CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, we have seen that Forster's search for self begins on an introspective note in his first story and culminates in his novel on India in a kind of self-realization bordering on a mystical vision of life. Human condition and its relation to the cosmic phenomenon are the necessary framework within which he zeroes in upon the elusive but vital nucleus called the self. The short stories, especially those written before his first novel, are the experimental explorations of his potentials as a writer. Reassured with the success of these stories and armed with his unique style he begins to 'dip his bucket' deeper in the darker recesses of his self. The process of self-development through self-awareness in his protagonist runs closely parallel to the author's quest for the identity of his own personality and psyche. His latent and subconsciously repressed instincts ultimately find an ordered expression through his protagonists, whose hesitant self-denial finally gives place to a gradual self-acceptance. The persona unravels the truth of his real self only by getting rid of the hypocritical mask of appearance he wears under the repressing influence of his milieu. But despite all his conscious efforts, the protagonist finds it extremely difficult to build 'the rainbow bridge' that can 'connect' man to man. The gap between individuals becomes even more unbridgeable when he realises that the two most important
faculties - the head and the heart constantly at war with each other - cause an eternal fragmentation and chaos within the human psyche. Tuning his self to cosmic designs the protagonist realizes the futility of human endeavour, planning and logic working against the huge machinery of nature following its own immutable and irrevocable laws.

Forster has rightly identified excessive logic as the real enemy responsible for the disintegration and dissociation within human self. An unnecessarily extra measure of thought prevents man from having an unruffled, unprejudiced and undistorted look at the truth of his being. It is the mind, according to a great Indian sage Ramana, that must be stripped of all thoughts to bring it to a state of quietitude so that the self can focus itself upon its own reality.

The Self is itself peace, the Self is silence (the Self is not 'silent' - there is no process, just Existence). Hence...the 'I' - thought is not merged in the unity of the Self, but has linked itself now with quietitude (instead of with other thoughts)...When the 'I' - thought is thus pursued beyond even the false lull, all its escape routes are cut off, it has to retreat into the Self. Then...the pursuit, the answers, the quietness, the experience, are all the One, the Self.!

Nature, according to Jung, is not so lavish with her gifts that she combines high intelligence with magnanimous heart in man. Where one is present in abundance, it is generally at the cost of the other. The discrepancy between
intellect and feeling, which get in each other’s way at the best of times, is a particularly painful chapter in the history of human psyche. If he were asked to choose between the two, Forster would certainly opt for the gifts of heart. His answer to the self plagued with the ominous train of thoughts is its replacement by love. The Maharaja of Chhatarpur’s memorable words - “love is the only power that can keep thought out”, (HO, 26) - provided him with the solution.

A sense of cosmic love informs the theme and plot of *A Passage to India*. Such a conception of love leads him to a unique mystical insight. Mrs. Moore’s encounter with the echo in the Marabar caves forces her to re-order and re-shuffle her Christian beliefs that she can neither fall back upon the old values that Christianity and the Western civilization have given her, nor can she reconcile to the ancient axiom of ‘self-renunciation’ and ‘self-dissolution’ propounded by the Indian philosophy and mysticism. Only an empty void and eternal silence stares her in the face. Her journey from echo to silence is a progression from confusion and muddle to gradual acceptance of the cosmic surge of the divine peace. Though the Forsterian voice comprises more than the world view of a single character like Mrs. Moore, such characters help him spread out his thoughts and feelings in a manner that he can approach the complexity of his self from more than one angle.

In the final analysis we have to appreciate Forster’s
quest in the light of the unifying principle that knits together the whole of his fiction into a single pattern. Using the analogy of Norman N. Holland of equating the self of the author with the text and the identity with its unity, we can trace this engaging principle down to the first story "The Story of a Panic" written in 1902. The thread runs steadily all through his short stories and novels up to A Passage to India which he finished in 1924. The flow and ebb of his creative energy no doubt varied from one phase to another, but the persistent quest for the self never ceased. His homosexuality, as we have seen, was a creative spring as well as a limiting factor in his literary career. Anne M. Wyatt reviewing Frederick McDowell's book on Forster underlines this feature in his early phase in the following words:

As a young man Forster's sense of identification with his characters offered him the opportunity to explore fictively the emotional experiences missing in his own life. The curious outbursts of sexuality and aggression in his early novels indicated that writing provided a necessary outlet for his submerged and little understood instincts.

