The Romantic Ideology of Education and the Modern Bildungsroman: *The Longest Journey* as Forster's "Prelude"

Sajjad Ali Khan[1]

Abstract

The recent studies of Forster tend to put him in the category of 'Queer Forster'. What these 'queer' readings of Forster are missing is his essential connection with Wordsworth. In this sense, my study of Forster is more traditional. It is argued that neither 'liberal humanism' nor 'humanism' nor 'naturalism' describe Forster adequately. Though he seems to embody some of these ideas in his novels, none of these describe him in totality. Forster is, in fact, a Wordsworthian. The Longest Journeyis a novel of education, and the mode of education that is authorized here is the Wordsworthian mode of education. The Longest Journey offers a scathing criticism of the British public school system of education. Forster picks on the public school system because it has a direct bearing upon the character formation of the middle classes of England. He explores in the novel a substitute system of education. As Wordsworth is assured of his literary gifts toward the end of The Prelude, similarly The Longest Journey is certainly a major step forward in assuring Forster of his literary gifts.

Keywords: Wordsworth, Education, Knowledge, Public school

1. Introduction

In spite of being placed in an altogether different point in time, Forster is echoing Wordsworth in *The Longest Journey*.[2] Wordsworth's *The Prelude* is largely an autobiographical poem. Forster's *The Longest Journey* is his "most personal novel" (Heine, 2006, 291).Colmer (1975) corroborates this point that the novel is Forster's "thinly veiled autobiography" (5). More than a century apart, both Forster and Wordsworth share a great deal in common. Both the authors graduated from Cambridge University. Wordsworth studied at Cambridge from 1787 to 1791.Forster attended

---

[1]Associate Professor, Department of English, GC University, Lahore

[2]This paper is a part of author's doctoral dissertation.

King's College, Cambridge, from 1897 to 1901.Both the authors came from upper middle-class families. Both were brought up as Anglicans. Both the authors in their respective ways express discontent with their respective systems of education. Both challenge the assumptions underlying the institutional mode of education. Wordsworth's criticism of the institutional mode of education is embodied in the description of his undergraduate years at Cambridge. Wordsworth describes his personal experience of Cambridge in two of the fourteen books of *The Prelude*. Forster presents his personal experience of Cambridge through the persona of his fictional characters. Though Forster does not entirely focus on his educational experience at Cambridge to illustrate the inadequacy of the institutional mode of education, his critique also includes the British public school system of education. However, Forster's intellectual position is not dissimilar from that of Wordsworth's. The outcome of their respective search is similar in many ways. Both turn away from institutions to an autonomous realm of imagination and Nature. Both choose to look inward for the means of personal growth and fulfilment after being disillusioned by the political ideals of their times.Both *The Prelude* and *The Longest Journey* seem to enact their authors' literary exercise of their respective gifts as literary artists. Both texts assure their respective authors of their literary gifts. Both the authors participate as the subject of their respective texts, and come out as radically transformed by the process of creation.

Forster (1960) states in the Introduction to*The Longest Journey*, "For all its faults, it is the only one of my books that has come upon me without my knowledge" (xxi). The idea of the novel itself came upon him 'all of a sudden and by chance'. His visit to Figsbury Rings in Wiltshire in 1904 gave him much substance of the novel. In the unique features of the landscape and under the tranquil charm of the place, Forster experiences a 'spot of time'; the place brings back to his mind an earlier feeling of magnanimity, expansion and oneness at the open countryside near the village of Madingley during his first year at Cambridge. He comes across a shepherd boy with a club foot. The conversation with the boy lasts only for a few minutes. The typical Wordsworthian characteristics – which he associates with the characters drawn from humble life such as peasants, shepherds or pedlars – of simplicity, innocence, spontaneous goodness of the boy deeply impress upon Forster's faculties of head and heart. *The Longest Journey* is the outcome of these deeply felt impressions at Figsbury Ring. As Furbank (1991) explains, Forster "had a more

momentous encounter with the spirit of the place, of much importance to his future novel *The Longest Journey*" (116). Therefore, *The Longest Journey* is the work of inspiration as Forster alerts his readers to expect a creative outburst which seems to flow through the personality of the writer and writes itself. In other words, he is acknowledging the power of creative imagination that works through him, and makes him the subject of its workings. Forster the literary critic sees the technical side of it as having 'faults' but Forster the creative artist sees his creative impulse fully expressed in it (if not fully but at least to his heart's content). What is significant for Forster here is his relation with the book; the relation of a piece of literary art with the artist. He is employing tender language to express that relation. There is another important point to note here is that Forster wrote the above-mentioned Introduction in 1960, far removed from the times and circumstances in which he underwent the process of creating it.Forster's gains as a literary artist here may seem to be of little importance to a perceptive critic or an intelligent reader but they mean a great deal to Forster. Forster (1960) states further, "I have managed to get nearer than elsewhere to what was on my mind, or rather towards that junction of mind with heart where the creative impulse sparks" (11). It is apparent from this statement that he values the novel because it seems to narrow the gap between what a writer wishes to represent and the means of representing it. His own response to it is meaningful at least in the sense that he has 'managed to get nearer than elsewhere to what was on my mind'. It is meaningful also because his search for synthesizing the opposites finds expression here, 'junction of mind with heart where the creative impulse sparks'. Forster clarifies the interpretive path for readers by declaring in the same Introduction his artistic achievement of having found a point of intersection where the powers of mind join the powers of heart; the purpose of this 'junction' is to awaken the creative potentialities. The ambiguous part of this statement is that he does not clarify the proportion of how much it is coming from the mind and how much from the heart.

