

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

E.M. FORSTER: A. NOVELIST

Edward Morgan Forster has been a controversial figure of the 20th Century fiction. He is one of the greatest English Novelists of the present century. Walter Allen has rightly said that Forster is a novelist difficult to assess.

Plot Construction

E.M. Forster, in his book, "Aspects of the Novel" makes a distinction between the plot and the story. According to him, the story merely exists in time sequence but the plot exists in relationship between cause and effect. The plot in the novels of Forster is not conventional and is not very easy to understand. Karl and Marvin assert surprisingly that the plots of E.M. Forster are simple, direct and economical. Walter Allen says that Forster's plots are improbable, melodramatic and far-fetched except that of "A Passage to India". He says that it is one thing to write on craft of the fiction and to write on belief of writing a novel is another thing. "A Passage to India" does not measure up to his own standards. The relationship of cause and effect is lacking in his novel "A Passage to India".

Characterization

Forster's characters are mostly types or flat characters. He has not portrayed them as individuals. They come under two groups. They are either Crutaceans or Vitalists. The Crutaceans are conservatives. Their responses never change. Characters like Ronny Heaslop, Major Callendor and The Turtens belong to this group. On the other hand, the characters as Fielding and Mrs. Moore belong to the Vitalist group. They are men of feeling and deep emotions. His characters lack passion and sexual fulfillment. They stand for certain values of life.

Realism

Arnold Bennett and Galsworthy place Forster among the naturalists and realists. However, the fact is that he is not such pronounced realist as the others. The surface manners may appear to be realistic but he is impatient because he infused sudden acts of violence in his plots. He places a romantic figure in a realistic environment. "A Passage to India" is a faithful presentation of Anglo-Indian relations but the novel tends to be more philosophical and symbolic than a realistic representation of the racial problem.

Morality

Forster is not in favour of convention, worship, snobbery, money and affected manners. He advocates the adoption of sincerity and truthfulness in human relations. His novels are the expression of his moral vision.

Criticism on Contemporary Civilization

E. M. Forster has criticized the contemporary civilization and has launched a campaign against the ills of civilization, which was founded on the ideals of materialism. His satire is sharp and deals with conventions and incidents.

E.M. Forster can be compared with D.H. Lawrence as a critic of the contemporary civilization. They have same reaction against the ills of civilization and share the positive theme, but they suggest different solutions.

Symbolism

Forster consciously makes use of symbols in his novels. Symbolism is the prominent feature in the Novels of E.M. Forster. His symbols are difficult to comprehend. In "A Passage to India", the title is symbolic. Passage is symbol of link and the writer seems to advocate a link between the British and the natives of India. Mosque, caves and Temple are also symbolic. Mosque stands for man's emotional nature, while caves represent intellect. Temple is the symbol of love and devotion.

A Liberal Humanist and Rationalist

Forster is truly a humanist and rationalist. He believes that life is not merely intellectual. It is something more than that. He believed that wisdom of the heart was neglected in the 19th Century but he could not reconcile with the devotion of blood, which, D.H. Lawrence advocated.

Style

His prose style is exact mirror of his temperament. His style is not grand but it is sensitive, dexterous and graceful. His choice of adjectives and lift of tempo of light tuneful rhythm are skillful.

Conclusion

To sum up we can say that E.M. Forster is not a writer of stature of D.H. Lawrence, but he is a fine and enduring artist and his work is of high standard. His novels lack emotional fire and human warmth, but there are certain virtues in him, which very few novelists possess.

Written and Composed By:

Prof. A. R. Somroo

M.A. English, M.A. Education

Cell: 03339971417

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF “A PASSAGE TO INDIA”

A Modern Classic

Many critics unanimously call “A Passage to India” as the best novel of E.M. Forster. Lowes Dickinson calls it as a classic of the strange and tragic facts of history and life in India. It is a monumental work and modern classic.

Life and conduct in India may have changed since E.M. Forster first visited the country before the First World War, but his insight into Indian problems, and nature of his intellect and art are deep enough to make a book, which does not date.

According to Rose Macaulay, “A Passage to India” is a well built tale, with significant approach, tense suspense, highly dramatic crisis, and brilliantly narrated denouement”.

Portrayal of Anglo-Indian Relationship

The book deals with the Anglo-Indian relationship in which both the English and the Americans were interested. The imperialists as well the anti-imperialists took equal interest in the book. There could be no friendship between the proud British rulers and the humble Indians. Can the barrier be removed? There is no answer to the question. The greatness of the novel lies in posing the question and not in answering it.

