

UNDER THE SAME ROOF:  
RECONCILIATION OF THE OPPOSITE ENDS  
IN E. M. FORSTER'S *HOWARDS END*

AYNI ÇATI ALTINDA: E. M. FORSTER'İN  
*HOWARDS END* ADLI ESERİNDE ZIT  
KUTUPLARIN UZLAŞMASI

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Abstract

The twentieth century marks the beginning of a new period in England during which the norms and the traditions pertaining to the Victorian age start to be questioned. While the echoes of this change have been audible from the 1890s onwards, they reach their climax with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 because it announces not only the physical death of the Queen but also the symbolic death of the Victorian mindset. With the reign of King Edward VII, therefore, the literary texts of the period illustrate a liberal outlook that questions the outdated ideals of the previous era. Within this context, this article examines E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910) by foregrounding and analysing the clash between the ideals of the past and those of the present, which in the wider perspective demonstrates Forster's modernist agenda to go beyond the strict dualities and to introduce a totally fresh synthesis. Epitomising the cultural inheritance of the country, *Howards End* is more than a house; it represents the future of England. Thus, it is important that *Howards End* should function as a unifying force that will bring these opposite ends together – as represented through different socio-economic classes embodied through three families whose lives get connected to one another at the end of the novel. Thereby, Forster aptly weaves the stories of the Schlegels, the Wilcoxes, and the Bast family by counterbalancing the intellectual and the material; the spiritual and the physical; the feminine and the masculine; the past and the present, and he presents a modern synthesis that, he believes, will shape England in the future.

**Keywords:** E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, Reconciliation, Opposite Ends, Social Class, Cultural Inheritance.

Öz

Yirminci yüzyıl İngiltere'si, Viktorya dönemine ait norm ve geleneklerin sorgulanmaya başlandığı yeni bir sürecin başlangıcına işaret eder. Her ne kadar bu değişimin yankıları 1890'lardan itibaren duyulmaya başlanmış olsa da İngiltere Kraliçesi Victoria'nın 1901 yılında vefatı ile en üst seviyesine ulaşır, çünkü kraliçenin vefatı sadece fiziksel bir kayıp değildir; onun temsil ettiği değer yargılarının da yok oluşu anlamına gelir. Dolayısıyla, Kral VII. Edward'ın tahta çıkması ile, dönemin edebi eserlerinde bir önceki yüzyılın modası geçmiş ideallerini sorgulayan özgürlükçü bir tavır sergilendiği görülür. Tüm bunlardan hareketle, bu makale, E. M. Forster'in *Howards End* (1910) adlı eserini, geçmişin ve şimdinin temsil ettiği ideallerin çatışması üzerinden incelemeyi ve Forster'in bu zıtlıkların ötesine geçmek ve tamamen yeni bir sentez ortaya sunmak için benimsediği modernist tutumu sergilemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ülkenin kültürel mirasını temsil eden *Howards End* bir ev olmanın ötesinde, romanda İngiltere'nin geleceğini yansıtan bir öge olarak sunulur. Dolayısıyla, romanın sonunda farklı sosyal sınıflardan gelen üç ailenin yaşamlarının birbirlerine eklemlenmesinden hareketle, *Howards End*'in zıt kutupları bir araya getiren uzlaştırıcı bir güç olarak görülmesi gerektiği ele alınmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Schlegel, Wilcox ve Bast ailelerinin hikayelerini birbirine dokuyarak, Forster düşünsel ile maddeselin, ruhsal ile fizikselin, dişil ile eril, geçmiş ile bugünün dengelenişi üzerinden, gelecekte İngiltere'yi şekillendireceğine inandığı modern bir sentez ortaya koyar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, Uzlaşma, Zıt Kutuplar, Sosyal Sınıf, Kültürel Miras.

