

The Colonial Encounter in a Passage to India

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Abstract

E. M. Forster's A Passage to India is obviously "more than a fictional travelogue, a kind of Inside India" (Karl & Magalaner, 119). It is concerned with matter that may generate confusion, susceptibility and distinct prejudice and set two individuals, even two races face to face in relation to belligerence, intolerance and prejudice. This paper will throw light on the cases that are responsible for encountering the position of East and West. As a text says what it does not say, my probe will dig out the political tension of Indian life and racial relationship in colonial setting from the fictionalized Indian conditions as depicted in A Passage to India.

Encounter gives birth to the idea of nationalism and Forster could very well grasp this conception during his developing period in India. While writing *A Passage to India* Forster's intention was 'philosophic and poetic'. For this reason, he had borrowed the title of this novel from a poem by Walt Whitman, the American poet whose major themes include political, spiritual and sexual freedom. These are the universal themes but the novel develops on the specific ground of Indian racial problems and cultural intersection. Since race and color problems can never produce good literature, implied universal themes provide material for great literary works. The manifestation of universal theme of human values, has embraced *A Passage to India* with the exploration of British imperial exploitation.

Forster was more inclined to produce a work of art than to write political propaganda. In "The artist in the post War World", broadcast in Delhi on 18th October, 1945 and published in the *Indian Listener* on the 7th November of the same year, declares that "the artist must aim to create art, rather than propaganda, that individual self expression should be as free from political pressure as possible and that if the artist has a message, it will necessarily appear in the art without conscious effort or distortion" (*Hill Of Devi*, XXXII). But as a reader of the country which was once a part of the British colony, after an intensive and analytical study *A Passage to India* seems to me closely allied with history of twentieth century Indian nationalism. In this connection Teresa Hubel says, "...the major events, figures, and opinions of the day can be discerned in its pages (86)." Actually a close study reveals that the novel is a bundle of truths about the British Raj in India; a fragment of the myth of colonialism, an interpretative discourse that depicts both angst and anxiety emerging from the diaspora of political, cultural and racial differences.

But at the outset what is really important as far as the topic concerns is that a close examination of his literary background is needed. Forster had a very powerful literary background. While studying at Cambridge, he was benefited with a cultural climate of freedom and friendship associated with the famous and exclusive discussion circle known as 'the Apostles'. Besides, he

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was one of the members of Bloomsbury Group, which inspired independence of mind and the climate of cultural opinion. This group valued honesty of thought and feelings, art, literature and mutual friendship. Due to the influence of this group which consisted of philosophers, novelists, painters like Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, G. E. Moore and many others, Forster developed the idea of passage of heart or 'to connect'. Besides, his extensive traveling in some parts of the world, for example, his service in Egypt with the Red Cross, contributed to broadening his views. Moreover, by the year he published *A Passage to India* in 1924 Forster visited Indian subcontinent twice with a mature faculty of an accomplished writer. His work as a secretary of Sir Tukoji Rao, the Maharaja of Dewas, and his friendship with Ross Masood paved a ground for him to attend many cultural and religious ceremonies of India, and even the royal 'Durbar' [royal court]. As a result, his immensely close contact with the people and their culture helped him comprehend Indianness, above all, the mosaic of culture and colonial situations convincingly.

Besides, Forster studied India's history, politics, geography and culture as preparation for the job of a private secretary of the Maharaja of Dewas. All his study, observation and, above all, friendship with Ross Masood culminate in *A Passage to India*. It may sufficiently lend weight to the view that this novel is mostly influenced by the experience of Forster's first visit to India. Social and ideological construction of the natives occupied a huge part of its narrative. In this connection it can be said, "Race has a sinister connotation in *A Passage to India* and racial problems are a direct consequence of the political situation- the rulers are aliens, the ruled are natives" (Hemenway, 97). The British and the Indians are the Aryan brothers, but the British always had a superiority complex when they met Indians. Hemenway blames Forster for focusing on Anglo-Indians with all their characteristics that have made them superior to the natives. In this respect he has said, "*A Passage to India* belabors the British conviction of racial superiority and the Indians' passive acceptance of the myth" (Hemenway, 98).