The Longest Journey is a good starting point for a Forster scholar if he is to grasp his later gifts as a writer.The novel embodies the story of Forster's growth and preoccupations as a writer.(One of the most quoted characters in the English literary tradition is Hamlet. Toward the end of the play, when he is near the end of his life, he tells Horatio to tell his story to the world. Why would Hamlet wish his story to be told to the world? One of the possible answers is that it is not simply the story of the

rise and the fall of a great prince but the story of his personal growth as a character.) The very title of the novel itself is such a powerful metaphor – and a very recurring one in literature; it conveys the depth and intensity of the essential problems of existence which involve the central characters in a serious struggle to make sense of what reality is in fact.As Moffat (2010) points out, Forster "borrowed the title *The Longest Journey* from Shelley's *Epipsychidion*– which loosely translates as 'the story of a soul'" (84). The title of the novel, in fact, refers to marriage as a disaster: "With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe, / The dreariest and longest journey go" (Cited in Trilling, 1971, 60). It bears "many similarities to Shelley's state of mind toward the end of his marriage to Mary, which is symbolically dealt with in *Epipsychidion*" (Trilling, 1971, 60). As Trilling (1971) explains Shelley's point about marriage: "one is either blasted by devotion to an illustrious superstition which one endows with the semblance of reality or one is enrolled among the unforeseeing multitude who slowly and poisonously decay" (61). Also Heine (2006) argues that the novel is about the "nature of reality and the relativities of individual perception" (291). Therefore, the novel is not simply a historical narrative documenting faithfully the critical account of the British public schools of the Edwardian era or is simply written to question the mode of education at Cambridge as limited; it tends to expose the gap between what Williams (1990) refers to as "substantial knowledge" and "abstract knowledge" (69). The novel questions the nature of knowledge that is "purchased by the loss of power" and attempts to reinstate the power of knowledge as Wordsworth (1979) does in *The Prelude* (V, 425).

2. Analysis and Discussion

Rickie Elliot's painfully long journey begins from Cambridge.(The first chapter of the novel is titled "Cambridge" covering half of the novel.) He comes to Cambridge as an unhappy product of a public school: "He had crept cold and friendless and ignorant out of a great public school" (Forster, 2006, 5).Forster's own experience at Tonbridge public school is no less different from Rickie's as Furbank (1991) states, "Forster's first two years or so there were wretched, probably the most unhappy in his life" (41).Nevertheless, life at Cambridgenot only promises to relieve Rickie of the painful memories of that unhappy experience at public school but also seems to offer him with a congenial academic environment. His experience at Cambridge seems to compensate for the lack he had experienced at public school because here he can exercise his intellectual abilities to the full; it also gives him an opportunity to find

genuine and kind friends.As Colmer (1975) states, Cambridge stood as "a symbol of the good life" for Forster (6). Moffat's study points toward the same direction, "The first third of his novel was a valentine to Cambridge" (2010, 43).The inattentive reader may take Rickie's earlier experience at Cambridge as a favourable account of the kind of life depicted there. It is, in fact, the later part of the novel which reveals the inadequacy of education at Cambridge; it is inadequate because it is limited. As Rickie muses over his relation with Cambridge: "Cambridge is wonderful, but – but it's so tiny" (Forster, 2006,62). Earlier in the text, Rickie asks himself whether Cambridge could prepare him for a "silent and solitary journey" (Forster, 2006, 5). Later, he asks himself whether it could deliver him from the "shadow of unreality" (Forster, 2006, 152).

The novel begins with a bunch of Cambridge undergraduates discussing the relation between the subject and the object. Stewart Ansell throws a challenge at his friend Tilliard by saying, "The cow is there" (Forster, 2006,3).He means to say that objects have existence of their own, independent of the fact of being looked at by the observer. Tilliard takes up the opposite position by saying that the cow is not there; it means that objects have existence only if they are looked at by the observer. Ansell and Tilliard state their preferences manifestly as two antithetical positions with regard to the reality of experience. Two orders of reality are established. The tension of conflict normally arises from the difficulty of arriving at any exclusive position but Ansell and Tilliard seem to insist on pushing either position to its extreme. One may wonder if the categories of experience are well-defined within the boundaries of their extreme positions, could the resulting perception be termed whole.Whether this rather self-indulgent philosophical chatter leads anywhere remains to be seen in the rest of the novel. Rickie remains a silent spectator in the philosophical discussion between Ansell and Tilliard. Could he not structure his response on the sure foundations of his learning at Cambridge?Why does he remain undecided and precarious? His intellectual position is, however, unformulated not because he is incapable of sustaining a line of argument from its premise to a logical conclusion as his university friends do. The fibre of his personality is woven into a pattern not of their kind who would invent a phrase first and later see its application in what they experience in life. Soon after hearing his friends disputing over the relation between the subject and the object, he realizes how inadequate the means of communication are. This realization reflects in his wish to bridge the gap between the possibilities of self and the

outward facts of reality: "I wish I could talk to them as I talk to myself" (Forster, 2006,14). Nevertheless, he seems to value more the communication between self with itself than the communication of the self with others. The manifest wish here is to turn the inner as if it were an outer event. He is confronted with a difficult choice: how to make the proportion right?

