (*HE*, p. 82). Moreover, when Leonard has lost his place in the capitalist system as a worker, he is also displaced by the new social order. As a proof for this, his eviction can be given as an example: “The Basts had just been evicted for not paying their rent [...]” (*HE*, p. 183). In other words, they become losers in the modern world. Accordingly, the capitalist system determines the place of the characters in the new economic system. The main distinction between the Wilcoxes and the Basts stems from capital accumulation, because “[w]ith the profit made from the labor of workers, the capitalist lives on, reinvests, and makes more money” (Levine, 1998, p. 3). In other words, the Basts are the ones who are exploited by the means of capitalist system.

In the novel, while the Basts are under the strong influence of the new economic system, the Wilcoxes also experience the same, but to an acceptable degree. Namely, capitalism also forces Mr. Wilcox to rent his lands and houses rather than living on it. Generally, the Wilcox family also experiences the impacts of the changing economic system. For instance, Mr. Wilcox reduces his wife Margaret’s inheritance in order to abstain from bad effects of economy. Furthermore, the Wilcoxes also send their son Paul thousands of miles away from his hometown and make him live in Nigeria to gain more profit and also to satisfy their imperial desire. Yet, the suffer the Wilcoxes experience can never be compared to that of the Basts. Because the Basts desperately struggle to survive in the capitalist society. Remarkably, Leonard Bast is unable to satisfy his own needs and interests because of his poverty. Duplessis explains Leonard’s desperate situation as follows: “Leonard Bast, who typifies the poor man desiring to improve intellectually, suffers economic hardship, humiliation, and finally death as a result of his contact with the intellectual Schlegel sisters, the blue-bloods of academic capital, whose impractical philanthropy theorizes the literacy of the poor in society” (2008, p. 95).

In the Edwardian period, modernity enabled the individuals to confront with the newly mechanized, crowded and urban settings in England, partly due to the gains of the imperialism. The individuals who struggle to give a meaning to both body and mind are “shocked”, a metaphor commonly used for both the representations of suffering and descriptions of modern subjectivity. In his essay, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” Walter Benjamin reads the concept of “shock” as a response to the symptom of society’s fallen status:

Shock is phenomenal, impersonal and without agency – in the background are the processes of urbanization, industrialization and modern condition, which are implicated. From the individual’s point of view, the shocking stimulus comes out of nowhere, with a suddenness that is experienced as a violent and frightening collapse of time and space. Part of the shock is the individual’s sudden awareness of her inconsequence against the great web of modernity which has attacked her not only suddenly but randomly: nobody can predict when a train will run off its tracks, when trams will collide, or even when a stranger will bump one’s elbow in a crowd (Rijswijk, 2010, pp. 158-159).

As the quotation above suggests, the characters in *Howards End* are shocked by the urbanization, industrialization and modern conditions. Forster, from the perspectives of the characters, reveals how the appearance of the cities change instantly and shockingly. Firstly, by the physical scenery, the characters are shocked, and secondly, they are unable to appreciate the relation between time and space in a setting where everything is immensely changing. They lack proper sequence in their thoughts and actions, characterized by illogical and inconsequent reasoning. Undeniably, the characters are commonly depicted in difficult conditions because of the capitalist order of the society, where everyone is looking for the investment of their income either by the imperial gains as the Wilcox family; or by the investments as the Schlegel family; or by the workforce as the Bast family.

Just like the definition above outlines the borderline of “shock,” the quotation below also displays how the characters shockingly experience the effects of modernity and capitalism along with industrialism, which is associated with modern city life such as traffic, crowds, noise, pollution and so on.