In such ways as the colonizers and the colonized treat each other that it strengthens Forster's conviction that passage is not possible in colonial background. Forster is unable to come out of the imperialist disposition and it inspires him to depict India with an alternative history which "posits the autonomy of the Indians, thereby putting the west in its place" (Hubel, 87). Racial prejudice lies at the root of all antagonistic forces against passage of Europe and India. It produces some corrosive differences that cannot be purged. Thus it is said, "Racial differences can never be eliminated, but they can be minimized or overlooked as inconsequential" (Hemenway, 98). In *A Passage to India* Forster's emphasis on the racial differences received more importance than that on cultural differences. In Chandrapore the club is all-white. No Indians are allowed here. In response to Mrs. Moore's insistence Aziz retorts that no Indians are permitted to enjoy the show in the club. Even "Windows are barred, lest the servants should see their mem-sahibs acting" (25). In fact, the colonizers never truly intend to interact with the colonized as they believe only in domination and submission, not in relation and this temperament turns the colonizer into a master, a slave driver, a prison guard, above all, a god. Hence, Ronny does not hesitate to say, "India likes gods. And Englishmen like posing as gods" (49). Again McBryde's "Why mix yourself up with pitch?" (168) and "the darker races are

physically attracted by the fairer, but not vice-versa" (213) are indicative of the colonizers' feeling of superiority and racial antagonism.

Though the bitterness of relationship reminds us of the political turmoil of colonial India the novel appears to be a study of characters, their tastes, attitudes, sentiment and way of thinking and it is not his crude consciousness of the time. In this connection Hemenway says, "Even though *A Passage to India* started certain waves which joined with the big currents of national freedom in India, there is little evidence that Forster intended this as a major goal of his novel" (Hemenway, 95). Forster himself disclaims the political motivations of the literary work. In an interview of 1962 Forster said, "The influence [political] was not intended; I was interested in the story and the characters. But I welcomed it" (Hemenway, 95). A thorough reading of the novel vividly shows that "If Forster had wanted to write a more inflammatory political novel; the seeds were present in the burgeoning Indian nationalist movement which is scarcely mentioned in the novel" (Hemenway, 95). But Hemenway misses to apprehend the undercurrent of intertextual historicity of this text and the textuality of history. It may be easily traced in the attitude of Aziz, though appears to be vulgar in reaction, that it is his conviction that it is India and the English have nothing to do with this country.

Though Forster does not directly admit the complicity of politics with the text, a historicist probe can discover a strong foothold of political background, mostly the belligerence of relationship between the colonizers and the colonized on the basis of racial, religious, linguistic and above all, psychological wavering. Friendship that he has portrayed between Aziz and Fielding is not durable. It is rather full of limitations which stand between them and finally cause a breach. Mrs. Moore's affectionate attitude towards Aziz is soon disillusioned by her incapability of maintaining hegemonic prejudice. Adela's hysteria in the caves is the outcome of her rooted belief that the orientals have no civilization, no history and no loyalty. Though these English women seem to embrace the heart of India, they pathetically fail because of the negative construction of the image of the subcontinent. In fact, they have helplessly knocked at the shell of colonial image but in vain. They have also failed to match the acute colonial awareness of Ronny who knows that they are here only to rule, not to love. He believes only in exercising power, coercion and persuasion. Persuasion, despite widespread enforcement, is more effective than coercion.

The response of the colonized to the colonizers' hegemony paves the ground of the relationship between them. Very often natives absorb colonial hegemony automatically through a mistaken belief that it was of their own. They had surrendered themselves to foreign rule through cultural intersection. Living close to the outsiders and under their influence for a long time both inadvertently and naturally, makes natives absorb their thoughts, ceremonies, rituals, dress pattern and many other phenomena. As consequence, natives at one point begin to think of themselves from the point of view of outsiders. This sense of likeness with the outsiders makes them mimic men. Over enthusiasm in entertaining two British ladies makes the readers suspicious that he makes every attempt to become Macaulay's mimic man.

The British always sought to supplement their control of the Indian empire through a web of hegemonic practices involving subtle strategies of cultural manipulation. Knowledge of Indian culture, ideology, ethnology, ethnography, anthropology and the geography of India helped the British colonizers to build up a powerful discourse. Very often books of science, fiction, technology and even the Bible were used as epistemological techniques for control. Books of literature also helped furnish the bourgeois epistemological knowledge for colonialists. They were used to exploit the people intellectually. They were also used to shape the style of thoughts of the colonized. Colonial literature mostly reflects the awareness of colonial machinery and encompasses cruelty and violence. The texts on literature misled natives by making them look for a utopia and not the real world of bourgeois evil practices. Colonial texts usually evaded the issue of contributing to the decadence and decay of native values and ignored the skepticism of the natives towards the colonial forces that were oppressing them. *A Passage to India* depicts both the deterioration and the formation of relationships between Anglo-Indians and natives. At the same time it is apparent that Forster has delicately decontextualized the novel by skipping the incidents, occurred during the formative decade (1812-1922), that paved the background of anti British resistance.