As to the question whether his quest for self led him to the state of mysticism, a number of critics, including Trilling and Roger Fry have actually called him a mystic though Forster himself seldom relished the idea of being called one. His visionary approach to the seen and the unseen phenomena in nature, his emphasis on the importance of
inner-life*, his 'double vision' operating simultaneously at the mundane and the spiritual planes, and his implied suggestion that to achieve salvation one must merge and dissolve one's self into the cosmic 'Self' are strong indicators that persuade his readers to believe that he was a mystic of rare insight and vision. "If mysticism is not the word, the right word is hard to find" asserts Trilling in this context.

Forster's emphasis on the inherent goodness of man, the vital importance he gives to sub-conscious in pursuit of the truth, his repeated reference to the oneness of mankind transcending all races and climes, and his underlining the need for man's harmonious relations with nature no doubt show him as mystical if not mystic being. K. Natwar Singh, a long time personal friend of Forster and perhaps the tallest figure among the Forsterian scholars in India says: "Forster is not a mystic strictly in the dictionary sense of the term, he possesses some extra-sensory powers of perception which penetrate through the appearance of things to reach reality. His inner awakening was unusual and his command of the language was such that he could convey the subtlest thought with clarity."

His mystical leanings, despite the fact that he considered himself an agnostic or an unbeliever, are strikingly similar to those of Albert Einstein who despite being a master of empirical scientific approach believed in a kind of cosmic religiosity. Emphasising that religiosity does not lie in the
fear of personal God or blind faith but rather in the power that reveals itself in the harmony of all being, Einstein draws a parallel between the roles of the scientist and the artist. According to him "the most important function of any creative human endeavour in art and science is to awaken this cosmic religious feeling and keep it alive in those who are receptive to it."\(^9\)

Despite the fact that Forster was opposed to over-mechanization of human life and over-emphasis of empirical analysis in dealing with human relations, it would be wrong to conclude that Forster was prejudiced against science and rational approach to human problems.

While Forster seems to fully subscribe to the classical Greek view that natural passions and emotions of the body are good and a well-developed mind leads such a body to celebrate life in all its fullness and richness, his constant reference to the unseen and the unknown points to his inherent romanticism. Forster believed that the finer things in the mind do not come from the known but from the unknown which man can approach only through imagination. H.N. Fairchild sums up this constant return of the artist to the unknown in these words: "Because of the abstract nature of the unknown, man invests it with the forms and characteristics of the known, filling it with illusions and making these illusions as concrete and specific as possible. In other words he tries to idealize the real and realize the ideal..."
blending of the known and the supernaturalized unknown gives us intense pleasure, and this pleasure may be aesthetic, or spiritual, or both at once.¹⁰

Just as it is impossible to describe the unknown and unseen aspects of life and the universe except by oblique allusions and abstract images, it is equally difficult to comprehend the absolute in verbal form. When an artist reaches a stage where he feels that he has already said all that he had wanted to say, the power of word begins to diminish for him. There is a limit beyond which the unknown absolute cannot anymore be described even in most artistic verbal image. In Aldous Huxley's words "Experience of the absolute in the relative, the real in the illusory, is to my mind the solution to the problem — on a non-verbal level, of course. On the verbal level, there is none."¹¹ Forster too reaches the same conclusion when he tries to describe such an experience in the realms of the unknown in *A Passage to India:*

...The human spirit had tried by a desperate contortion to ravish the unknown, flinging down science and history in the struggle, yes, beauty herself. Did it succeed? Books written afterwards say 'Yes'. But how, if there is such an event, can it be remembered afterwards? How can it be expressed in anything but itself? Not only from the unbeliever are mysteries hid, but the adept himself cannot retain them. He may think, if he chooses, that he has been with God, but, as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rule of time (PI, 285).

When the seen begins to be illuminated by the unseen,
when the known begins to obliquely reveal the unknown and
the being starts merging into the non-being, the self and
its identity naturally become stripped of all the meanings
and attributes. Such a mystical experience cannot 'be expressed
in anything but itself'. Words lose their relevance and the
silence begins to invade and inundate the self. The cosmic
silence engulfs all the noises and echoes into its harmonious
and orderly reign. In Forster's own words, "a perfectly
adjusted organism would be silent" (PI, 145). No wonder he
lost the urge to write fiction after *A Passage to India*. The
quest for self was over.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. C.G. Jung, The Undiscovered Self, p. 94.

3. Norman N. Holland, "Unity Identity, Text Self"

MLA, 905, p. 814.


5. Oliver Stallybrass, "Introduction", A Passage to India, p. 21.