Racial Problems

In the novel, the two great races with different history and heritage come to meet. Aziz and Fielding represent the two different races, which have come in contact on unequal relation.

The English repeatedly humiliate Dr. Aziz. The picnic at the Marabar Caves brought the communal hatred into focus. The English officials were agitated over the question of punishment to Dr. Aziz. The incident of supposed assault by a Muslim on an English girl brought fore the suppressed emotions of racial contempt, prejudice and injustice. The Englishmen were almost united to avenge themselves on the poor Indians. The voice of sanity, sympathy and reason were lost in the wilderness of commotion.

On the other hand, the Indians were also united and bent upon rioting. However, the Nawab Bahadur kept them under check and saved bloodshed.

Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested raise important Questions

The novelist has used Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested to raise some questions. Mrs. Moore announces God is Love and tries to develop a relation of good will. Her interest in spiritualism neared her to Prof. Godbole. She loved the songs sung by Godbole. Her effusion of love towards the Indians showed the liberal Christian in her.

Adela Quested wanted to know India without knowing the Indians. When she faced the reality and saw the hollowness of her previous opinion about the Indians, she became

confused. Her previous opinion was biased by the views of Anglo-Indian community. When she saw the tyranny of the British Empire and puppet like character of Ronny, she became perturbed by the question of her marriage with Ronny.

She fell victim to her own confusion that if the Indians be so handsome as to attract her. She showed undue haste in reporting against Dr. Aziz to the police. But she failed in the test of patience to understand Indians.

Echo of the age of Forster

The age of Forster was of transition when the beliefs of absolute values were eroded. The old religious beliefs were no more valid. However, no clear picture of regenerated Christianity emerged. There was mystery and it was not possible for a man to understand it. Like Virginia Woolf he was conscious of confusion but was unable to explain it. He however believed that reasonableness and toleration would solve the problem.

Forster's Impartiality

The author showed Dr. Aziz as a prey to narrowness and snobbery of the British. In spite of the fact that he belonged to a different race, the author has exercised resistance in depicting him. The author has made attempt to gain sympathy for Aziz by making sentiments in his favour. We find in Aziz pride, vanity, desire to please and even lack of confidence. His desire to be liked by the English men is hard to explain. The author has portrayed Mr. Moore admirably because she represents his inclination towards Hinduism.

Characters are both Round and Flat

Dr. Aziz, Mrs. Moore and Fielding are characters when are the round ones. Dr. Aziz was proud, vain, vulgar, aggressive, progressive and courageous. He was proud of Islam and India at the same time. He was courageous and fearful. Despite all this, he was human and living. Mrs. Moore was also individual of unique qualities. She was a mystery. She had much sympathy for the Indians. Ronny Heaslop is a type of the self-righteous English official. Prof. Godbole represented the mysterious and indifferent Hindu.

Plot

Rose Macaulay remarks that "A Passage to India" is superbly well-constructed story. However, another view is that there is hardly a story worth the name. The two English women come to India. One is to marry the son of the other. They want to know India and the Indian people. Mrs. Moore realized that the official policy would not succeed. Out of disgust, she goes back and dies in the way. Miss Adela Quested, the second lady loses everything and in desperation return to England. The other side of the story deals with the friendship between an Indian Dr. Aziz and an Englishman, Fielding. A minor misunderstanding was cleared but the friendship could not be lasting. This could hardly

make an interesting story. But the other angles like of the trial scene revealed the feelings of the important characters.

