

CHAPTER II

FORSTER'S POSITION IN THE TRADITION OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

A creative artist may sometime appear enigmatic to his reader if his works suggest a close reliance on a world of spirit in which the conventional values find no place for any disharmony. This may be well said of Forster whose fictional universe has been thoroughly explored, yielding varying conclusions. But the fact remains that those who do not believe in the profundity of the aesthetic order Forster stands for, will, however, fail to see much in him. Forster often reminds us of Shelley by his dream of an enlightened order and his yearning for pervasiveness of the spirit of beauty in our life. Shelley's agonized cry to the Spirit of Beauty :

Where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim, vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?

and the piteous appeal :

Depart not — lest the grave should be
Like life and fear, a dark reality

are the expressions of an attitude that drives him to yield more and more to his spiritual nostalgia. Such an attitude becomes a dominant force in Forster's approach to life and to all that is good and beautiful. In Howards End Ernst Schlegel, one of Forster's enlightened characters, has a fond hope that "the clouds of materialism obscuring the Fatherland would part in time, and the mild intellectual light re-emerge." This ardent

belief of Ernst Schlegel is the belief of Forster himself whose romantic bent, Coleridgean in kind, made his novels a panorama of an ideally civilized life. Naturally Forster's attitude to life runs counter to the Benthamite outlook. He is for the life of the unseen; and his entire literary career is a crusade against the growing impact of industrialism. The bad climate, bred by industrialism, which has clouded the English way of life, distracts him greatly. He laments the loss of ^{*}rural values. He complains of the economic movement which has now become the sole consideration of the country, undermining the spiritual fecundity of a country life. He writes :

There is a huge economic movement which has been taking the whole world, Great Britain included, from agriculture towards industrialism....Personally I hate it.

Forster's affiliation to a natural life or an imaginative one stands in contrast with the Benthamite attitude which many people in modern times have unfortunately developed. The Industrial Revolution radically altered the old values of English life. It enhanced prosperity and encouraged material pursuits on the part of the individuals. The English people in general became steeped in materialism. This aspect of modern life has naturally agonized Forster much; he sought instead the re-emergence of the intellectual light along with the old traditional life of the countryside.

It is an old thing for a Westerner, as Stone aptly remarks, to view the human condition as divided into either a Benthamite

or a Coleridgean. This peculiar characteristic of cleavage was first pointed out by John Stuart Mill in 1840. He said: "Every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgean."¹ This clear distinction between the two classes was, roughly speaking, much pronounced in the intellectual realm. The Benthamite attitude represents a mechanical view of life. It is a contrast between analysis and synthesis. Bentham stood for the rationalist view of life which is not far removed from utilitarianism. Coleridge was for romanticism which was evidently anti-utilitarianism. Forster's idealism is, indeed, Coleridgean in kind. In his novels the schism between Benthamite and Coleridgean, between the prose and the passion, between the seen and the unseen, the head and the heart, is much evident. The Coleridgean aspect dominates the theme of his stories and novels. Coleridge could not feel at home in the Benthamite society. Forster, too, is affected by the alien conditions of the modern life. He curses the present age of industrialism. Hazlitt lamented that "the nymphs are gone from the Regent's canal." So also does Forster in some of his short stories in which he sharply brings into focus the loss of the countryside life.

"All the poetry is going from Nature," cried one of Forster's characters, "her lakes and marshes are drained, her seas banked up, her forests cut down. Everywhere we see the vulgarity of desolation spreading."²

Forster's reaction to the 'vulgarity of desolation' is pertinent.

1. Quoted by Wilfred Stone in The Cave and the Mountain, p.3

2. E.M. Forster, 'The Story of a Panic', Collected Short Stories (Penguin), 1954, p.12

He writes :

"It is through us, and to our shame, that the Nereids have left the waters and the Oreads the mountains, that the woods no longer give shelter to Pan." ¹

Forster craves the emergence of 'the mild intellectual light' for an all-pervasive effect upon human life. Considered in this light Forster's novels reveal his trenchant criticism of English manners and social customs, the life of anger and telegrams, of gross materialism and sham culture. The novels are the critique of Victorian smugness and of its highbrow society. Forster's ruthless criticism assails the conventional life and snobbery of the upper middle-class people. His stories reveal the loss of the agricultural way of life caused by commercialism. He holds industrialism responsible for the loss of aesthetic sensibilities of the upper middle-class people.