It is apparent in the above-mentioned discussion that Rickie is set apart from the rest because of his preoccupations as an imaginative artist. He has imaginative understanding of experience which does not necessarily follow on analytical inquiry – Wordsworth (1979) designates it in *The Prelude* as "analytic industry" (II, 379). Agnes Pembroke points out to Rickie a very important fact about his life that he is an artist: "Always running yourself down! There speaks the artist" (Forster, 2006, 15). She does pronounce the most appropriate word in a tone somewhat deprecatory regarding Rickie as a character. What purpose does it serve Rickie by speaking ill of himself? His frank admission of his defects appears to be an endearing trait of his personality, and which springs from his unself-conscious commitment to honesty of feeling. The world of experience is his artistic workshop where he is to shape that experience into a living work of art.

Rickie is further removed from common experience by virtue of his physical deformity.Forster "gave Rickie Elliot (his alter ego in *The Longest Journey*) the shepherd's limp, thus presenting himself as a modern Oedipus confronting the riddle of his own life" (Saunders, 2007, 9). Rickie inherits a slight physical defect – a club foot – which has come down to him from his father's side.It puts him in a somewhat precarious position in life. It affects him in such a way as it makes him somewhat ashamed of his deformity, and also makes him socially vulnerable to situations where he might have acted differently if he were not deformed. His childhood and boyhood periods are marked mostly with loneliness: "The boy grew up in great loneliness" (Forster, 2006,24). His is a creative kind of loneliness because it opens up the infinitely rich inner world for him: "And so the only person he came to know at all was himself" (Forster, 2006,24). He finds a great stock for reflection there. He does not know yet what to do with it but it is a great support to him. "The self-sufficing power of Solitude" makes him value imagination as a substitute reality (Wordsworth, 1979, II, 77). He supplements self-knowledge with the knowledge derived through his devotion to books: "Scarcely ever was

he without a book" (Forster, 2006,19). His choice to turn inward is determined by the special nature of his circumstances. Both of his parents are dead; he adores his mother, and hates his father.(Wordsworth's imagination is described as an 'orphaned imagination'. In this sense, Rickie's imagination can be described as an 'orphaned imagination.') These facts of his life place him in a position where he may take full charge of his life provided that such a wilful intention exists on his part. He has already experienced life where pain and suffering do not come as a surprise.

Whatever assurances Rickie seeks, they come from his relation with his mother and his love of Nature. Though he always felt intimidated by his father's image, his mother's benign influence compensated for much of the misery resulting from his father's short-tempered and cold behaviour. His father died but gave him such a permanent reminder of the negative associations he had of him. In the Forster gallery of character portraits, Mr Elliot is a character of a 'diseased imagination' and an 'undeveloped heart.' He was a barrister by profession, and he must have been a product of a great public school. He was hard as a nut, and that nut cracked under the oppressive weight of a personal crisis. Where could he seek means of regeneration when he had trained himself so thoroughly to conform to a limited and limiting view of reality? Mr Elliot's is an average man's response to experience. Characters like him live simply because the law of life keeps them alive. What was the defining principle of his life? He was incapable of sustaining an emotion for a long time. He could not sufficiently love his wife; as a result of which, she found love in another man. He hated his son because he was a painful reminder of his defective inheritance. He remained insensitive to other people's feelings throughout his life. He loved to torture his son and wife. When finally the crisis came, he was least prepared to face it. Even pain could not humanize him. He had nothing to fall back on because he had stuffed his memory on husks: "In reality he never did or said or thought one single thing that had the slightest beauty or value" (Forster, 2006, 24). He had nothing to fill up the emptiness of his soul. The decay approached him as befitted a beast without physical strength. He failed to contact his inner resources so as to seek regeneration through them.He developed a tender association with his mother: "He worshipped his mother, and she was fond of him" (Forster, 2006,25). She poured out her tenderness and natural good in him. He began to see life through this relation. According to Wordsworth, the bond between the mother and the child is long established since the beginning

of their relationship. Wordsworth in *The Prelude* remembers the time when he, as a little child, began to communicate intimately with his mother.Mrs Elliot is a typical Forsterian middle-aged woman character whose excellence knows no bounds. It is affirmed by Mrs Failing – Rickie's aunt –who always stood contrary to Mrs Elliot: "Her kindness and unselfishness knew no limits" (Forster, 2006, 25). She was tutored by Nature's benign influences. Uncontaminated by the influences of the industrial-capitalist civilization and modern urban life, she retained her innate goodness. Later, Mrs Failing tells Agnes about Rickie's mother: "I never knew a woman who was so unselfish and yet had such capacities for life" (Forster, 2006, 94). Mrs Failing's remark about Mrs Elliot echoes Wordsworth's valuation of his own mother. The common factor about both Wordsworth's and Rickie's mother is the retaining of innocence and purity from 'anxious fear of error and mishap / and evil.' Both draw their strengths from Nature. Mrs Elliot disappeared so suddenly in the quicksand of others' making. She was weighed down by the oppressive pressure of existence. Her sources of inspiration were cut off as her lover, Robert – "a young farmer of some education" who was the son of the soil –, died by drowning (Forster, 2006, 231). However, she leaves such an indelible impression over Rickie's sensibility that she continues to stay fresh in his memory. Wordsworth attributes great valuation to the role of a mother in forming later relations.