Division of Novel into Three Sections

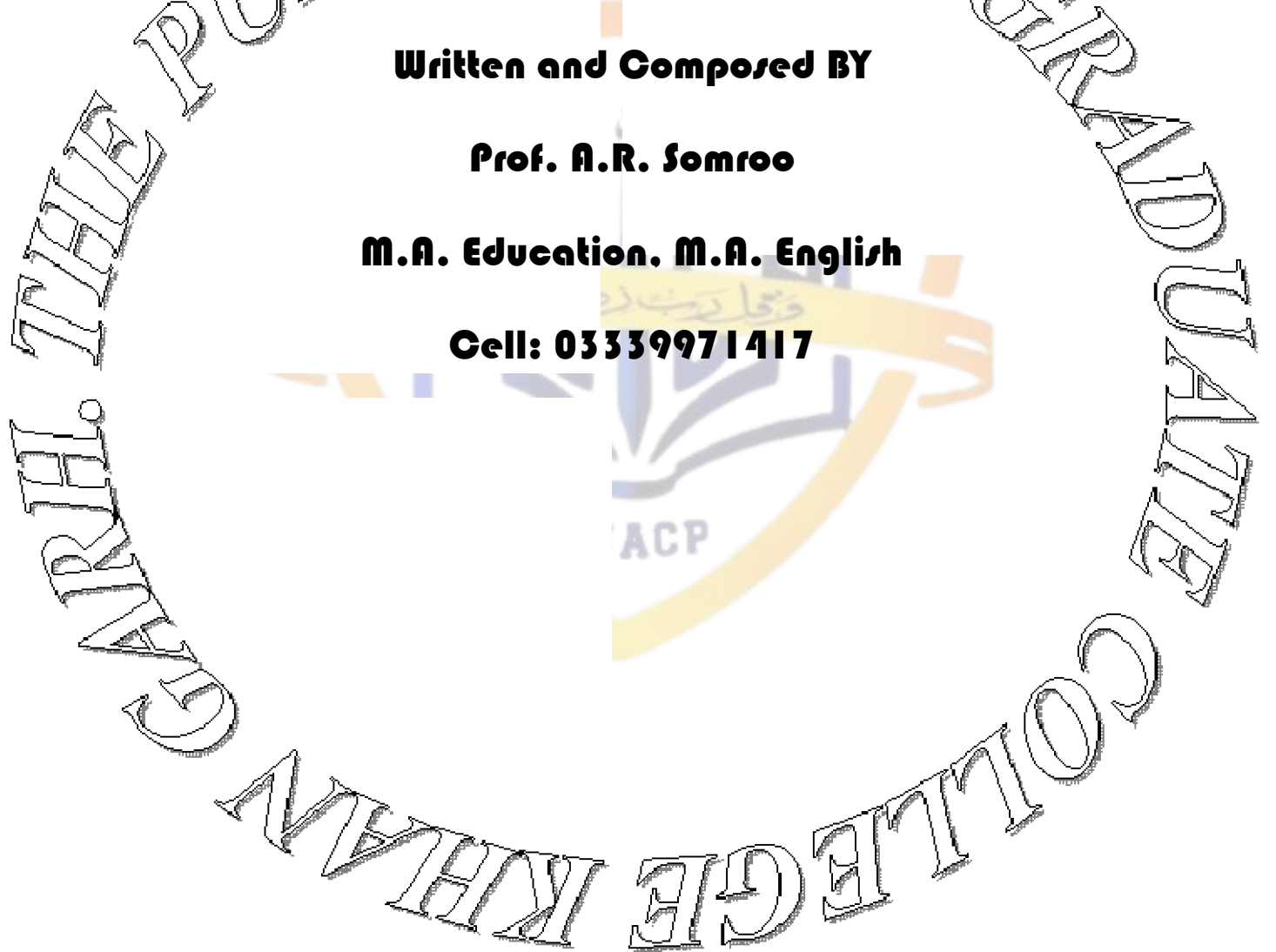
The story and the plot do not go side by side. The story ends with the close of the second section of the novel, "The Caves". But the writer stretched it in the remaining five chapters of the third section, "Temple". The division of the novel into three section is open to various interpretations. G.M. White describes it as thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Allen disagrees with White and says that the three sections represent ways of work, knowledge of work and of love. Whereby Forster, presents the native as he appears to himself, as he appears to the British and as he really is. W.A.S. Keir suggests that the three sections represent the three periods of Indian History, the Moghul Empire of the past, the present Anglo-Indian and the future, dominated by the Hindus.

Written and Composed BY

Prof. A.R. Somroo

M.A. Education, M.A. English

Cell: 03339971417



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CHARACTER SKETCH OF DR. AZIZ

Dr. Aziz is the hero of the novel, as all important events in the novel revolve around him. Almost all the critics praised E.M. Forster for the creation of round character that is living and human. He has successfully portrayed a character of a different race with impartiality and sympathy.

A Fanatic Muslim

Dr. Aziz, even though educated in England, was a loyal believer in supremacy of Islam. He was very proud of Islamic heritage. He liked Almgir and Babar and disliked Akbar, whom he did not consider a true Muslim. He regarded Hindus as lazy, unpunctual and dirty. He wanted his Afghan brothers to come down from Afghanistan and occupy India to revive the glory of Islam. He visited the mosque whenever he was frustrated.

A Nationalist Indian

Whereas Aziz was proud of being a Muslim, he was also proud of being an Indian. The march of events turned him into a nationalist. He denounced the hateful attitude of his boss, Major Callendor. He had to get down from the Tonga at a distance from Callendor's house as it was objectionable to ride up to the bungalow of an Englishman. Mrs. Callendor arrogantly ignored his greetings and drove away in the Tonga brought by Aziz. Ronny was always disrespectful to him. Accusation of criminal assault by Miss Adela Quested converted him into a nationalist.