Forster's novels are realistic so far as his irony is concerned. His criticism of English society is honest. He exposes the sham nature of Sawston-culture. He reveals the defects of the English Public Schools and their administration. He admits that the economy of England is controlled by the Wilcoxes ; they run the British Empire. In his early three novels, the scene is mostly either a foreign country or an unknown society. The complex social conditions do not figure in the novels ; the major problems of a social life are kept outside the fictional canvas. This, however, results, on the one hand, from his affiliation to upper middle-class values and his tendency to escape, on the other, from a life so problematic to him. His tendency to retreat into a private

1. E.M.Forster, 'The Story of a Panic', Collected Short Stories (Penguin), p.13

world of his own is in keeping with ^{the} general tendency of the pre-war writers. Such a tendency to retreat into the private worlds of their own was a result of their inability to grapple the complexities of the society to which they belonged. Such a retreat became evident first in poetry. Yeats did not draw his themes from the social milieu. Turning aside from his own time, he fixed upon the folk-lore of the peasants as a foundation for his world. Ezra Pound, similarly, preferred a sojourn in medieval Provence and Old China. Forster, too, likes his world inhabited by Pan. His short stories are fantasies. They abound in classical deities. Forster's treatment of his milieu, his 'back to Nature' tendency, and the ideal world that forms the part of his subjective reality, speak of his belonging to the Romantic tradition.

Forster has appeared differently to numerous critics. This may be due to his peculiar aesthetic approach to social reality and relationship which does not allow so easy a grasp on the part of his critics. To Richard Church he is a "gentle liberal Platonist"¹; to Louis Casanian he is "unique"²; to Montgomery Belgion his moral and spiritual values are "mysterious" and "pernicious"³; to George Sampson, his works are "almost diffidently presented" and "he has no strong impulse to invention"⁴;

1. Richard Church, The Growth of the Novel, p.208

2. E.Legois & Louis Casanian, History of English Literature, London, Reprinted, 1954, p.1383

3. Montgomery Belgion, 'The Diabolism of E.M.Forster', The Criterion, October, 1934, p.56

4. George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge University Press, 1949, p.969

to Arnold Kettle he is "not a writer of the stature of Lawrence or Joyce" but a "fine and enduring artist"¹; and to Nancy Hale he is "the funniest writer in English".²

One should keep in mind the trend of the novel when Forster took to writing. In an attempt to make an estimate, however briefly, of the function of the English novel from Defoe onwards, it will be evident that the leit motif of early English novels was to reveal the influence of contemporary society on the individual. Being primarily concerned with the task of bringing into focus the injustice of social law, Defoe was earnest to reveal the impact of society on the individual. Fielding, who regarded novel as prose epic, was chiefly concerned with painting society with satirical emphasis on hypocrisy. Richardson's intent was, however, different. He confined himself to a special aspect of society, particularly to the incidence of one set of ideas, although he was serious about laying stress on the justice of the social law. Smollet exposes in his novels a brutal and crude society. He attacked his age exactly where it was dirty and diseased. His concern was with the superficial features of temperament and mannerism in which men differ. Serious criticism of life will, however, be looked for in vain in his novels.

Sentimentalism was the basis of Sterne's philosophy of life; it was its integral part. Sterne creates a world that extends the

1. Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel, 2.
London, 1953, p.152

2. Nancy Hale, The Realities of Fiction, Macmillan & Co. Ltd.,
1963, p.74

reader's knowledge of the world he habitually knows it. His method was similar to that of an Impressionist. Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth found their right medium in the domestic novel. Jane Austen restricted herself to a certain narrow class so as to examine more closely the ideas proper to it. Maria Edgeworth's strong sense of responsibility was like that of a practical teacher; she wanted to correct the rash and erring.

Dickens's moral ideas permeating society were the theme of his novels. While creating a galaxy of immortal personages with the help of his broad and benevolent humour, he also attacked abuses in warehouses, boarding schools, debtors' prisons and so on; his works embody his ruthless criticism of the social conditions of his time. In Hard Times he gives the theme a special emphasis. He satirises the whole laissez faire system of the Manchester school and suggests that its unenlightened self-interest is unenlightened cruelty.