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Published in 1910, E. M. Forster's (1879-1970) *Howards End* provides an insight into England, which was passing through significant changes in relation to the social, historical, and political dynamics of the early twentieth century. Despite having been interpreted by various scholars, *Howards End* continues rendering different interpretations possible – thanks to its embodiment of the ongoing dialogue between the seemingly 'opposite' ends represented through three families from different socio-economic classes in the novel: the conservative and the materialist Wilcox family; the liberal and the intellectual Schlegels; and finally, the Bast family from the lower-middle-class. To a Victorian mindset, it is not difficult to draw sharp distinctions between these three families, for the Victorians tend to compartmentalise everything into strict boxes. Nevertheless, with the turn of the century, it is to be realised that what has been embraced as solid and fixed for too long is, in fact, bound to change and flow in accordance with the evolving dynamics of the new century. Within this perspective, in his attempt to bring all these three families under the roof of Howards End, Forster addresses much beyond his time, and he offers an alternative to the stagnant and passive standpoint of Victorian England. Hereby, it should also be noted that as "[a]n Edwardian, Forster is not a modernist in the strict sense, but rather a central figure in the transition from Victorianism into Modernism" (8). Therefore, it is not surprising that "Forster breaks with customary family values of the early 1900s," and his work posits an ultimate possibility for the creation of "an unconventional family" that challenges either/or dualisms of the previous era (Olson 351). Besides, Forster's existence as a timeless writer can also be validated through British author Zadie Smith's (b. 1975) novel *On Beauty* (2005), which is loosely modelled on *Howards End*. In her novel, Smith uses "the archetypal story of the liberals versus conservatives" and moves the setting "from Edwardian England to George W. Bushian Boston" (Gray 48). The conservative family in Smith's novel finds its parallel in the Kippses – a family of black Caribbean origin; and the Schlegels find their reflection in the Belseys – a family of African Americans. Though a century apart, the dilemma and the conflict between these two families remind the readers that the harsh dualities embodied through people belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds can never be limited to a certain time and space in history. Forster's resolution to bring all these clashing opposites together reveals an optimistic and unifying attitude that explains the reason why *Howards End* continues appealing to numerous scholars and readers in the twenty-first century. In this manner, the aim of this paper is to analyse the connection between the inner/personal and the outer/impersonal and to show the ways in which the dualities pertaining to spiritual and

the physical, the feminine and the masculine, the past and the present can intermingle within the bounds of *Howards End*.

Marked as a period of transition from the ideals of the Victorian era to the liberal nuances of Modernism, the early decades of the twentieth century elucidate the need to find a stable position that would ideally make it possible to hold on to the traditional set of values represented by Queen Victoria (1819-1901) and her cultural legacy. Following the death of the Queen, however, King Edward VII (1841-1910) comes to the throne, and it marks the beginning of the Edwardian era – lasting from 1901 to 1910. As a reaction to the conservative mindset which goes hand in hand with the notions of control and repression that are mainly associated with the Victorian age; it is not surprising that the Edwardian era foregrounds the dissolution of such oppressive attitudes that tend to marginalize certain segments of the society, including the women and the labourers. In addition, as opposed to his mother, who is largely withdrawn from public life, the new king is known as a pleasure-seeking person whose manner of fashion, speech, and amusement are set as an example to be imitated. As a result, the luxury and ostentation replace the moderate, dull, and duty-oriented lifestyle of the previous era. Together with the technological advancements such as the development of the automobile industry, the introduction of electric lighting and communication systems, the physical borders between distant places get nullified, and these changes find their socio-economic reflections in the expansion of the opportunities that enable people to increase their income during this period. Therefore, the social borders between classes also begin to lose their sharp edges, because by taking the advantage of social mobility, the individuals can create wealth for themselves. In this regard, as Caserio states, “King Edward VII’s reign is a rebellious era, establishing a libertarian agenda for subsequent decades” (83). Hence, it is possible to argue that the writers of the Edwardian period tend to display this “libertarian agenda” in their works, and they pursue “artistic freedom” and “experiment with literary forms and genres” (83) – which, in the wider perspective, imbues their works with the hues of modernist echoes.