OVER TWO YEARS PASSED, and the Schlegel household continued to lead its life of cultured, but not ignoble, ease, still swimming gracefully on the grey tides of London. Concerts and plays swept past them, money had been spent and renewed, reputations won and lost, and the city herself, emblematic of their lives, rose and fell in a continual flux, while her shallows washed more widely against the hills of Surrey and over the fields of Hertfordshire. This famous building had arisen, that was doomed. Today Whitehall had been transformed; it would be the turn of Regent Street tomorrow. And month by month the roads smelt more strongly of petrol, and were more difficult to cross, and human beings heard each other speak with greater difficulty, breathed less of the air, and saw less of the sky (*HE*, p. 76).

Remarkably, in *Howards End*, the characters are analysed through the perspectives of capitalism with its relation to modernity. As already stated, the identities of both female and male characters gradually change because of the effects of modernism. Specifically, a new form of identity appears as capitalism affects the manners of the characters. As far as capitalism is concerned, the classes are specifically divided into three main strands. One is the Schlegels, the upper-middle class intellect; the other one is the Wilcoxes, the upper-class capitalist; and the last of all is the Basts, the working-class. Yet only the Basts are under the strong influence of capitalism. Moreover, they are unable to survive in the capitalist world order and they become invisible in a capitalist society. They neither think of accumulating money nor having property. They only try to survive in a society where values of the culture have been changing gradually from spirituality to materiality. Just as is the metaphor in the fairy tale called Little Red Riding Hood, “the terrible big mouth” of capitalism figuratively eats up the Basts. Forster, by including the concept of capital accumulation as a mode of capitalism, simply demonstrates how greediness of the people gradually increase in the Edwardian period. As indicated, nearly all characters excluding the Basts are in pursuit of profit in a capitalist society.

Conclusion

In this paper, it is attempted to uncover the changing identities of characters who are in the grip of capitalism in the Edwardian period. By decoding their insights, particularly on two modes of capitalism: private ownership and capital accumulation through the lenses of Marxism, this paper exposes that Forsterian characters are under the strong influence of material gain because of the gradual effects on modernity. The characters in the Edwardian society want to live in better living conditions, as is the case in our own age, they avariciously try every means to have a better life. All the characters in the novel recognize that the larger they accumulate, the better they live. However, while greedily accumulating money on foreign investments, the characters, on the other hand, experience the bad effects of modernity, particularly when they see the flashy modernity of their cities, which make them panicky. Forster, by portraying the idiosyncratic behaviour of upper-middle class family the Wilcoxes, whose wealth and quest for modernity impelled them to be a rather unpleasant family, attracts the readers’ attention into the bad effects of capitalism and modernity. In the novel, it is portrayed that economic motives of the Wilcoxes seem to take precedence over humanitarian conditions. For instance, Mr. Wilcox feels no sorry for Leonard’s loss of job even if Leonard has lost his job because of Mr. Wilcox’s suggestions.

In the Edwardian period, where the old certainties of the Victorian period are repeatedly questioned and new opportunities are experimented, Forster positions his characters in the throes of modernity and capitalism in the Edwardian period to make his readers familiarize with the continual changing nature of the culture in the society. As indicated, the Wilcoxes, as the representatives of capitalism, mostly dedicate themselves to property ownership and capital accumulation for the sake of sustaining their wealth in the capitalist system. Yet, as for the Schlegels, they are presented as the intellectuals of the

Edwardian period who apparently give much more importance to the cultural capital rather than the material one at the very beginning of the novel. However, the Schlegels, as the humanitarians, cannot resist the change and they also become capitalist intellectuals in time. In other words, they also rank money in the first place because of the fact that they prefer accumulating and investing money on foreign things. Even if they seem to have appeared anti-capitalist intellectuals, they have turned out to be greedy capitalists at the end. Consequently, they can best be defined as intellectuals of the time whose priority is money. As for the Basts, they are unable to survive in the capitalist world order. They neither think of accumulating money nor having property. They struggle against the bad effects of capitalism, but in vain, since Leonard has lost his job. Rather than investing money, what they think is only to survive in the capitalist system. Yet, it is significant to emphasize that it is not only the capitalist Wilcox family but also the intellectual Schlegels exploit the Basts family.

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