Thackeray's novels often reveal with penetrating truth the inner soul and character of Victorian society, its essential pettiness and hypocrisy. Mrs. Gaskell's social portrayals also reveal an amazing insight into the anomalies of Victorian England. The attack on society through the novel, which Dickens had followed, was carried on with documentary exactness by her. Charles Reade's It is never too late to Mend, with its exposure of the prison system in the melodramatic narrative reminds us of Zola. Charlotte and Emily Bronte had the courage to explore human life with greater fidelity than Victorian morality would allow. Disraeli ironically

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depicted, in Sybil, the relationship between capitalists and workers. While Kingsley in his novels, such as Yeast, faced urgent social and religious problems, Mrs. Gaskell protested, in her novels such as Mary Barton, against the plight of the downtrodden of Manchester, advocating greater sympathy on the part of the employers. Trollope's focal point was the upper middle-class; but he artistically drew round it the whole of the society of his day down to peasants and brickmakers. George Eliot, too, in her early writings sought to enlarge men's sympathies with ordinary folk. It can, however, be roughly said that with very few exceptions, the novelists in general felt the necessity of depicting society as it appeared to them. Leaving aside Tristram Shandy which is a pure comedy and Wuthering Heights, a tragedy, we can come to a conclusion that other novels, too, were meant to give the contemporary readers ideas about the society they lived in.

A change in the scope of the novel was felt with Meredith. With him we can no longer feel the emphasis on society but on the individual. Though he did not ignore society or its values, he was nevertheless much interested in revealing the moral struggles of his people who would appear to the reader to be keen on doing well from clear motives in spite of social canon or conven-

tion prohibiting them from responding to the dictates of their conscience. Although Meredith conceived life poetically, he was also impressed by the doctrine of evolution and gave it a spiritual interpretation. He regarded Nature as spirit - the spirit of life pervading all things. Therefore, he regarded her processes as spiritual processes, and expected man to labour in unison with such processes in which lay, he believed, his happiness and fulfilment of life.

Hardy's aim differed greatly from those of most novelists already discussed. Social life was variously depicted by Jane Austen, Thackeray, Trollope, and George Eliot. But in Hardy it scarcely exists in any of the forms as drawn by them. His characters stand in relation to various things including ^{the} weather, the seasons and even a traditional craft. He sees his characters in their generic aspects as Scott does. And, lastly, what concerns him most in human beings is their response to the deep-rooted passions.

Every novel that Henry James ventured represented a technical problem to be solved. He strove to give the novel the aesthetic intensity of a great poem or a magnificent painting. Behind his technical innovations and his attempts to make the novel a self-contained whole, we discover his attempt to combine ethics and aesthetics. He did it in a manner to make the ethical rendered successfully in fiction, so that the representation could become aesthetically satisfying. Gissing's fiction, which is too personal and in which expression of a grudge is evident, is not sufficiently detached from its creator. Conrad's theme is man against himself. In his novels the environment has a double function : it isolates the character from society or the world of men in order to put him

in an extreme situation. It also acts as the agent of his self-confrontation.

A departure in the technique of novel writing is, however, noticed early in the twentieth century with H.G.Wells. According to Wells, the novel should embody a world of discussion embracing all aspects of human life — business and finance and politics. The modern novel has become typically a picture of the middle and upper middle-classes because of the fact that the novelists themselves come from these classes. The poor come into them as figments of middle-class imagination. They are mostly servants, porters and taxi-drivers. Wells, at the beginning of his literary career, gave us some admirable picture of lower middle-class life. Galsworthy brought into focus in his novels numerous social problems.

With Forster one feels a decisive turn in the development of the function of the novel. What he believes theoretically and has enunciated in Aspects of the Novel has also been harmoniously illustrated in his novels. Therefore, his novels are the embodiment of what he believes as a theorist and an artist. James McConkey's subtle and profoundly penetrating analysis of his novels is a probe into the inmost recess of the novelist's mental frame from this point of view.

Society exists for Forster as a background with all its beliefs and customs. He does not believe that a novel can fulfil its function quite honestly by acting only as a criticism of life and society. Its function should be, he thinks, to change the people by making them aware of their own idiosyncrasies or weaknesses, and look at themselves as well as at others in a new way

which should include an aesthetic view of life. Forster's views on the novel have a close relevance to his ideas on art, and they are mostly centred round man's aesthetic attitude and spiritual understanding of life in relation to social relationship. He writes:

Yes — oh dear yes — the novel tells a story. That is the fundamental aspect without which it could not exist. That is the highest factor common to all novels, and I wish that it was not so, that it could be something different — melody, or perception of the truth, not this low atavistic form.