Although it would be wrong to limit E. M. Forster to a certain period as he led a long life and “witnessed social and cultural changes on an unprecedented scale” (Page 1); to be able to scrutinise *Howards End* from a broader perspective, it is significant to analyse his position as an Edwardian writer. Also, as Crews argues, “Forster’s literary activity since 1924 [the publication date of his last novel, *A Passage to India*] can strike us only as a series of footnotes, however brilliant, to a career whose real center lies in the first

decade of the twentieth century” (3). In this light, Forster is “an Edwardian in point of time, and he is equally so in spirit” (3). Exploring the rebellious common platform that Caserio has indicated above, Forster belongs to “the liberal tradition,” and he complies with its tenets by attacking the manners and morals of the British moral class, supporting spontaneity of feeling, as well as the virtues of sexual fulfilment and intelligence (Trilling 13-14). However, as Trilling elaborates further on, Forster, on the other hand, goes against the premises of liberalism because he does not support the simple logic that is strongly withheld by the liberal mind: “[G]ood is good and bad is bad” (13). For Forster, such a limited interpretation would mean turning a blind eye to the existence of good-and-evil (14). Hence, by establishing his autonomous position, as well as developing a more comprehensive approach, Forster tries to shed light on the inner lives of the characters in *Howards End*. He does not simply paint his characters as rational beings, but he portrays their actions by referring to the interaction between the mind and the body – that is, the emotional and the physical – which, in a broader context, links Forster the Edwardian with Modernism. In other words, in his novel, Forster depicts the inner world of the characters by emphasising their insights and impressions and, thus, releases himself from the limited perspective of the conventional realist style.

Howards End is a Hertfordshire country house, “inspired by Rooksnest where Forster lived from 1883 to 1893. The choice of the name too is associated with this childhood home, for it once belonged to a family called Howard” (MacDonogh 37). In the novel, the house belongs to Ruth Wilcox, who is a Wilcox by marriage as her maiden name is Howard. Representing the past of England, she turns out to be a misfit in her own family. Unlike her husband, who stands for the emergent business class and is mainly motivated by financial interests, Ruth is deeply rooted in the earth, and she has traditional wisdom that is carried through generations. Just like her husband, Ruth’s children Charles, Paul, and Evie have long been disconnected from the earth and from the ideals that nature epitomizes. To illustrate, Charles is too occupied with his motor car; Paul has turned into a colonial administrator working in Nigeria, and Evie is a breeder of puppies who systematically controls the regenerative capacity of nature by intervening in the process. Hence, Ruth Wilcox sets out to look for a spiritual heir for the house because if it falls into the hands of any of her family members, it is quite likely that it will literally bring an end to Howards End. As Rose states, “Howards End signifies more than a house in the country; it becomes a symbol of personal freedom and hope for the future. It is to belong to those who can cherish it” (68). Accordingly, “the plot of *Howards End* is about the rights of property, about a destroyed will-and-testament and

rightful and wrongful heirs. It asks the question, ‘Who shall inherit England?’ (Trilling 102).

Forster develops the central tension of the novel by offering the Schlegel family as a counter rival to the Wilcoxes because the former can lay a spiritual claim to the house. As opposed to the materialistic and pragmatic stance of the Wilcoxes, the Schlegel family signifies the intellectual and cultural aspect of England. Lacking the paternal and the maternal figure(s), as they died years ago, the family consists of two sisters Margaret, Helen, and their brother, Tibby. Counterbalancing the highly masculine quality of the Wilcoxes, the Schlegels are predominantly feminine, and it makes the interaction between these two families easier – as it is first illustrated in the attraction between Helen and Paul, and then between Margaret and Henry in the novel.