Rickie's ideal self finds solace in a secluded dell near Madingley. He designates the place in his imagination, "This way to heaven" (Forster, 2006,18). It is based on Forster's own experience of visiting the place during his first year at Cambridge. As Moffat (2010) writes, "Near the village of Madingley he came upon a strange feature in the landscape, an abandoned open chalk pit that had sprouted a copse of pine trees. In the 'shelter of the dell' he felt as if he had entered a separate magical world" (43). Rickie's 'orphaned imagination' seems to have found parentage here. He pays homage to this place just like an ancient worshipper of Nature. On the one hand, it offers him an escape from the harsh realities of this world; on the other hand, it offers him sanctuary and momentary peace. His imagination finds release from the fetters of modern existence and all the fuss that accompanies such a state of existence. It gives him not just sensual pleasure but also the distinct pleasure of exercising his faculties to their limits. It is pure joy of being alone with the object of his adoration. The philosophical discussion among his friends at the beginning of the novel stands in sharp contrast to the joy Nature yields to Rickie. He sees

the real cow embodied here in Nature. He tells Herbert Pembroke – Agnes's brother –,"Thank God I'm English" (Forster, 2006,45). It is an extremely significant remark by Rickie. He is surely English to the marrow of his bones because he identifies himself with firmly rooted rural values. Forster echoes Wordsworth when he attributes the country with greatsignificance: "the power of the earth goes stronger" here (Forster, 2006,270).Forster aligns himself with the central English tradition which gives great significance to country values.As Wiener (1981) states, "Idealization of the countryside has a long history in Britain" (47). Being the first industrial nation, English society did not view industrialization without expressing deep suspicions about it. Wiener (1981) traces out this "ambiguous attitude" toward industrialization in the late Victorian era (ix). According to him, "English way of life" came to be associated with country ideals (1981, 6). However, Wiener's study relates the idealization of the countryside to the decline of the industrial spirit in Britain.

The Longest Journey offers a scathing criticism of the British public school system of education.Forster picks on the public school system because it has a direct bearing upon the character formation of the middle classes of England. As he states: "Just as the heart of England is the middle classes, so the heart of the middle classes is the public school system" (1996, 3).The British public schools were often boarding schools. Traditionally considered prestigious, they often admitted students – especially from the seventeenth century – from the upper classes. In *The Longest Journey*, Mr Pembroke says to Rickie that "it is not of our wealthier boys that we are always proudest. But the point is that no public school can be called first-class until it has one" (Forster, 2006, 45).They played a significant role in terms of the formation of much of the national character of England since the end of the eighteenth century. From the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, they contributed significantly toward much of the life of bureaucracy in England.Wiener (1981) affirms that "the late-Victorian public school outlook continued to shape British attitudes and values in the twentieth century" (22). The products from such schools went into politics, the armed forces, and colonial government.In the nineteenth century, they were associated more and more with the fact that they had become breeding grounds for the 'empire-builders'. They were usually given credit for producing the type of English character known as a 'gentleman type'. They were also known to keep up the existing state of class differences.The "educational ideology" of the public school system of education was based on the study

of the Greek and Roman classics (Weiner, 1981, 18).The idea was to equate the study of classics with “civilization and ideal mental training”(Weiner, 1981, 18).The public image of such schools was often projected as training students for ‘public service’ as Wiener (1981) argues that “it exalted a dual ideal of cultivation and service against philistine profit seeking” (23).It excluded almost entirely or included very nominally the study of science, the technical skills and business education. Wiener (1981) relegates Britain’s decline of the industrial spirit to the public school system of education. According to Wiener, ‘The Clarendon Commission of 1861’ put ancient public schools as the model of secondary education. Money-making, production, utility are socially despicable terms in English society. This attitude is deeply embedded in English culture. Not a very comfortable feeling is associated with the idea of ‘progress’ in English culture. Wiener (1981) argues that after the industrial exhibition of 1851, there began currents of strong reaction against change: “The idealization of material growth and technical innovation that had been emerging received a check, and was more and more pushed back by the contrary ideals of stability, tranquillity, closeness to the past, and ‘nonmaterialism’” (5-6). This “cultural counterrevolution” began picking up momentum in the 1860s, and continued to gather public support through the late-Victorian to the Edwardian period: Wiener (1981) sees the public school as playing a central role in “the shared formative experience of most members of the English elite” (16).One of the aims of these schools was to prepare students for the ancient universities.Wiener (1981) comments on the role of the ancient universities in maintaining the status quo: “Oxford and Cambridge, even more than the public schools, were precincts reserved for the sons of gentry, clergy, and the more distinguished professions” (22).

Forster in *The Longest Journey* exposes the inadequacy of the system of education that operates in the public schools. He challenges the assumption that underlies the public school ethos: “school is the world in miniature” (Forster, 2006,157).His criticism is based on the premise that the public school system became instrumental in creating a type of English character lacking sufficient knowledge and understanding of the world. Colmer’s study reveals two significant aspects in terms of Forster’s “vision of life: first, a hatred of the conventional values that were taught there; second, a recognition that the public school system was responsible for the characteristic weakness of the English middle classes” (1975, 5). Forster (1996) writes of the products that yearly came out of such schools:

"they go forth into a world that is not entirely composed of public-school men or even of Anglo-Saxons, but of men who are as various as the sands of the sea; into a world whose richness and subtlety they have no conception. And they go forth into it with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts" (4-5). It is clear from this statement thatthe world is much more different and various than the limited world of a school; the emphasis is laid on 'richness and subtlety' of the world. The other important point he makes is the lack of cultivation of heart. Forster (1996) further points out the unreasonable nature of the system of education that inculcates conscious repression of 'feeling' and 'emotion': "For it is not that the Englishman can't feel – it is that he's afraid to feel. He has been taught at his public school that feeling is bad form…He must bottle up his emotions, or let them out only on a very special occasion (5). Foster, like Wordsworth (1979), raises serious doubts about the nature of knowledge which is limited to the external world alone, "reared upon the base of outward things" (VII, 650). The consequent characteristics of the type of an average Englishman that Forster sees are unself-conscious "hypocrisy" and "muddle-headedness" (Forster, 1996, 10). He denounces the public school system of education on the grounds that it "does not make for mental clearness" (1996, 10). Wordsworth's critique of the institutional mode of education is based on discrediting all those influences which damage "the mind's simplicity" (1979, III, 216). Forster's mode of educating an individual involves the following: recognition of humans as 'various'; appreciation of the 'richness and subtlety' of this world; cultivation of the heart, 'feeling', and 'emotion'; 'mental clarity.'As Forster (1996) states, "The depths and the colours [of English character] are the English Romanticism and the English sensitiveness" (8).Wordsworth (1979) in *The Prelude* concludes his observation on the inadequate system of education on the grounds not different from Forster: "And – now convinced at heart / How little those formalities, to which / With overweening trust alone we give / The name of Education, hath to do / With real feeling and just sense" (XIII, 168-72).

Forster's critique of the public school system of education is illustrated in the novel by Sawston public school which was founded in the seventeenth century. It mostly admitted boys from the upper middle classes of England.Forster comments on the quality of products that come out of this school: "It aimed at producing the average Englishmen, and, to a very great extent, it succeeded" (Forster, 2006, 43). Forster places Rickie – now a freshly passed out Cambridge graduate – as one of the schoolmasters at

Sawston public school. Much of what follows his experience as a schoolmaster offers Rickie a very tough time adjusting in vain to Mr Pembroke's methods of educating boys. Mr Pembroke, the house-master, treats Rickie with a priestly authority.As Hynes (1968) points out, "headmasters of public schools were often clergymen" (10).Rickie realizes soon after joining the school that it is not the right way of educating boys. What is the right way then? This is what he discovers during his stay at Sawston.

Rickie repudiates the ideals Mr Pembroke upholds. Mr Pembroke is Forster's target of criticism. Forster represents Mr Pembroke as a characteristic type of the public school ethos, which is"patriotic, athletic, learned, and religious" (Forster, 2006, 157). Mr Pembroke is the most representative figure of the type of man who embodies the ideals of progress, and the values of industrial-capitalist civilization: "He was generally acknowledged to be the coming man" (Forster, 2006, 43). Williams (1990) perceives separation of culture from civilization in the late Victorian Era; he sees culture "independent of the progress of society" (63). He believes in efficiency, competency, competition, utility and practical work. His emphasis on these is borne out by his insistence on shaping the nascent minds on a model which is most agreeable to the public school ethos.He is determined to see the boys fit into a prescribed role. One of the roles he sees fit for the boys is to prepare them as "empire-builders" (Forster, 2006, 158). He wishes to put everyone in line for a collective purpose. His idea of education may well be compared with the manufacturing system of production. All products should look alike just the same way as the processes of mechanical production control what the products should look like.He wishes to superimpose through rigorous discipline the processes of mechanical production over the natural processes of growth. His clearly manifest malice for the day-boys speaks of the tyranny of his methods. He makes it difficult for the day-boys to continue at the school because they are free of his complete control. It is exemplified in the novel in his mistreatment of Varden, a day-boy.(It is based on Forster's own experience as a day-boy at Tonbridge public school.) He wants to exert complete control over boys. He believes, "Perhaps each of us would go to ruin if for one short hour we acted as we thought fit, and attempted the service of perfect freedom" (Forster, 2006, 43). He wants to shut out all those influences which may challenge his methods. He is adamant not to give boys any little space for solitude, leisure and inner joy. His idea of education is to ignore imagination. His

manifest dislike for Mr Jackson, a fellow schoolmaster and a classical scholar, speaks of his dislike for intellect. He considers Mr Jackson as a threat to his schemes of educating the boys because of Mr Jackson's scholarly pursuits and "brilliant intellect"; otherwise "it would be a case of Quick-march" for Mr Pembroke (Forster, 2006, 44). The narrator comments that "his whole life was coloured by a contempt of the intellect" (Forster, 2006, 165). 'Brilliant intellect' is not his forte because it tends to unsettle his sweeping methods. He is placed antithetically to Mr Jackson whose ideas seem quite appealing to Rickie because Mr Jackson "tries to express all modern life in the terms of Greek mythology" (Forster, 2006,174). If Mr Pembroke's idea of education is stretched to its logical limits, it is in danger of inculcating a "brainless life" (Forster, 2006, 47).

Therefore, Mr Pembroke's model of education is a reductionist model; it is controlled growth under a controlled environment; education must determine what an individual should be like without questioning its validity. Forster through Rickie questions this process of selective growth which illumines only the targeted aspects of the personality of the boys, and represses the rest of the personality. Mr Pembroke himself is a classic example of this phenomenon. He must have been a product of such type of a school. He fails to grasp the wholeness of life. He is good at dealing with things in bits. He lacks clear vision: "Herbert was sometimes clear-sighted over details, though easily muddled in a general survey" (Forster, 2006, 205).His is an unimaginative response to reality; Forster refers to it as a product of the 'diseased imagination'. He epitomizes the forces of industrial-capitalist civilization which threaten to overpower an individual to the extent of separating him from the vital sources of his strength and power. He ideally fits into that model of change which over-rides the inner life. He wishes to standardize boys to a level of utilitarian task-performers. He raises such slogans as "Organize", "Systematize", "Fill up every moment" to emphasize the primacy of human utility over inner capacity for growth (Forster, 2006, 270). He measures the extent of progress in terms of social advancement. He works according to the formula: "Work and drudge. Begin at the bottom of the ladder and work upwards" (Forster, 2006, 15). Work in this context comprises of a series of mechanical acts performed in the spirit of discharging one's duties as outlined by the terms of work. He does not see any other virtue in work except that it brings drudgery, and which is supposed to accrue from such a work. He does not specify in this statement as to how far this ladder goes upwards but his mode of going about the business of life is clear. He has already defined