Again, Forster's subtle probe of all hegemonic ingredients has made his portrayal of the relationship between the East and the West very convincing. *A Passage to India* is the story of relationships between the rulers and the ruled. Forster has very dexterously highlighted different factors – social, political and religious which determine how they came together and had to live together. In this connection Mahood says:

The development of the story in *A Passage to India* is thus in many ways the development, or rather the deterioration, of the relationship between rulers and ruled in the sub-continent between 1912 and 1922: perhaps the most formative decade in Indian history (74).

And when we speak of context, it comes to our thinking that it was an age during which political unrest was intensifying and the English could feel themselves more unsafe in India than ever before. Though Forster emphatically said that he had not written this novel on a political theme, it is obvious that even at the outset of the novel he produced an atmosphere of political tension in India. The ups and downs in the geography of Chandrapore seem to suggest the disequilibria between the rulers and the ruled. "Houses belonging to Eurasians stand on the high ground by the railway station. Beyond the railway – which runs parallel to the river- the land sinks, then rises again rather steeply"(9). Upper land that remained unaffected by the flood or other related natural calamities and was well ventilated and it had been habitable for the rulers. The lower land which was haunted by natural calamities had been left for natives. Metaphorically interpreted, the geographical position interprets that life for the colonized can arise only from the decomposing cadaver of the colonizer.

As presented in *A Passage to India*, Britain, according to the Anglo-Indians, stands for justice and control, indispensable for an unruly and wild country like India. India had been fabricated by them to uphold British supremacy as inevitable for modernization. The rulers thought of themselves to be the light giver to the natives and it had made them masters of the Indians.

Obviously, human malice promoted the rulers to pose themselves as gods. Ronny, in course of his conversation with his mother, represents the colonial rulers as god. The colonizers' disposition and attitude towards the natives act as a positive hindrance to promote the colonial relationship between the rulers and the ruled. The typical Anglo-Indian official could never go against his own class. In response to Mrs. Moore and Adela's request to treat Indians softly Ronny says:

What do you and Adela want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire out here? Lose such power as I have for doing good in this country because my behavior isn't pleasant? I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force. I am not a missionary or a labour member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I'm just a servant of the Government; we're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do (49-50).

Ronny's evocations of power represent a sense of omnipotence among the Anglo-Indians whose minds had elevated themselves to the level of gods. When Ronny says to Mrs. Moore and Adela that to Indians they were like gods, his belief placed him among typical colonizers puffed with superiority complex. His declaration represents the attitude of the British government whose mission was to apply force only, not to show sympathy.

In the city of Chandrapore the British lived like 'little gods' (42); socially they consider themselves superior to all Indians 'except one or two of the Ranis' (42) and exclude the Indians from their club. The British officials were given to hard work in trying to dispense justice and keep the peace and thought it their duty "to hold the wretched country by force" (50). Ronny's over consciousness about his position as a custodian of British rule reminds one of the historical background once again. Though Forster had to evade the immediate past, it is evident that *A Passage to India* is in many ways a historical novel. According to M. Keith Booker, "By the end of 1920s, British fiction was beginning to show a sense that the end of the Raj was not only inevitable but also imminent" (146). *A Passage to India* experienced the rise of violence during the second and third decades of the 20th century and it was not beyond the idea of Forster that "violence is a disintoxifying force" (Bertens and Natoli, 132) which frees the colonized from inferiority complex and makes them fearless enough to restore self-respect. At the end, Aziz's brave snub to Fielding – "Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons" (316), predicts the formation of resistance against the colonizers. The mob that slogans outside the court during the trial of Aziz "Esmis Esmoore" (219) makes the readers feel the pulse of the time that experienced belligerence of Anglo-Indian relation.

Besides, the constitutional reforms that occurred in 1909 and 1919 opened the door for educated natives to participate in government service in India. Fielding's thinking about why a British man should exercise official power when natives are available, suggests that the rise of the natives as worthy gentlemen was imminent. Besides, in the last chapter Aziz's hardening attitude towards Anglo-Indians exposes the gradually intensifying spirit of nationalism. His discovery of 'otherness', and of the everlasting muddle is the consequential outcome of education, knowledge and awareness of Indians. Actually Forster's acute awareness of contemporary happenings gave

him a conviction that the days were not far when the natives would come to the ruling position and establish self-government in India.