He declared that India would emerge as a nation in spite of the English policy of divide and rule. He told to Fielding that if the present generation failed in its attempt to drive out the British, the next generation would surely succeed.

His Family

Aziz was very fond of talking about the Afghan blood running in his veins. He came of a prosperous Muslim family and got education from England. He loved his wife and often thought of suicide after her death. He did not attend the party arranged by the Collector as that was his wife's anniversary. He loved his children and sent a large part of his salary to his children every month.

Emotional and Sentimental

Aziz was a highly emotional and sentimental person. As a Muslim he was strongly bound to the society in which he lived. He allowed his emotions to influence his beliefs. He believed that the rumor about Fielding and Adela was true and did not care to verify the rumor.

Physical Appearance

Adela considered Aziz a handsome little oriental, who could attract the women of his race as well as of the white race. She believed that Aziz was more handsome personality than either Ronny or herself.

An Able Doctor

He was an able doctor. Even Major Callendor was conscious of the fact. He took Aziz's assistance in every major operation. Mr. Das, the trial magistrate, consulted him for the treatment of shingles. After his trial he was appointed the chief of the Medical services of the state of Mau.

A Good Friend

Dr. Aziz believed in friendship. He was loyal to all his Muslim friends. Hamidullah and Mahmud Ali helped him greatly during his trial. He sought friendship even with persons of different race. Fielding was his friend also. He also befriended Adela and Mrs. Moore. He was kind and affectionate to his friends.

His Oriental Hospitality

He was the best example of hospitality. He arranged for Mrs. Moore and Adela to go on a trip to the caves of Marabar. He personally attended to every single detail. He spent the whole night awake at the station so that he would not miss the train. He borrowed every required item from his Muslim friends.

His Love for Mrs. Moore

Aziz had great admiration for Mrs. Moore. He was greatly charmed by her sincerity. Mr. Fielding was surprised by the charm she influenced on him since beginning to the end. He gave up his claim to the compensation which he had demanded from Adela when he was convinced that Mrs. Moore would have wished it so.

Sexual Pervert

He criticized Adela for not being beautiful. He treated her as he would treat a man. He regarded her angular body and freckled face as a great defect. He thought of dancing girls of Calcutta and wanted to go there. He had contacts with a person running a brothel at Calcutta.

His Diplomatic Lies

Aziz pretended to be ill while he was not. He told some lies to Fielding regarding Adela's trip to Marabar caves to save her honour. He deliberately hid the fact that she had asked him about the number of his wives. He told Adela that his wife was living and she would come to see her. While the fact was that he was a widower.

Revengeful

He demanded compensation of rupees 20,000 from Miss Adela Quested as damages for falsely accusing him criminal assault. He did not appreciate that her bold statement saved his life. He wanted to avenge himself on every Englishman. He treated Ralph roughly. He wished every Englishman to be drowned into the sea.