the terms of experiencing reality. His struggle seems to be confined within the boundaries of those terms, which are firmly rooted into a one-dimensional track of reality. He speaks from the vantage point of that assured realm which determines his actions. He has energy, strength, consistency, uprightness, but all diverted toward a pre-conceived end. He makes an effort of the will to delimit human faculties to simply desirable responses.

Rickie confronts Mr Pembroke's methods of education on another level of experience, his relationship with Agnes. Soon after their marriage, he realizes that she is a fine specimen of her brother's ideal product that must have issued out of his school. As Trilling (1971) argues, "Thus the cloud of unreality settles down upon Rickie, deepening as Sawston claims him more and more, Cambridge and his friends less and less" (68).Right from Agnes's violent entry into the text that breaks the circle of Rickie's friends except Ansell who contract under her unannounced presence, Rickie could hardly achieve those moments of genuine union which he associated with love. As Trilling (1971) explains, "The marriage with Agnes was based on an illusion, which each of the parties entertained, a falsification of reality"(66).On the other hand, it is not at all her wish to accelerate the process of disintegration that sets in motion soon after Rickie marries her and joins the school. She does it inadvertently though.She is described in the text as a "kindly Medea, a Cleopatra with a sense of duty…a dark, intelligent princess" (Forster, 2006,47). She is a fine example of the uncritical reception of her brother's ideas. She hardly suspects her brother's methods of education. She is thoroughly practical and inclined toward making the most of others to her advantage. Gerald Dawes could have been a perfect match for her because he, too, fits very well into Mr Pembroke's system. Gerald is another of such characters in the novel who is a classic example of the public school ethos: 'well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and undeveloped hearts'. He and Rickie were once school fellows. His sadistic treatment of Rickie at school speaks of his lack of concern and sympathy for others. He appears much more solid than Rickie. His love for Agnes lacks depth and passion. He believes in what he sees. He has trained his faculties to take things at their face value. He has a remarkable physical appearance but he never tried to explore on the other side of things. He gives an air of command in his speech. He waters his ego and tends to boast off his achievements in sports. He is described as "intellectually a prude" (Forster, 2006, 50). When Rickie and Gerald face one another again, they meet in the same relation as of old:

"The bully and his victim never quite forget their first relations" (Forster, 2006, 38). He shows no sign of moral improvement in the future. His premature exit from the text – "Gerald died that afternoon. He was broken up in the football match" – rules out any such possibility (Forster, 2006, 51). Agnes was engaged to marry Gerald but his sudden exit from her life broke her heart. As Trilling (1971) points out, "the fine scene in *The Longest Journey* in which Rickie forces Agnes to 'mind' the death of Gerald is a criticism not only of the British fear of emotion but also of liberalism's incompetence before tragedy" (15).It was Rickie's love that helped her regain her powers but interestingly the powers which she regained proved destructive to Rickie's stability. As Trilling (1971) argues, "Rickie was in love not so much with the girl herself as with her 'manly' and brutal lover, in love in the sense that he was identifying himself with the strong and dominant man" (66). His marriage with Agnes calls the sexuality of Rickie into question. As Matz (2007) points out in Forster's early fiction a kind of "homoerotic primitivism" which is "a fascination with raw virility, a romanticization of male brutality, an exotics of masculinity" (34). She argues that "this form of primitivism gives way both to disaster and to the search for truer masculinity" (2007, 38). Rickie misunderstands "the source and significance of Agnes's feelings for Gerald" in an earlier scene when he finds them in each other's arms (Matz, 2007, 39). It gives him a feeling of inferiority about his own physical deformity. Forster's later novel *Maurice* is also about 'the search for truer masculinity.' Maurice's first meeting with Alec Scudder is also an example of 'homoerotic primitivism.' As Matz (2007) explains, "The redeemed masculinity that emerges leads the men back to a better world, the novel's utopian finish amounting to the strongest possible assertion that redeemed masculinity entails political redemptions as well" (48). *Maurice* was written in 1913-14, and revised in 1932 and 1959-60. It was published posthumously in 1971. Like *The Longest Journey*, *Maurice* is a novel engaging with education at its heart. As Bailey (2002) argues, "Maurice, the slow-witted, emotionally stunted product of the public school system, gradually comes to realize his homosexuality, largely through the intervention of Clive, his first love" (337). Also Matz (2007) argues that "Forster says very clearly, early on, that Maurice's homosexuality makes him a better man" (48).Earlier, the narrator comments on Rickie's relationship with Agnes, "From the bottom of her soul she hated him" (Forster, 2006,53). As Trilling (1971) points out, "her heart is not involved in the marriage, for her days of passion are behind her and Rickie is but a second best" (59).Her hatred is founded on what

she has learnt to value in life. Nevertheless, she acknowledges Rickie's psychological insight into her relationship with Gerald: "You never talked to us, and yet you understand it all" (Forster, 2006,54). Rickie is constituted differently. It is a painfully long journey before he discovers that values are not given but explored in the context of experience. As Trilling (1971) argues, "He endows Agnes with the semblance of reality but what he believes her to be is only the product of his diseased imagination; actually she is one of the unforeseeing multitude. He himself joins the multitude and begins to decay" (61).