In the same vein, Forster has not forgotten that Oriental mind elated with soft impulses acted as hamartia for the natives. To Orientals, love and friendship are more important than order, form and harmony. Aziz's love for Fielding is selfless and no trace of authority is to be found there. He would rather give the stud of his coat to Fielding than to possess it solely. He showed the photograph of his wife to Fielding though he is conservative in belief and piety and believes in 'purdah'. He, very frankly, announces that he believed in the 'purdah', but would have allowed him to see her if she were alive because "I should have told her you were my brother..." (114). Aziz's slavish longing for kindness from the colonizers cannot bring two races together in the colonial setting. He believes that only kindness on the part of the colonizers can cement the relationship between natives and colonizers. As such he puts it:

Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope (114). Aziz's longing for kindness is quite opposite to what the colonizers intend to exercise. If the practice of coercion and tyranny is the strategy of the colonizers, it will be impossible to reconcile East and West. Aziz fails to comprehend when East and West try to come closer it only results in disaster.

As a consequence, hospitality of Aziz towards the members of the picnic party, especially Mrs. Moore and Adela, failed to impress the English. The situation rather went reverse and the aftermath proved to be quite opposite to his expectation. His hospitality to the English was not motivated by any selfish interest. It was, in fact, based on a sense of courtesy that Orientals traditionally and culturally show to their guests. Psychoanalysis interprets that Aziz's enthusiastic hospitality was his suppressed desire to yield to occidental superiority and to be a mimic man. Europeans believed that Indians were not serious in their action and appointment but Aziz wanted to prove the falsity of it. Hence, he went to the station and remained there at night so that he could catch the train in time and receive the English guests at the station.

Thus, Aziz's persistent attempt to break the firm prejudice of the English about Indians seems to be a part of restless attempt of the natives to be like the colonizers. In this connection, Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (2001) may be mentioned. In this book Fanon has showed how natives are inscribed with "the schizoculture of colonialism" (Robert, 144). Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) has shown how blacks are gradually transformed into colonial subjects not only externally but also internally and how even their desires are changed. The restless attempt of Aziz to please the colonizers with his sincere effort to break up their negative attitude indirectly resulted in the displeasure of colonizers.

Actually, distinctive attitudes of the rulers and the ruled pulled them apart. While the English loved mystery and not muddle, the Orientals apparently could not avoid muddle. In the room of

English every necessary thing was ordered. On the other hand, the Orientals did not care much for the mystery or muddle in their household. When Aziz enters the residence of Fielding, the well ordered furniture and all other necessities there posed as a contrast to his own room in the bungalow that was “infested with small black flies” (69). Besides, awareness of the strength of the other group was much more alive in the rulers. Such awareness flows from cool head and could never go with the warm heart of the ruled.

It is obvious that Forster’s portrayal of the households of both Aziz and Fielding often shows the real picture of that time. As a colonial writer and as part of the colonial machinery, he gathered practical experience of the colonized. But a deeper probe shows that through such a convincing portrayal Forster, like all colonial writers, has projected a superior self-image. Disorder of the dusty furniture in the household of Aziz does not draw Forster’s sympathy. Rather through a contrast, it shows Forster’s views of the nakedness and corrosive idleness and carelessness of Indians. The conceptualization of this gap between the East and the West was intensified into a vision of emphasis that made Mrs. Moore reluctant and it also horrified Adela who visualized this gap through the representation of Dr. Aziz. Such conceptualization lies at the root of all the disillusionments in both natives and Orientals. *A Passage to India* seems to suggest that East and West are doomed to be more memento and trophies to each other. Reconciliation of silly misunderstanding cannot make real friendship. Racial and political differences always stand between them and consequently reconciliation between Aziz and Fielding proved futile because of their respective awareness of these differences.

For their part, colonizers want the world to be interpreted in a European way. Elleke Boehmer has said, “European colonizers held the conviction not merely that the rest of the world could be understood in its terms, but that the rest of the world also could – and indeed should – be encouraged to interpret reality in a European way” (79). Though superficially Mrs. Moore does not seem to be a prototype of colonizers, she too wanted India to be interpreted in her own way. Hence, after the incident in the caves Mrs. Moore’s abrupt indifference to India and even to Aziz exhibits how fast she was puzzled by the muddle of India. It is as if she had an illusion of good India but the muddle and mystery disillusioned her. The darkness of the cave and its suffocative atmosphere appeared to expose her to the reality of India for which she was never prepared.

Although Forster’s interest in India centered upon the life, culture and geographical varieties of the land, he was obviously engaged in political currents. In this modern age everything, every aspect of life, and even emotions have been politicized. The friendship between two strangers developed on the basis of politics. Religion, culture, education, habit, manner and customs that were in vogue were also being politicized. Only a mystic disposition could not meaningfully bring two souls together. These inseparable factors of life acted as a block between them. Hence, Mrs. Moore’s humanistic and mystic attitude towards Aziz grew weary very soon after her visit to the caves.