His Contradictions

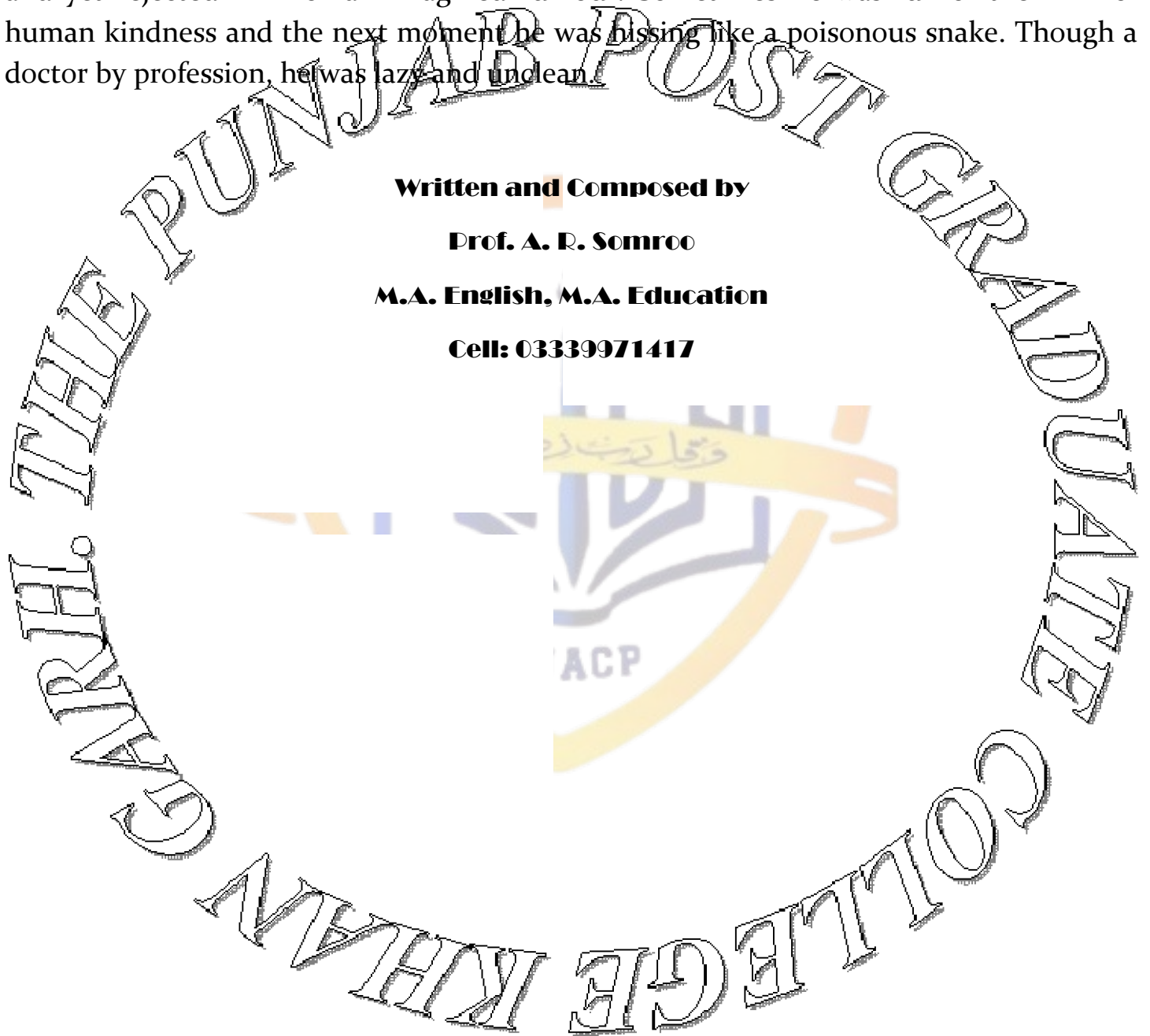
It was the contradictions in Aziz's character that made him lovable. He sought friendship with fielding and offered color stud to him, showed him his wife's photograph and yet rejected him for an imagined rumour. Sometimes he was full of the milk of human kindness and the next moment he was hissing like a poisonous snake. Though a doctor by profession, he was lazy and unclean.

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Prof. A. R. Somroo

M.A. English, M.A. Education

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CHARACTER SKETCH OF FIELDING

Cyril Fielding plays a highly significant role in the novel. He was a modern man, polite and sympathetic, having a clear vision of life. He is in the middle of forties and working as a principal of the Government College in Chandrapore. Towards the end of the novel the writer has portrayed as still in the education service but married and having fewer friends. He is the central figure that sets the whole plot in motion.

Affectionate

Fielding was an affectionate man. He felt that it was more important to conceive an idea than to produce a child. He was always ready to help people and to seek friendship with others.

A Seasoned Personality

Fielding was an educationist and devoted most of his time to this noble profession. He was quite popular with his pupils. He was free from racial prejudice and liked to mix freely with Indians. He believed in the brotherhood of man. He was a scholar and gentleman.

An Atheist

Fielding was an atheist. He did not believe in God. He confessed it before Aziz and told him that most of the people in England were atheist. This belief might have been the result of his being cast off by a woman he loved. But it does not mean that he had no values of life. He is the only character in the novel who has high values and has the stamina to uphold them even against heavy odds.

Balanced and Impulsive

Fielding was balanced in his views and temperament. But on occasions he could be impulsive. He called Miss Adela Quested self-righteous. He had no liking for her. He disliked Ronny Heaslop and his values of life. The other Englishmen thought that he was of no use.

A Man of Extra-ordinary Courage

Fielding was a man of extra-ordinary courage. During the trial period of Dr. Aziz he was the only Englishman who refused to the British line. He kept patience, suggested many hypotheses, and finally came to the conclusion that Aziz was innocent and Adela Quested had made a mistake.

A Real Patriot

Fielding was a real patriot. He was the cultural ambassador of his country. He represented the best of the English way of life. The other Englishmen called him unpatriotic because of his free mixing with the Indians. He was not a true sahib. The officials of Chandrapore wrote against him to the higher authorities and forced him to go on long leave.