In parallel to the way Ruth Wilcox is in search of a spiritual heir to *Howards End*, the sisters are also “looking for a new home, literally and symbolically” (Hodge 44). Their house in Wickham Place is a leasehold property left to them by their father, so at the expiration of the lease, the family will have to lose their thirty-year-old home, as well as their memories related to the place. The house also faces the threat of being demolished to make space for the construction of new blocks of flats. Now, therefore, it is a matter of finding the connection points between the two families so that they will be able to merge into one another, and out of this harmony, Ruth Wilcox’s wish to pass the traditional wisdom of her ancestors and to secure the continuation of *Howards End* will be realised.

While *Howards End* is usually interpreted to be a novel about England’s fate and the struggle of the classes to take control over it, it should not be forgotten that it is also a novel about the struggle between men and women. Represented by the male members of the Wilcox family, the masculine principle is depicted as a domineering power that is mobile and has the capacity to impose its own rules on nature. The motor car functions as an important symbol signifying the industrial and the practical characteristics of new England, whereas traditional England mainly depends on personal relations that operate on a deeper level of associations as conveyed through the bond between Margaret and Helen, Ruth and Margaret, Miss Avery and Ruth/Margaret. In other words, it is the female solidarity and agency that connect people to one another, thereby foregrounding empathy rather than indifference.

The connection between Margaret and Ruth Wilcox develops following Helen’s and Paul’s failure to form an enduring bond during Helen’s stay at *Howards End*. Impulsive

in her actions, Helen assumes to have fallen in love with the youngest son of the family, Paul Wilcox, or to express it more precisely, with the Wilcox way of life:

The energy of the Wilcoxes had fascinated her, had created new images of beauty in her responsive mind. To be all day with them in the open air, to sleep at night under their roof, had seemed the supreme joy of life, and had led to that abandonment of personality that is a possible prelude to love. (Forster 24)

However, as Trilling argues, “it was not a set of ideas that Helen was admiring—it was sex. It was with masculinity that she had fallen in love” (108-109). Having immersed herself in intellectual discussions for too long, at *Howards End*, Helen realises that she also exists as a body, and she forms a physical connection with Paul – through the kiss that he gives her under the wych-elm tree. However, soon enough, she gets disillusioned, for she witnesses Paul’s frightened reaction concerning the money issues at the breakfast table the next morning. Here, Paul shatters the image of the all-powerful masculine character that Helen has constructed in her mind. As a result, she starts questioning the reality behind the appearance: “I felt for a moment that the whole Wilcox family was a fraud, just a wall of newspapers and motor-cars and gold-clubs, and that if it fell I should find nothing behind it but panic and emptiness” (Forster 26).

Just like Helen, who feels torn between the ideals which she held close to and their sudden dissolution, Margaret, too, is having questions in her mind. Associated with the intellectual and the idealistic world, that is the inner life; Margaret starts to wonder whether she is missing out on the practical life that stands out there:

The truth is that there is a greater outer life that you [Helen] and I have never touched—a life in which telegrams and anger count. Personal relations, that we think supreme, are not supreme there. There love means marriage settlements, death, death duties. So far I’m clear. But here is my difficulty. This outer life, though obviously horrid, often seems the real one—there’s grit in it. It does breed character. Do personal relations lead to sloppiness in the end? (Forster 28)

Unlike her sister, however, who impulsively admires and then condemns the outer life, thus cancelling out the opportunity to bring the personal and the impersonal side by side, Margaret is more perceptive in her approach because she can assess the idealistic and the materialistic simultaneously. Hereby, she manages to form a connection both with Ruth Wilcox and Henry Wilcox, respectively. As mentioned above, her friendship

with Ruth Wilcox starts following Helen's disillusionment with Paul. Uprooted from the earth – yet only in appearance – Ruth moves to London with her family and begins to live in one of the apartment flats opposite to Wickham Place where the Schlegels reside. Since Helen is leaving for Germany with her cousin; and Paul for Nigeria, Margaret and Ruth Wilcox are able to visit each other without any reservations. Not bothered by the fear that her sister might be offended by the visit, as Paul is abroad now, Margaret is able to invite Ruth Wilcox to a lunch party in her house. In order to increase the effect of Margaret's and Helen's attempts to get together – not only on a physical but also on a spiritual level – Forster, in a sense, purifies the atmosphere from the influence of the remaining members of both families. Hence, he enables the formation of a much purer connection between Margaret and Ruth so that they can be totally exposed to each other, which in the end makes Margaret realise the illusionary life that she is leading – that is devoid of any down-to-earth connection with people around:

They left the dining-room, closing the door behind them, and as Mrs Wilcox buttoned up her jacket, she said: "What an interesting life you all lead in London!"

"No, we don't," said Margaret, with a sudden revulsion. "We lead the lives of gibbering monkeys, Mrs. Wilcox—really—We have something quite and stable at the bottom. We really have. All my friends have. Don't pretend you enjoyed lunch, for you loathed it, but forgive me by coming again, alone, or by asking me to you." (Forster 84)

It is Margaret's ability to see beyond the appearance and her tendency to develop a self-reflexive approach concerning her position in life – without falling into the trap of over-idealisation – that nominates her as a spiritual heir to *Howards End*. Having witnessed Margaret's insinuated search for a root, and her desire to form a connection with the tangible, just before her death, Ruth Wilcox writes a note indicating that she wants the house to be left to Margaret: "To my husband: I should like Miss Schlegel (Margaret) to have *Howards End*" (Forster 104). The surviving Wilcoxes, on the other hand, are represented to be much concerned about their daily lives in the novel: Charles starts inquiring about his motor-car on the day of his mother's funeral (Forster 109); Henry Wilcox feels regretful not because he was unable to see through his wife's deteriorating health, but because she hid it from them all (Forster 109), and he chooses to ignore his wife's bequest by naming it as a flimsy appeal: "It was not legal; it had been written in illness, and under the spell of a sudden friendship; it was contrary to the dead



woman's intentions in the past, contrary to her very nature, so far as that nature was understood by them" (Forster 106-107). As it is implied between the lines here, the Wilcoxes can never understand the ideal represented through Ruth Wilcox. Hence, by leaving her house to a young woman who is not literally related to her, Ruth chooses to neutralise her position both as a wife to her husband Henry and as a mother to her eldest son Charles who – under the normal circumstances – are entitled to lay claim on Howards End.

As Crews argues, "Margaret is temporarily cheated of what is hers, but in a deeper sense she is justly denied a role she has not yet earned" (111) because Ruth's note is demolished by the remaining members of the Wilcox family and Margaret does not have any knowledge about Ruth's ultimate wish at this point. Considering the end of the novel, since Howards End eventually falls into the hands of its true spiritual heir, it is functional that Margaret 'seems' to have been denied her true position. In this way, the reader is able to witness Margaret's spiritual maturation, for she is a character who has the capacity to evolve for the better in the novel. She has a questioning mind that does not take everything at face value. She is aware of her limitations, as well as of her positive sides. Therefore, she functions as a kind of mouthpiece for Forster, who "is content with the human possibility and its limitations" (Trilling 21). In other words, Forster "is one of the thinking people who were never led by thought to suppose they could be more than human and who, in bad times, will not become less" (23). Accordingly, it is possible to say that Margaret is the one who is able to understand both good-and-evil, spiritual-and-physical, intellectual-and-material, and on a broader scale, her marriage to Henry Wilcox epitomises her struggle to construct a bridge between the inner and the outer worlds:

It did not seem so difficult. She need trouble him with no gift of her own. She would only point out the salvation that was latent in his soul, and in the soul of every man. Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is left to either, will die.