'Melody, or perception of the truth' is, according to the novelist, what should be the cardinal point of a novel. In his novels the plot and characterization go quite harmoniously together — as it were, hand in hand — to hit the mark. However, his motto of revealing the ultimate truths of life may be responsible for the novels being at certain stages less convincing. This does not, however, eclipse the brilliance of the fictional qualities.

Forster is always an enjoyable writer in the sense that he does not confound his reader with lofty ideas and ideals; he is not even confusing in his view-point regarding art and the values of life. In the words of Ifor Evans he "neither assaults the reader with a new creed as does Lawrence, nor stalks forth clad aggressively in technical novelties."² As a writer of stories and novels he has the unique gift of investing commonplace experiences of life with extraordinary significance. He is concerned,

1. E.M.Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p.27

2. B. Ifor Evans, English Literature Between the Wars, p.27

from the aesthetic point of view, with the exploration of the fundamentals of life and its meaning. The result is obvious : he admits of diverse critical approaches. Forster, while appreciating Peter Burra's admirable essay on him, observes : "One grows accustomed to being praised, or being blamed, or being advised, but it is unusual to be understood."¹ Forster is an artist; and his novels are best enjoyed when the novelist's personal fascination, his aesthetic outlook and the cultural heritage that he derived from certain families and relatives are kept in view.

To a Marxist like D.S.Savage, Forster does not appear to have been able to achieve a full integration of his values of life and the social milieu in the context of which they are presented. Forster, according to him, does not belong to that group of writers "whose creative work proceeds from an achieved centre of being, and whose continual creativeness is the expression of the constant extension of their grasp upon and penetration into reality."² Even to a recent critic, Forster appears to have nothing positive to say to those "whose children are dying of starvation because of social injustice, or to those whose families are decimated by a marauding army."³ He is of opinion that Forster's values "thrive best in a secure world, and so perhaps they are finally only suited to a university."⁴ All these critics, however, miss the important point that Forster's liberalism is not based on economic or political values, nor does he

1. E.M.Forster, A Passage to India, Everyman Edition, 1957, p.ix

2. D.S.Savage, 'E.M.Forster', in Writers of Today, p.154

3. C.B.Cox, The Free Spirit, p.79

4. Ibid., p.79

believe that economic well-being can ensure moral progress and do away with the miseries of life largely bred by economic competition and opulence. Like Shaw, he thinks that economic betterment cannot necessarily ensure spiritual attainment; it is not at all concerned with the world of the spirit. Forster's idea of a good society and an ideal life of aesthetic values is the counter-part of a positive approach to a life of perfection and fulfilment by way of pursuing beyond the veil of the tangible world in order to grasp the eternal through a process of self-abnegation and love. His novels, therefore, embody a world of beauty and harmony, typifying the vision of some pattern conceivable through man's quest for the eternal, or the Absolute, or the Atman as it is called in the Hindu Scriptures.

The negative criticism about Forster's art may have some valid basis. But any limitation in his art should be considered in the light of his task, which he took upon himself, of fashioning life after his liberal values. That his novels could actually hold their place amidst the massive and monumental works of notable writers, is indicative of the fact that the values he regards as genuine and accepts as sacred, have, no doubt, the importance of their own especially in the midst of a swiftly crumbling civilisation. His popularity as a writer reached its climax after the publication of A Passage to India which is now regarded as a "modern classic". In this novel Forster postulates the values of life which are clear, precise, and exact, although in its predecessors a spiritual vacuum or uncertainty finds its way

as the outcome of the novelist's theological preoccupation for an exact conception of God, or for a definite foothold about his inclination to believe that there is something more valuable, more important beyond our grave than this tangible world. His disapproval of Christianity springs from his inability to accept the meaning of life it explains because it is no more than a moral system, or it is ^{an} incomplete moral system devoid of profound spiritual appeal.