The Only Good Englishman

Among the group of haters he was the only man who did not hate men—white or black. He hated hypocrisy and racial prejudice. Whatever he said he did it. He did believe in slogans rather he believed in real constructive work of bridging the gap between the British and the Indians.

Conclusion

Fielding was such a forceful character that defeats the critics. That is why some of the critics regard “A Passage to India” to be without a hero. At stages, by his noble and heroic deeds, he appears to be snatching the role of a hero. Anyhow it can be said that the novel without him will lose something substantial for which there is no substitute.

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CHARACTER SKETCH OF MRS. MOORE

Mrs. Moore is a mystical and philosophical character. Forster has expressed his own likings towards Hinduism through her. He wanted to focus the attention of his readers on the Hindu message that God is love. She represents the Hindu view of compassion and kindness.

Her Family

Mrs. Moore had married twice but had lost her both husbands. Ronny was her son by her first husband. Stella and Ralph were her other children by her second husband. She loved them all. She had come to India to unite her son in wedlock with an English lady Miss Adela Quested. She was an affectionate mother.

Warm and Kind

She showed warmth and kindness to those whom she liked. She met Dr Aziz in the mosque and liked him. She remained affectionate and friendly to him throughout. She was kind to all the natives because she felt the poor Indians were not being treated properly.

Considerate

She was considerate and thought of happiness of others. She went to a mosque and took off her shoes knowing that shoes were not allowed inside a mosque. Aziz shouted at her to take out shoes but he was pleased to see that she had already taken off the shoes. She did not want to attend the court because she could not stand the sight of Aziz's humiliation.

She wanted all Indians to be treated well by the Britishers. She scolded Ronny for not being pleasant to the Indians. Ronny replied that India was not a drawing room. His primary business was not to please the Indians but to keep peace. But she persisted on her benevolent view, that India was a part of the earth and God had put us on the earth in order to be pleasant to each other.

Her Health

She was an old lady. Her health became worst after the Marabar incident. She became more fretful. The echo and the stink of the crowd had affected her greatly and she could not shake off the evil influence of them.

Religious Minded

Mrs. Moore was interested in religion. It is evident from her visit to the mosque. She was bored by the way the English were living. She was bored by the activities at the club. She chose instead visiting a mosque. She met Dr. Aziz and put many questions to him. She was pleased by the song sung by the mystic Hindu, Godbole. The song was an invocation to lord Krishna. She was a Christian, and had come in contact with two great religion of the east---Hinduism and Islam. She felt more attracted towards Hinduism. To her Hinduism was a system of religious worship of all inclusiveness. A sudden sense of unity, kinship with the heavenly bodies passed into the old woman and out like water through a tank leaving a strange freshness behind.

Superstition

She believed in ghosts. When she heard of the accident of Nawab Bahadur's car had met with, she at once exclaimed that it was ghost that had done it. Nawab Bahadur also believed in it.

A Steadfast Friend

Her friendship with Dr. Aziz stood on sure ground. She did not change her opinion about him. Even when every Englishman was against him, she did not change her opinion. She declared him incapable of such a crime. She frankly told Adela Quested that he was innocent.

A Symbolic Role after Death

Mrs. Moore was mighty when alive, but after her death she became mightier. Her name like Julius Caesar was repeated again and again after her death. Her presence was felt everywhere. In her life she was helpful to everyone. After her death she became more helpful. Aziz wept when he heard the news of her death. He withdrew his claim of twenty thousand rupees as compensation from Miss Adela Quested when he came to know that Mrs. Moore would not have wanted any harm done to Adela.. The spirit of Mrs. Moore was hovering over Aziz. It made no difference whether she was a trick of his memory or a telepathic appeal.

Inside the court, the pleaders were referring to her as weighty evidence smuggled out of India by Ronny. Out of the court, the crowd was shouting her name, "Esmiss Esmoor" far away from England. She was symbolically buried in the Indian Ocean.

She had really become an abstraction. From the beginning to the end, she exercised her open influence when living, and her subtle influence when dead, to the advantage of all whom she met. She was a victim to the crookedness of the English misrule and a martyr to her desire for friendship with India. Her passage to India and passage to England are full of meaning which need no explanation.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

CHARACTER SKETCH OF MISS ADELA QUESTED

Does Adela deserve the rank of heroine of the novel? This has been disputed by most of the critics. "A Passage to India" is described as a strange novel, for it does not have the conventional type of heroine to support its plot. Adela vanishes from the story before it reaches the end. It shows that she is meant simply to be one of the most important characters in the book and not the heroine.