Forster develops through Rickie's experience a substitute model of education; it tends to involve the whole of human faculties.Pointon (1998) states, Wordsworth endorses a "whole-life view of education" (53).Knowledge of experience is given priority over academic knowledge but both kinds of knowledge finally exist in a relationship of give and take.Mrs Aberdeen, the maid, echoes Wordsworth when she says to Rickie's friends at Cambridge: "Gentlemen must learn to give and take" (Forster, 2006, 59).A pattern of humanitarian values emerges from that relationship. It is based on Rickie's assumption that "human beings are simply marvellous" (Forster, 2006, 170). It reflects Mr Failing'sWordsworthian doctrine: "We are all much more alike than we confess" (Forster, 2006, 98). Its roots go back to the English Romantic tradition. Wordsworth's introspective journey in *The Prelude* affirms his faith in the essential goodness of human beings: "the inner frame is good, / And graciously composed" (1979, XIII, 281-82). The most reliable connection that allows for such ideas to take firm root is love: "By love subsists / All lasting grandeur, by pervading love; / That gone, we are as dust" (1979, XIV, 168-170). The conditions Wordsworth (1979) sets for the growth of love in a human being are contrary to Mr Pembroke's methods of education. According to Wordsworth, "its growth requires / Retirement, leisure, language purified / By manners studied and elaborate" (XIII, 189-91). Rickie concludes at the most life-changing moment of his life, "On the banks of the gray torrent of life, love is the only flower" (Forster, 2006, 250). Earlier, he tells Agnes that "Poetry, not prose, lies at the core" (Forster, 2006, 174). He attributes great value to emotion because it comes from Nature.

Rickie achieves a high point in his growth when he finally sheds the influence of the institutional mode of education – his Cambridge experience which he looked upon with utmost regard, and his later

experience of teaching at Sawston public school. It stems from his recognition of the reality of his half-brother, StephenWonham. As Trilling (1971) argues, "In the end, it is Rickie who is cured by Stephen's inducing him to leave Agnes, Dunwood House and Sawston" (70). It happens through a deep personal crisis where the hitherto most reliable categories of experience meet a very stiff challenge in the form of this recognition. His earlier reaction to the sudden and unexpected discovery of Stephen as his half-brother was grounded in his credulous assumption that he must be his father's son; it rather hardened him against Stephen. This assumption was based in his selfish concerns of fearing a scandal which could have upset Agnes and her brother. However, when the reality finally dawns upon him that Stephen is his mother's son, it makes all the difference. How could he get away from Stephen now?Denying Stephen means denying the most cherished value of his life. Stephen, being his mother's son, is of great significance to him. He has so far nurtured himself on that regard for his mother. She comes alive in the form of Stephen: "the Beloved should rise from the dead" (Forster, 2006, 249). He looks at Stephen as "a symbol of redemption" for himself (Forster, 2006, 249). His longing "from a life of horror to a new life" finally expresses itself in this recognition (Forster, 2006, 249).(The crises of his life deepened since the death of his lame child.)The recognition does not simply spring from giving up in the face of unmanageable circumstances from within and without. He rather acquiesces to the vitality of life embodied in Stephen. As Matz (2007) argues, "Stephen is one of many male characters — in this novel, and throughout Forster's early fiction — through whom Forster wonders about the proper state of manliness" (38). The novel is a search for "truer manliness — for a worthy masculinity whose strength is not brutality" (Matz, 2007, 39). It is exemplified in Robert – Mrs Elliot's lover.Rickie begins to attribute great value to Stephen in his thinking not because he is guilty of seeing Stephen as simply an uncivilized character or an unrestrained brute force but because he sees in Stephen the untainted expression of Nature herself. Stephen appears to him as "a cloudless spirit" (Forster, 2006, 242). His earlier adoration, during his undergraduate years at Cambridge, of a secluded dell near Madingley, which he regarded as his private heaven, reasserts itself in the form of Stephen. All his life's loves find a collective expression in Stephen. Moreover, Stephen is the child of love. Rickie learns to appreciate "a mind so radiant" (Forster, 2006, 266). By acknowledging thus, he breaks himself free from the eddying force of his tightly disciplined job and with that the misapprehended qualities of the woman he loved so passionately and

dearly. Stephen releases him from the artificial colours of life. Stephen's manner may seem crude to Rickie but once the bond is established, the rest can follow in its natural course. He attains that point of equilibrium where the mental side of his personality – embodied in Ansell / Cambridge – is reconciled with the natural, which is embodied in Stephen. Toward the end of the novel, he is hit by a moving train while pulling the drunken Stephen off the tracks. He dies tragically at a point in his life when he is beginning to see life in its true proportion. As Trilling (1971) puts, "In some way he is made to triumph over circumstances by the process of mere growth" (58).Is it the punishment he receives because of the wrong choices he made? Rickie realized too late Ansell's foresight about the catastrophic consequences of his marriage with Agnes. Forster's concern in *The Longest Journey* is to find "intimacy, love, and domesticity akin to marriage" (Moffat, 2010, 71). Also Trilling (1971) argues that "he is eventually saved, but because, on his return to generosity, he still demands what is unreal, he is destroyed" (61). He further explains: "Thus had Rickie destroyed himself by mistaking the nature of reality. He had been able to conceive Stephen's personal existence, not merely his ideal existence, he would not have been, in Shelley's words, 'blasted by his disappointments', nor descended to an 'untimely grave'" (Trilling, 1971, 71).Earlier, his collection of short stories on Nature fails to get published. The collection is published after his death under the title *Pan Pipes*. Is Forster trying to diminish Rickie's achievement by exalting Stephen above him? Why does Ansell bow down to the superior power of Stephen?