In his essay entitled "The Game of Life", published in 1919, Forster says that life is not inclined, as it were, to explain its very purpose and meaning to us, and that Fate being the ruling master over us, governs the condition of human life, and it matters quite little whether we have played our part well or acted heroically, because "play, subtle and vigorous play, goes on all the time, though the player is being swept to disaster or victory by causes beyond his control." But this is no pessimistic explanation about man's preordained destiny conditioned by 'causes beyond his control'. Forster writes : "Failure or success seem to have been allotted to men by their stars. But they retain the power of wriggling, of fighting with their star or against it, and in the whole universe the only really interesting movement is this wriggle."¹ The 'wriggle' becomes the dominant feature in the character of Leonard Bast in Howards End. In the earlier novels its impact is very thin on their plots. Those novels being of comic genre after Jane Austen's manner, the metaphysical backdrops become gradually

1. E.M.Forster, 'The Game of Life', in Abinger Harvest, p.59

broader in each of the successive novels. The correlation between the social values and the metaphysical aspects being considerably thin, it becomes difficult to see life as a whole in these novels. But the spiritual struggle that grips the idealistic characters in these novels has a significance of its own, as it forms the basis of Forster's liberal humanism which pervades these novels. In his novels Forster's idealistic characters are not so much concerned with seeing life as a whole at the beginning of the novels, as they are profoundly concerned with striving after spiritual realisation, so that life may appear to them full of meaning and purpose; it appears to them well explained, too. If Forster's success in the earlier novels is not so convincing, as many critics think, his achievement in A Passage to India is beyond any doubt; in it man's quest for truth is a reality, the purpose and meaning of life is illustrated, and a definite hope 'on this side of the grave' is securely anchored.

Belief in personal relationships, in individualism, and in imaginative life saturated with spiritual values, may be regarded as the very basis of Forster's liberalism. He is of opinion that death and music have a deep meaning and play an important role in human life. Forster suggests that large part of human personality is built upon false assumptions. Consequently, many of his characters who may be grouped as goats are mere ragbags of social pretence and affectation. They are no more than a series of poses lacking both individuality and sincerity.

Many critics think that his criticism is not adequate as it does not go deep into the root of the society of his times. This raises, no doubt, a question as to the extent to which a creative artist can keep himself aloof from social reality. Can he distort facts so as to suggest in his works a fresh series of values or a new order of life? W. Basil Worsfold's remarks in this connection deserve consideration.

When the poet or novelist represents his characters as surrounded by the conditions of real life, and at the same time as able to act ideally, his presentation is deficient in truth. For the idea so presented is essentially false. Similarly if he represents his men and women as acting as they would in real life while the conditions by which they are surrounded are plainly ideal, the idea which he presents is one which has no correspondence with reality. Such works have neither the truth of science nor the truth of art. What is ideal is false because it is made to look as though it were real, what is real is false because it is offered to the reader in the form of the ideal. In short, the whole picture is distorted. A work of creative literature cannot be made to present the facts of life in the sense in which these facts are presented in history, biography, or in a scientific or philosophic treatise; if the attempt is made, such a work ceases *ipso facto* to be 'creative', and it loses forthwith the characteristic beauty of a work of art. On the other hand the principle of truth controls the application of the idealizing process in two ways. It requires that the idealization shall be consistently applied throughout — otherwise the work will convey a distorted and therefore untruthful idea of the realities upon which it is based; and it requires that the idealization shall be itself guided by that wide and yet exact knowledge of men and things which is expressed by the term 'philosophy'. If there is no such basis of wide and exact knowledge to guide the artist in the formation of his mental originals, the characters and scenes which he presents will bear no resemblance to the realities which these mental originals are intended to interpret and explain. The effect of such idealization, uncontrolled by the principle of truth, is seen especially in prose fiction. 1

While estimating Forster's art the following points should, therefore, be carefully considered :

- i) To what extent Forster represents his characters as influenced by the conditions of real life;
- ii) To what extent the conditions by which the characters are surrounded are ideal, although they may so behave as to correspond to the real life;
- iii) To what extent the idealisation, so warmly made by the novelist, is itself guided by that wide and yet exact knowledge of men and things.

In the light of the afore-said principles, some of the characters in Forster's novels act ideally, and they are not surrounded by the conditions of real life. Some characters who act realistically have only been presented in contrast with the former class of people. Forster believes in the fecundity of such principles as that would help to mould human life aesthetically, and would suggest a sense of equality, conceived in terms of kinship, fellow-feeling and human love. The principles of truth, which Forster endorses, may not, however, appear to have harmoniously governed the plots of his earlier novels. In perspective of Worsfold's point of view, Forster's idealization may not appear to have been consistently applied throughout the novels : either he presents — the realists may argue — ^{an} imaginary idea of the realities upon which his world is based, or that the idealisation, which he makes, does not appear to have been so aptly guided by that wide and yet exact knowledge of men and things as needed to guide him in the formulation of his mental originals. All these points are closely connected with the values he endorses and the

practical knowledge of human life in the contemporaneous English society which he has seen and known. This apart, a thorough evaluation of Forster's novels, as attempted in this dissertation, will conclusively reveal the inadequacy of the common yardstick of the Worsfold standards for a broad assessment of Forster's novels.