Forster has subtly sought out the spirit of independence amongst Indians. But he did not endow his protagonist with power to stand against colonial discourse. Aziz possesses the spirit of

independence but these spirit bubbles in his mind and ultimately vanishes into inscrutable mumbling. Forster enforces the subjugation of the more independent and spirited Indians and demands respect for the British Raj in *A Passage to India* in the peculiar relationship that is depicted between Major Calendar, the Civil Surgeon, and his subordinate. Dr. Aziz feels irritated when he is summoned by the Major to his bungalow. Aziz is full of resentment towards the Major but he is bound to go to his bungalow in a Tonga. His petulance exposes the oppositional spirit of Indians.

Aziz's shifting from Chandernagore to the state of Mau which was not in direct rule but supervised by the British Political Agent shows how he has become free from the shackles of enforced servitude under British rule. He is shown on one occasion mocking the rulers of British India. Thus while Fielding was on an official tour in Mau, "Aziz sketched a comic salaam - - - . Like all Indians, he was skilful in the slighter impertinences" (296). His resentment towards the British rulers discloses his heart full of emotion, sentimentality, hatred but not with the power to pose a fit resistance against the colonial hegemony. Aziz's anti-British attitude may be interpreted as the attitude of the Indians towards their British rulers in India. Aziz who at first took no interest in politics, is transformed into an angry nationalist at the end. Towards the beginning he is shown as inwardly moved by pan-Islamic sentiments and by a deep feeling for the past glory of Islamic culture. But towards the end his transformation into an angry nationalist reflects the spirit of the contemporary Muslims enflamed by the Khilafat Movement which could unite the Muslim community through telepathy.

In this connection, it may be recalled that at the root of the Khilafat agitation in India was the issue of Britain's prolonged hostility against Turkey. Indian Muslims considered Turkey as the sovereign land of the spiritual centre of Islam, the Khalif, and their religious sentiments were intertwined with the destiny of the Khilafat. Conflicts between the Christian powers of Europe and Turkey, therefore, had always repercussions in India and resulted in Muslim resentment against British authorities.

Even after the First World War, Britain continued to be hostile to Turkey. Consequently, Muslim politics in India became firmly anti-British and they agitated in support of the Khilafat. In 1920 as the Treaty of Sevres was signed and large part of Turkish territory was apportioned by the Allies, the Khilafat became a part of the non-co-operation movement. At this point, the political union between Hindus and Muslims known by the name of 'Hindu – Moslem entente', was complete. Gandhi, along with the Khilafat leaders Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali campaigned for a common cause, against a common adversary. It was then that Gandhi started to campaign demanding self-government through complete non-co-operation. He and Mohammed Ali declared jointly that the British must be driven out of India. In the same vein, it is safe to say that Aziz's mind and sentiment is the product of contemporary Indian history. Anti-British slogans came out of Aziz's mouth at the end of the novel. He is ready to invite the Afgans who are of the same Islamic heritage, but as far as he is concerned the British and Christians, must quit India. Aziz had also revealed a tendency towards exclusion when he had first encountered Mrs. Moore: "Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all" (21).

Thus in the final scene of the novel, Aziz and Fielding are found going on a horse-ride together. Fielding wants to renew their relationship. In course of the conversation Aziz tells Fielding that they can never be friends until the English quit India. Aziz realizes that friendship between two individuals is possible only on the basis of political equality. Aziz is now sufficiently conscious of the oppressive nature of colonial discourse and the hegemony that always label the colonized as slaves or inferior citizens. Actually, development of self-knowledge germinates a spirit of revolt in Aziz against the British. In this respect, knowledge emerging out of the exercise of power gradually forms a barrier against the rulers and the natives eventually challenged them. They began to think in the way colonizers did. But they develop a rooted grudge for the rulers. Aziz's final development is the result of his reaction to the colonial enterprise. In this he represents millions of Indians. According to M. Keith Booker, "Forster's epistemological uncertainty and political crisis" (42) shaped his portrait of India. British colonial power adopted knowledge as a means of ruling the people of different parts of the world. But the knowledge that the colonizers gathered regarding the concerned land was not enough for them to dominate India for long. Forster knew very well that to a great extent India was unknowable to the British colonizers. The knowledge that the British rulers gained about India could never be sufficient to ensure the configuration of British colonial power. In this connection, M. Keith Booker further says:

-----for the British to maintain their rule in India, the disciplinary practices, characteristics of bourgeois hegemony must be supplemented by the twin feudal-aristocratic practices of violence and theater. The anxious tone of crisis that informs *A Passage to India* of modernist literature is itself generally skeptical of epistemological closure. But Forster's particular version of modernist epistemological skepticism is firmly rooted in the political and historical realities of British colonial power in India (42).