3. Conclusion

Forster places Stephen ahead of all other characters. He has been to a public school but was expelled at the age of fourteen. He is bred and trained in the midst of lovely objects of Nature in Wiltshire.The only article of decoration in his attic is a picture of Cnidian Demeter, scornfully discarded by Mrs Failing. Mrs Failing's attitude towards Nature is described in the text as "severely aesthetic – an attitude more sterile than the severely practical" (Forster, 2006, 102). Moreover, Mrs Failing's house – Cadover – is built predominantly in the architectural style of ancient Rome. Stephen is brought up here. Stephen loves to make poetry out of life: "He was the child of poetry and of rebellion, and poetry should run in his veins" (Forster, 2006, 242). In Forster, 'poetry' and 'rebellion' are associated with infinitely rich inner life.His movements are determined like the movement of stars within their fixed orbits: "his motions were decided" (Forster, 2006, 243). The laws of his being are the laws of Nature

as the narrator comments, “he was a law to himself” (Forster, 2006, 279). He is unlike Rickie who regarded everything in terms of its symbolic significance, and the risk of reducing living beings to symbols is to run after the shadow as against catching the real substance. In other words, Rickie regards others as absences. Stephen not only sees himself as a living presence but also regards the others the same way: “here am I and there are you” (Forster, 2006, 244). He believes in nothing other than what he receives from Nature: “I am an atheist. I don’t believe in anything” (Forster, 2006, 269). Stephen’s remark to Rickie affirms the point that religious belief is no guarantee of an individual’s moral well-being. The institution of religion has been dismissed in the novel as “a fount of superstition” (Forster, 2006, 268). Therefore, the pattern of values that is explored in the novel develops independently of religious beliefs.

Ansell acknowledges it to Rickie that Stephen “knows more than we do. He knows everything” (Forster, 2006, 262). Ansell’s remark to Rickie reminds us of Mrs Failing’s remark about Mrs Elliot’s ‘capacities for life’ and Agnes’ remark about Rickie’s psychological insight into her relationship with Gerald: ‘You never talked to us, and yet you understand it all.’ This is a comment given by a proud intellectual. How could Stephen know more than the most educated characters in the novel? Here is a clear distinction made between the knowledge represented by Ansell and the knowledge represented by Stephen. Ansell’s knowledge is academic; whereas, Stephen’s knowledge is experiential. Ansell’s source of knowledge is the educational institutions, and Stephen’s source is Nature herself. Nature is a much broader term than any institution as Stephen tells Mr Pembroke that “there’s no miniature world” (Forster, 2006, 286).

The difference between these two kinds of knowledge is based not only on the magnitude but also on the two orders of reality. Ansell may structure his response to reality in the form of concepts; whereas Stephen sees in Nature – the open book of experience – imaginative expression of totality. Thus, what Stephen knows has a superior claim over what Ansell knows. It is symbolically demonstrated in the unannounced match of strength between Ansell and Stephen in the garden of Dunwood House. Stephen overpowers Ansell. Their chance encounter turns into intimacy when Ansell gives his pouch of tobacco to Stephen. Ansell wonders about Stephen, “United with refinement, such a type was common in Greece” (Forster, 2006, 212).It is also reflected in Ansell’s choice to stay at

Stephen's house in Wiltshire. At the end of the novel, Stephen is lying with his little child – whom he gives the name of his mother – in the open countryside of Wiltshire. The power of Nature is reassured of its vitality in the end. Thus,*The Longest Journey* does Forstermuch good in affirming the fundamental values of his life.

References

Adair, G. (2006). "Introduction" to The longest journey. London: Penguin Books.

Colmer, J. (1975).E. M. Forster: The personal voice. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Forster, E. M. The longest journey.London: Penguin Books, 2006.

____. (1996).Abinger harvest and England's pleasant land. London: André Deutsch.

____. (1960). "Introduction" to *The Longest Journey*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics.

Furbank, P. N. (1991). E. M. Forster: A life.London: Cardinal, 1991.

Heine, E. (2006). "Afterword" to *The longest journey*. London: Penguin Books.

Hynes, S. (1968).The edwardian turn of the mind. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Khan, S. A. (2013). William Wordsworth, James Joyce and E. M. Forster: the romantic notion of education and modern fiction (PhD dissertation), Department of English, University of Sussex, England.

Moffat, W. (2010).E. M. Forster: A new life. London: Bloomsbury.

Pointon, B. (1998).Wordsworth and education. Lewes: Hornbook Press.

Saunders, M. (2007).Forster's life and life-writing. In D. Bradshaw (Ed.), The Cambridge Companion to E. M. Forster. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trilling, L. (1971). *E. M. Forster*. New York; London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Weiner, M. J. (1981).English culture and the decline of the industrial spirit, 1850-1980.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, R. (1990). Culture and society, 1780-1950.London: Hogarth Press, 1990).

Wordsworth, W. (1979).*The prelude* (1850), (Eds.), J. Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and S. Gill.New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company.