Forster himself hails from the upper middle-class, of which he has first-hand knowledge. But he does not, as he admits in certain interviews,¹ have knowledge about the life of the lowest middle-class or the working-class people. When he depicts the life of the lowest middle-classes, he does not, it should be admitted, fare well in revealing the exact conditions of real life there; either he unintentionally distorts their life or helplessly makes an imaginary representation of the conditions by which these characters are surrounded. In Howards End he has honestly shown that Leonard Bast epitomizes the struggle of the individual against the bourgeois society. This aspect of the social problem, as discussed in the novel, may appear, to many readers, to have been oversimplified by intending to bridge the social gulf that exists between Leonard and Helen through sexual relationship. Prima facie, the effort to enable Leonard to pursue a life of culture through a gift of money from Helen overestimates his intellectual and aesthetic potentialities. His credulity and his rural simplicity are surely the qualities needed to conform to the standard of a life Forster desires to see on ^{the} social plane.

1. P.N.Furnbank & J.H.Haskell, Writers at Work, p.28

Forster's point of view in his fiction is apparently two-fold. Admittedly he is in favour of a social order bereft of class barrier that separates man from man. Therefore, Lilia's connection with Gino in Where Angels Fear to Tread, Lucy's with George in A Room with a View, Robert's with Mrs. Pilling in The Longest Journey, Leonard's with Helen in Howards End, either through matrimony or sexual relationship, is indicative of the novelist's ardent desire for a classless social order, since all these characters, sexually paired, hail from the two distinct social strata marked by polar difference. Such a social bridge is sought through 'connections' : barriers of land, custom, culture, and approach to life, are overcome in order that a happy pattern of life conducive to spiritual realization may be postulated. As the aesthetic side of human life is Forster's great concern, these social connections naturally speak of aesthetic socialism which he emphasizes as a value. Therefore, this aspect of social life based on a sense of equality - particularly equality of manners - has relevance to the contemporary socialist movements for a classless social order that meant material benefit only to all. Forster's idea of spiritual benefit as the sole need of man on earth, is outside the socialist concept of life. To Forster the role of the novel in the light of man's spiritual side on social plane, is undoubtedly great.

The novel, according to Forster, has two chief functions : it acts like a 'notice-board' which communicates information, and it creates an 'atmosphere' in order to "explain the secret

of the universe" and "to create not only atmosphere, but a world, which, while it lasts, seems more real and solid than this daily existence of pick-pockets and trams."¹ He further stresses the point that the novel should embody a new world in which "common knowledge disappears and uncommon knowledge takes its place."² The uncommon knowledge so derived by the reader in a work of art through imaginative approach enables him to enter "a universe that only answers its own laws, supports itself, internally coheres, and has a new standard of truth."³

Forster's fictional standpoint is to focus the reader's attention on some facets of life which are reinforced by a new standard of truth, so that such aspect should become his fictional milieu. In his novels the world behind, unlike the physical world, comes out as an animate reality to be comprehended through the 'third vision' that grows out of a religious view of life. Forster's fictional responsibility becomes categorical in his seeking the novel as a literary projection having an aesthetic whole. As Forster's idea of a new pattern of life on/^{the}social plane has a relevance to the hitherto unexplored world of uncommon knowledge, the novel, contrary to this, as an honest, social critique, is no more than a sociological blue-print - a 'notice-board' - from whose canvas re-creation of life on the basis of aesthetic principles is precluded. The reorientation of life embodying a 'new standard of truth' being his fictional standpoint, Forster's achievement in expanding the dimension of

1. E.M.Forster, 'Anonymity: An Inquiry', Two Cheers for Democracy, (Penguin), 1965, p.89

2. Ibid., p.89

3. Ibid., p.89

fictional experience, is unique. An attempt to make , therefore, a comprehensive study of moral as well as spiritual realism in Forster's fiction, will be a stimulating experience if looked into his world through the lens of spiritual socialism which is imperative, Forster thinks, on^{the}/social plans.