Forster has depicted typical colonial attitude through McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police, who, though shocked at Aziz's predicament, could not but pour forth his racial disgust in these lines, "All unfortunate natives are criminal at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30. They are not to blame; they have not a dog's chance— we should be like to them if we settled here" (164). He has also formed a philosophy that is saturated with prejudice. His speech is an exposure of a harsh judgment in which the dominating colonizers are proud of labeling other races with all sorts of pejorative expressions.

All their hatred, grudge and negligence of Orientals produced a discourse through which they labeled them as inferiors. In fact, the discourse that they produced was used as a powerful weapon to label, rule, and persecute the Orientals. This intellectual discourse, of course, is 'Orientalism'. Actually it is the projection of the colonial power in politics, science, culture, thought and philosophy. The arrogance that Ronny shows towards Indians and discriminatory Bridge party depicts how rudely and inhumanly Orientals were treated at that time.

In the Indian subcontinent Oriental discourse worked much better and catered to the taste of natives. Internal conflicts among different religious sects facilitated the rule of colonizers. The

Hindus generally were not pleased with the Muslims as the latter had taken away power from the Hindus. As a result, in many situations when the Muslims were under attack many influential Hindus had remained silent. This can be seen in Godbole's attitude towards Aziz. Godbole is preoccupied with the thought of setting up a high school in central India in the name of Fielding. While Fielding is moved by Aziz's predicament, Godbole refers to his mystic philosophy and says:

"No, not exactly, please, according to our philosophy. Because nothing can be performed in isolation. All perform a good action, when one is performed and when an evil action is performed, all perform it" (174).

Godbole's reaction to Aziz's predicament appears to be considerate and sagacious. But Fielding's belief in Aziz's innocence does not touch Godbole. Indian history depicts the same picture of Hindu reservations about Muslims. Godbole does not take a strong stand in favour of Aziz even though Fielding sunk his head on his arms and shouted, "Really, Indians were sometimes unbearable." Such inter-racial conflict and tensions between Hindus and Muslims lengthened the colonizer's persecution.

On the other hand, British rulers want to interpret India from their own perspective. Eurocentric prejudice against the Orientals very often tends to misrepresent the East and it is formed and shaped in the way the West thinks of it. Edward Said has justly identified the colonial and imperial ambitions of the Europeans and the Americans and criticized how they produce the romanticized images of Orient as a subject for the practice of hoodwink. In his seminal book *Orientalism* (1978) Said has marked the Western mindset about the East as Orientalism and says how he got it. In his words, "As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggressive, activity, judgement, will-to-truth, and knowledge" (*Orientalism*, 204). Hence, the two Western women, Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested came to see the 'real India' (25) and Mrs. Moore, very enthusiastic about Aziz and India at the beginning, loses her interest in them soon after entering the Marabar Caves. She fails to discover the 'real India' in the darkness of the caves that are the central image of the novel. Adela Quested wanted to see the 'real India' but did not obviously know what the 'real India' meant. Whatever things here she attempted to see, it was marred by her reaction in the cave. Mrs. Moore and Adela's failure to discover the 'real India' depicts the inscrutability of the spirit of India which is made of heterogeneous cultures, religion, beliefs, and ideas. Actually, as typical Europeans they romanticized Orient with the label of mystery and muddle.

In fact, 'real India' is the image of India that colonizers produce and impose upon the Indians. They want to see good India whose image they have already created in their minds and are determined not to compromise with anything else. Adela comes to know the ultimate inscrutability of India when she enters the cave. Out of hysteria, she rushes out and accuses Aziz of making an abortive attempt to rape her. The caves are incomprehensible to her and to all her fellows who have come to see 'real India'. According to M. Keith Booker, "the most important result of the unknowability of the caves is the inconclusive trial of Dr. Aziz, in which the bourgeois system of British justice is unable to determine the truth of Aziz's encounter with

Adela Quested in the caves”(43). All hopes of connection between the East and the West seem to have dissolved after the cave episode. This unknowability of the caves destroys the blossoming friendship between Aziz and Fielding and leads to suspicion and misunderstanding. The echo in the caves indicates that the new administration echoes the old, offering no hope for love and reconciliation. The ignorance of the British rulers about Indian history is synonymous with the unknowability of India and Adela's sudden discovery of this cavity in her knowledge of India horrifies her.