Physical Appearance

Adela was plain and unattractive. She was young and amiable but lacked the charm of youth which could draw young men to her. Ronny wanted to marry her because his mother had brought her from England for the purpose of marriage with him. Fielding called her a pig when Aziz asked him to marry Adela. Dr. Aziz also found her unattractive.

A Careful Girl

She came to India with Mrs. Moore to meet her fiancé. Before deciding to marry him she watched him and disapproved of his attitude. She found that Ronny had become a cog in the machine of British Imperialism. She was therefore confused whether to marry him or not.

She Wanted to Know India without Knowing the Indians

Adela wanted to know India without knowing the Indians. She felt that she knew all about love, life and death, whereas the fact was that she had derived it merely from books. Her test came when she entered the Marabar caves. After the incident in the caves she should have waited but she hurried to the police station and lodged a complaint of criminal assault against Dr. Aziz. She lacked Mrs. Moore's intuition and sympathy. Without these qualities, it was very difficult to understand persons belonging to a different race.

Courageous and truthful

She may be accused of confusion after the Marabar caves incident but the fact must be appreciated that the courage and truthfulness lying dormant for a while in her feminine frame came out at the right moment and saved Aziz who had been so kind to her.

Adela's Sense of Repentance

Adela felt repentant over what she had done to Aziz. She wrote a letter of apology to Aziz for causing trouble to him. She bravely accepted her defeat in personal relationships. No one except Fielding appreciated her noble act. The sorrow constantly hurt her and she did not know how to compensate against the harm done to India.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

CHARACTER SKETCH OF PROF. GODBOLE

Prof. Godbole is a flat character. He represents Hinduism and acts as a foil to Dr. Aziz. Forster had likings for Hinduism. A Moslem can be read inside out, for he wears his heart on his sleeve, but it is difficult to measure a Hindu for he is slippery like an eel and baffling as a night.

Physical Appearance

Prof. Godbole was an elderly man with grey moustaches, grey blue eyes and fair complexion. His whole figure suggested the combination of the East and the West. His strange dress reflects the strange mind that he possessed. He wore dhouti, kurta, turban, tie and coat. This mixture of Western and eastern garments makes Godbole stand out as a quaint figure.

His Philosophical Approach

He was a seasoned and intelligent man and possessed philosophical outlook on life. He was very calm and never annoyed. He was an introvert and he respected the Britishers. He remained almost silent. When Aziz was arrested on charge of rape and Fielding asked for advice to Godbole, he avoided the issue and talked of opening the school in his native village. He considered evil a part of the universe.

Courteous and Polite

He was a humble man. He never boasted of anything. He accepts the invitation of Fielding and Dr. Aziz with all courtesy. He remembered Mrs. Moore at festival of Gokul ashtmi. He also remembered the wasp a tiny creature of God unlike Christian missionaries, who excluded wasp from God's scheme of things.

A Helpful Friend

Prof. Godbole valued friendship. When Dr. Aziz was in trouble and was disgusted with the shabbiest treatment, he went to Prof. Godbole who was the Minister of Education. Godbole through his influence helped Aziz secure the job. He knew Dr. Aziz as a doctor as well as a man and had no rising above in getting for him an honourable place.

Religious –minded

Prof. Godbole was a religious minded and God-fearing man. He could miss the train and not the prayers. Fielding who was to bring him to Dr. Aziz to accompany to the Marabar Caves was late to arrive at the station. Fielding told Dr. Aziz that it was his prayer responsible for their late arrival. At the festival of Gokul ashtmi, he led the celebration by singing and dancing before the image of the lord.

A Bluff-master

Prof. Godbole gave the impression on the tea party by Fielding that he was an authority on Marabar Caves. When he was asked to give an idea of the caves, he cleverly avoided the question and left everything covered in mystery.

Not a Conscientious Administrator

He was the Education Minister in the state of Mau but most of his time was spent in prayers and celebrations of Hindu festivals. He had sent an intimation to the British Government that he had opened an English Medium School in his state. Fielding came on an inspection tour of the so-called new institution. He was surprised to see that the promised institution was not established and it existed only in papers.

Preferred Muslims to Englishmen

As an Indian he considered himself nearer to the Muslims than to the Englishmen. There might have been something in his consciousness that the English were foreigners and were bound to quit one day. When Fielding went to visit for inspection, Prof. Godbole did not go to see his former boss.