Nor was the message difficult to give. It need not take the form of a good "talking." By quiet indications the bridge would be built and span their lives with beauty. (Forster 202-203)



While Margaret's connection with Ruth Wilcox operates on a spiritual level, her marriage to Henry Wilcox proves functional since it completes the missing part of the picture – that of the physical. In this way, Margaret is able to develop a much more comprehensive approach, and she justifies her rightful position as a spiritual heir to *Howards End*. Just like Helen, whose idealisation of the Wilcox family has been shattered to the ground, Margaret, too, is gradually brought to see through the shallowness, hypocrisy, and self-deception of the Wilcoxes. During this process, she encounters various tests that allow Margaret to put her principles and conscience into practice. For this aim, Forster designates Leonard Bast whose “function is to disturb the social conscience of the other characters and the reader” in the novel (Brander 146).

The Schlegels, situated between the upper-middle-class represented by the Wilcoxes and the lower-middle-class represented by Leonard Bast, have access to both ends. Accordingly, Trilling states that “each of these intellectual sisters has reached out to the mysterious extremes of the middle class, Margaret upward to the Wilcoxes, Helen downward to Basts” (105). Leonard Bast, the poor clerk who tries to improve himself through art and literature, “is placed at the centre of the story and powerfully affects all their middle-class lives, wrecking their security and so emphasizing the function of *Howards End* in restoring a sense of peace” (Brander 146-147). He stands in deep contrast to the Schlegels in his search of a “useless intellectualism” and to the Wilcoxes “in being poor and proudly honest in an area in which doublethink has led them to wealth” (147). At the concert, Helen carelessly picks up Leonard's umbrella and ignores the existence of its owner up until the moment he comes to Wickham Place and exposes himself. Leonard is denied the right to secure himself a distinct place in society. He is treated as a material good, whose feelings and aspirations are bound to be ignored by the members of the upper-middle-classes, especially by Henry Wilcox, who had an affair with Leonard's wife in the past – when she was a prostitute. Just like the umbrella, which is picked up and exchanged between hands, Henry Wilcox objectifies the female subject in his sexual intercourse with Jacky Bast and cheats on his wife, Ruth Wilcox. Moreover, though indirectly, he also meddles with the life of Leonard Bast. Hearing from Henry Wilcox that the company where Leonard is working is unsound and will soon collapse, Margaret and Helen, try to help the young man by advising him to change his job. However, all their attempts prove catastrophic as Leonard ends up losing his job. Although he has been able to regain his umbrella from the Schlegels, he cannot get an alternative job offer from Henry Wilcox because, as a capitalist businessman, Henry Wilcox is too blind to see the connection between Leonard's tragedy and his having a

hand in its implementation. In this light, Leonard functions as a figurative litmus paper that illustrates the extent of the selfishness and indifference that afflicts the English economy and the social life, which are highly influenced by the *laissez-faire* system. Hence, as Page also argues, “Leonard’s is not a fully realised individual tragedy but only a convenient occasion for the debate between two well-defined value-systems: humanistic concern and capitalistic indifference” (88).

Totally infuriated by Henry’s indifferent stance and Margaret’s ineffectual reaction concerning the matter, since rather than talking to him face to face, Margaret simply chooses to write a letter to Leonard and announces that Henry Wilcox has no vacancy for him; Helen, in return, desperately tries to connect herself to the poor man by sleeping with him. It may be interpreted as Helen’s attempt to relocate what is lost in Leonard back to its place – which is his dignity – but, as she is to admit later, she can never love a man; therefore, she uses Leonard as a tool to ease her conscience. This can be interpreted as a form of impersonal connection on the part of Helen – which proves fatal for Leonard, as it causes him to lose his life. It is significant that he dies at the hands of Charles Wilcox, who beats Leonard with the Schlegels’ family sword, thereby also implying the Schlegels’ ironic contribution to his death. Again, it is paradoxical that Leonard gets smashed by the books that tumble over his body – the very means by which he has tried to improve and educate himself. The system, in a way, digests Leonard and gets rid of him eventually. Nevertheless, the intimacy between Helen and Leonard, though lacking the personal and affectionate aspect, brings about the birth of a child who is to inherit the Howards End. Leonard may be dead, but he continues to live through his son. Moreover, the child also functions as an important figure enabling Margaret to see through Henry’s selfish and indifferent attitude that threatens the sisterly connection between her and Helen. Having learned about Helen’s pregnancy, Henry quickly condemns her behaviour – which he interprets as a sinful act – and he does not want Margaret to spend the night with Helen in Howards End. He even uses Ruth as an excuse to make Helen sleep in a hotel instead of Howards End because he does not want the memory of his late wife and the house to be defiled – which shatters Margaret’s remaining belief in the possibility that Henry may, one day, learn to connect:

“Not any more of this!” she cried. “You shall see the connection if it kills you, Henry! You have had a mistress—I forgave you. My sister has a lover—you drive her from the house. Do you see the connection? Stupid, hypocritical, cruel—oh contemptible!—a man who insults his wife when

she's alive and cants with her memory when she's dead. A man who ruins a woman for his pleasure, and casts her off to ruin other men. And gives bad financial advice, and then says he's not responsible. These, man, are you. You can't recognize them, because you cannot connect. I've had enough of your unweeded kindness. I've spoilt you long enough. All your life you have been spoiled. Mrs Wilcox spoiled you. No one has ever told you what you are—muddled, criminally muddled. Men like you use repentance as a blind, so don't repent. Only say to yourself: 'What Helen has done, I've done.'" (Forster 335)

Accordingly, Crews contends that "[a] believer in sowing wild oats, he [Henry] refuses to distinguish between unchastity and infidelity, that is, between technical 'sin' and the violation of his wife's trust" (115). He is unable to feel empathy, so he cannot form a personal relationship that does not stigmatise people. In the same vein, Margaret also experiences a kind of spiritual awakening because, at this point, she reaffirms her sisterly connection not only to Helen but also to Ruth Wilcox. Even though she has decided to ignore Henry's infidelity "[for] it was not her tragedy: it was Mrs. Wilcox's" (Forster 253), now she realises the real connection between herself and Ruth – that they are not separate but related, they are both a Mrs. Wilcox.

Finally, it can be said that *Howards End* acts as an amalgamation point where the Schlegels – represented by the sisters; the Wilcoxes – represented by Henry Wilcox, who undergoes a nervous breakdown due to Charles' imprisonment, and now needs his wife Margaret's affection and empathy; and the Basts – represented by Leonard's son, all come together and form a harmonious unity. Negating the dualistic agenda of Victorian England, which tends to introduce sharp distinctions between the intellectual and the material, the spiritual and the physical, the feminine and the masculine, the past and the present, the good and the bad, *Howards End* illuminates the path leading to a more welcoming and modernist attitude in terms of implying at the need to question the 'unshakeable' status of the long-established values and ideas. Epitomising the dynamic interaction between all these seemingly opposite ends, this paper has attempted to underline Forster's position as a modern writer who is able to read through the dualistic mindset of the period out of which he has sprung out and who has also achieved to turn these binaries upside-down. In this manner, as Bradbury also elucidates, "[i]t is thus possible to read the novel as a dialectical work moving towards *synthesis*, which is spiritual completeness" (par. 3, emphasis added). At *Howards End*, the past connects

with the present, the dead wife with the alive, the masculine with the feminine, and the outer life gets reconciled with the inner life. Under its roof, “[t]here is room for her [Margaret] father’s books—the life of the mind—in the library; there is room for Helen and her sisterly love; but there is also an upstairs, a physical life, which must be brought into concert with the rest” (Crews 113). In order to reach such a peaceful state, what is needed to be done is simple enough: *Only connect!* (Forster 202, emphasis added). In this respect, E. M. Forster goes beyond the restrictive regulations of the Victorian era and embraces a modernist vision that challenges the either/or dualities and welcomes a much egalitarian and unified perspective.

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