To the English, India is a land of mystery and muddle. They think that it is not possible to achieve sufficient epistemological knowledge of this country. This is proved when in the midst of the trial in response to the question of the judge Adela, breaking the illusion of her fellows, announces, “I am not quite sure” (222). Actually, the caves constitute a powerful and effective metaphysical symbol which represents the East which is always inscrutable to the Westerners who stand for materialism. The colonizers behave as prigs and cannot adjust to the muddle of this sub-continent. How can Adela understand India who is, according to Fielding, “a prig.....trying ever so hard to understand India and life” (116)? Actually, the problem of Adela can be generalized for as that of all colonizers who are prigs. Discovery of the gap of this preconception and reality confounds Adela and consequently she admits that Aziz is not to be blamed.

Obviously enough, Forster does not make sufficient attempts to see Indian characters with their Oriental stereotypes. Despite his Western education, Aziz, thinks to be emotional and disorganized. Though he has been depicted as an individual, he is apparently still an “Oriental”. After the acquittal from the trial when Fielding told Aziz not to seek financial reparations, Aziz immediately suspects that Fielding, like the other Anglo-Indians, has taken the part of Adela and that wants her to be able to keep her money so that he might marry her and get it for himself. Such suspicion as depicted in Aziz is a typical Oriental characteristic. It is a malignant tumor, a malady that makes him self-conscious and unfriendly suddenly. Aziz, as a representative Oriental, trusts and mistrusts at the same time in a way Western people cannot comprehend.

Similarly, while visiting the caves Adela suddenly asks Aziz, “Have you one wife or more than one?” (151) At such question Aziz feels so much irritated that he might not have minded more if he were asked, “Do you worship one god or several?” (151) and as a consequence immediately loses his zest of travel. He, then, “let go off her hand” (151). He thinks, “Damn the English even at their best” (151). Through this incident the oriental mind has been contrasted with the colonial mind. In another situation while talking with enthusiasm in his sick bed he tells Fielding, “I shall arrange a lady with breasts like mangoes ...” (117) if he wants to marry again. Actually, like a typically sensible English man Fielding does not show any interest in such erotic proposal of typically sensitive Aziz.

It is evident that Forster's attitude towards the Orientalist characters is sympathetic but he has failed to come out of prejudice of colonizers. As a colonizer he maintains the sense of the others. In this regard M. Keith Booker says, “Forster's narration again and again succumbs to standard Orientalist characterizations of Indians, despite his ostensible sympathy for their position and his

obvious critique of the outrageous orientalism of Anglo-Indian characters like McBryde and the Turtons” (43). Forster’s sympathy for the natives is purposeful because the colonial condition has chained both the colonizers and the colonized into an implacable dependence which moulds their respective characters and dictates their conduct.

It is important to bear in mind that Forster’s observation of the East-West relationship appears to be concrete and realistic, rather than emotive. He believes that the superficial hatred of the Orientals for the colonizers is not adequate to drive them away. After the trial, Aziz determines to go out of the colonial state. He wants to migrate to where there is no British domination. But Aziz’s resentment cannot pave the way for a permanent solution to this problem. British Central Investigation Department continues to keep an eye on him.

In fact, East can never establish friendly association with West because of so many hegemonic differences. Superficial resentment against each other cannot liberate East from the dominance of West. But the formation of a discourse can be a fit antagonistic force against colonial discourse. A basic motive of discourse usually discovers the regularities and constraints of the components of ideology and thoughts of the nation. It also reveals the observational faculties of the people. It is a historical phenomenon that indicates the margin of the main body of the thoughts at different levels- economic, political, religious, and ethical and many others.

Actually colonial discursive practices must be set against the motives and justifications for colonialism that can perhaps form a complicated interlocking matrix, comprising so many layers. Science and technological knowledge lie at different layers. To impart a competent fight against this matrix the colonized must yield to the development of a concrete discourse. In relation with the motive of discursive practices, it is obvious that Aziz’s first and foremost limitation is that he fails to accumulate an epistemological discourse that can fight against British colonial discourse. He fails to understand that the fight is not between himself and Ronny, not between the English and the Indians but between two opposite discourses. He pathetically fails to generate an image of self-projection. Explicit British ideologies of moral, cultural and racial supremacy which backed its interpretative ventures have formed an image of self – projection which labels colonizers with the role of the conquerors and civilizers. This narcissistic attitude has tempted them to think that their histories are made of the first and the best. The beginning of their colony in a particular country is the beginning of the new history for the natives. They consider the history of the natives as less important and of lesser significance. Such imperial vision has germinated narrowness of attitude towards the natives. In *A Passage to India* Ronny’s attitude towards the Indians is the projection of such imperial vision.

Aziz’s resentment towards the British colonizers is an indicator of the impulsive protest. He said vehemently, “I have decided to have nothing more to do with British India, as a matter of fact. I shall seek service in some Moslem state, such as Hyderabad, Bhopal, where English men cannot insult me any more” (245). It is an outburst of his emotional grudge, not a rational protest. His attempt to escape the colonial domination is an exposure of his ignorance of the persuasion of the colonizing mechanism. Forster appears to make him a typical Indian as Elleke Boehmer has pointed out, “The people of India, especially of Bengal, were typically characterized as passive,

soft, seductive, languid, and generally effeminate when compared to the robustly male personae of the colonizers” (86).

In this connection, it is safe to say that Aziz should have thought that the potential remedy for his discomfort in the colonial rule lies at the formation and formulation of an antagonistic discourse. But he fails to achieve it. His problem is that he is externally well-equipped with Western-knowledge, but internally passive, soft, languid, impulsive, a typical Indian and these typical situations act as a block on his way to developing potential discourse against Orientalism through which colonizers can exploit the natives of this sub-continent. In fact, Orientalism, an accumulation of power and textual practices, images the East to accompany Western territorial accumulation. “For Foucault, discourse is at once a denial and a critique of a canonical assumption in our thinking about literature and language, -----” (Fowler, 65). Thus by developing discourse colonizers ruled the way of thinking of natives. Aziz is only aware of geographical colonialism, not of intellectual which is still functioning in the form of Neo-colonialism in many parts of the world.

Actually, Aziz represents a typical Oriental who observe things and judge matters from personal point of view and tinge every aspect, both serious and trivial, with emotion. They are always in the extreme and if they love, they love extremely and if they hate, they do it with extremity. On the other hand, the Westerners observe things sensibly and judge them from political point of view. In connection with this gap of the discourses between the East and the West, it requires to understand that the British – Indian relationship is not monological – “the British endlessly speaking and issuing orders with no reply – as imperialists and some subsequent critics have believed, but dialogical” (Morey, 54). British imperialism was devoted to impressing the natives in order to involve them in a kind of transaction resulting in acquiescence in imperial rule. “The Indians are to be impressed both in the sense of being overawed by displays of power, and by being impressed with a kind of mark which makes him recognizable and conveys an exchange value regarding his relationship to the over seer”(Morey, 54). It makes sure that the colonized responds to the colonizers. But the utterances of the colonized are as the colonizers want them to speak. Essentially Aziz is made to speak in *A Passage to India* but he thinks, speaks and acts as colonizers want him to do. Whatever he thinks outside this idiosyncratic discourse, is full of vehement resentment and it fails to liberate him from the chain of colonialism

On the other hand, imperial discourse hinders the development of the self image of the colonized. Obviously, colonial discourse determines the goal of the colonized. In this connection, it may be mentioned that after the trial Aziz tries to raise his voice against the colonizers. Though after being acquitted of the charge of Adela he was furious with her, ultimately he could not take any effective action except hating her. But he cannot proceed with his determination. He cannot escape the profound influence of the world of the colonizers. In this connection Peter Morey has said, “Imperial discourse must, by necessity, be dialogical in a regime that purports to govern by consent. It constitutes a two way gaze; the ruler looks at his subjects and encourages them to look back at him and his works with the requisite degree of reverence, with which he can, in turn, construct a view of himself as in total control of a situation characterized by the clear cut binarism of victory and defeat”(Morey,54).

Though *A Passage to India* superficially appears to be centering on the friendship between the English man Fielding and the Muslim protagonist Aziz, it is true that Forster has very delicately interpreted the social and political conditions of Indian nationalism. The novel shows the conflict between the urge of the natives for self-government and the British Raj. Passage between the two races is certainly vulnerable while conflict soars high. Though Forster does not represent some major political incidents that took place between the suppression of the so-called 'Mutiny' of 1857 and the massacre of civilians at Amritsar in 1919, he has discovered almost all the improbabilities of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized.

On the whole, a thorough and close reading of *A Passage to India* reveals Forster's political awareness and liberal astuteness in respect of racial tension and human problems. India as the formless mass, muddle and mystery cannot come in close to the rigid and definitely patterned West. Attempts may be made for the fusion of these two; human emotions may come to the climax on both the sides as it is depicted through the boat colliding scene at Gokul Astamy ritual in Mau state, but passage is not possible in the colonial setting. There may be passage in some other time and in some other place but "Not, not yet,.....No, not there(317)" and thus Forster has prophetically voiced that the colonizers must wind up their Indian empire and it may only then be possible to bridge East and West.

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