Prof. Godbole is not the true delineation of the Hindu character. As a matter of fact, Forster had imperfect knowledge of the Hindus, because he lived with a Muslim for the most part of his stay in India. He had no Hindu friends to stay with and as a result, Godbole was introduced not as a true representative of the Hindu culture but as a caricature.

Written and Composed by

Prof. A. R. Somroo

M.A. English. M.A. Education

Cell: 03339971417

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CHARACTER SKETCH OF RONNY HEASLOP

Ronny Heaslop represents the official class or what Forster says as “Public School” type. Ronny was devoted and conscious of his duties. He was honest and sincere as far as the British Raj was concerned. He was a true sahib. He could sacrifice his own interests for the sake of the British rule.

A Staunch Imperialist

In England, he was just a fair-minded. His opinion and deeds were masked by moderation and balance. His stay in India had however changed his behavior. He had become a confirmed imperialist. He felt that his main business in India was to maintain peace for the safety of the British Empire. India was a part of empire not the drawing room, where he was expected to be polite and soft to the natives.

He disliked Indians

He criticized his mother Mrs. Moore for making friendly approaches to Dr. Aziz. He was convinced that Indians were not reliable. Once he had invited the pleader Mahmoud Ali to smoke with him, but he latter made it known that he was very thick with the magistrate and managed to attract more clients in this way. After that, Ronny never invited any Indian to his house.

His Conception of Love

Love was not a passion with him. He preferred official duty over love. Ronny's love for Adela was not well marked. He exhibited no strong feelings towards her. He preferred to remain reserved. When Adela decided not to marry him, he did not show any reaction and remained calm. His love was also of official type. After the trial scene he decided not to marry Adela as that would resist his promotional interests.

His Treatment of his Mother

He did not approve his mother's attitude towards the Indians. His mother criticized him of being insensitive to human beings. He did not accept that the Indians and the British were equal. His religion was not Christianity but imperialism. After the Marabar Caves incident he was doubtful about his mother's behavior towards the whole episode. He feared that his mother would damage the British Cause. That is why he sent her to England. He could not forgive his mother for her emotional involvement with the Indians.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA--PLOT CONSTRUCTION

According to Forster, "A novel is based on a story which is a narrative of events arranged in time sequence". There should be suspense in the story to prepare the reader to move on with the movement of the story. The question, "what next?" keeps the reader's interest alive till the end. Dr Bhopal Singh says about the novel, "The plot of this novel is simple". This statement must not be taken on its face value that the novel has no mystery. It merely means that it is easy to understand the novel.

Main Plot

Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested came to Chandrapore to meet Ronny Heaslop and see India. Both the ladies wanted to see the real India. Mrs. Moore soon became friend of a Muslim doctor, Aziz. He was an assistant to civil surgeon, Major Callendar. Dr. Aziz invited both the ladies with Fielding and Prof. Godbole to a picnic to Marabar Caves. Miss Adela Quested accused Aziz of criminal assault. Dr. Aziz was arrested. It was not clear what actually happened. But the author made it plain that Dr. Aziz was innocent. This incident roused the bitter racial feelings. The supposed assault was taken by the Anglo-Indian as a big challenge to their honour. Fielding and Mrs. Moore were the only sane Englishmen open to reason. The trial took place under a Hindu magistrate. Miss Adela Quested heroically, disappointed her community and admitted that she probably was mistaken. Adela Quested was deserted by her community. The behavior of the Indian was not less passionate and the decision in their favor was a great victory for them. Aziz left the Government and became anti-British. He went to the service of a Hindu king and concluded that no friendship could be lasting between the Englishmen and the Indians. This is the main point of the plot.

Climax

The story is divided into three parts, Mosque, Caves and Temple. These parts may be unequal in length but not in importance. The introductory section is well connected with the second and the third leading to the final stage.

Importance of the Third Part

The story ends apparently in the first two sections after Aziz's trial and Adela's return to England. The third part seems to be unnecessary. But Forster himself stated that the third part was architecturally necessary. If we think that the third section was added to drive home a lesson and not merely to tell the story, the third part would not seem superfluous. It is this last section that completes the circle and preaches a moral that love in the form of Shri Krishna is the only hope of unity. Without the third part the story would have been complete but not the purpose of the novel.

Unity of Design

The three parts are to be accepted as a part of the same design. The first part, *Mosque* gives the background, unfolding the plot and introducing the characters. The background is of British occupied India. The relation between the ruler and the ruled are based on mutual mistrust. The two major groups of characters constitute Mr. and Mrs. Turton, Mrs. McBride, Ronny Heaslop and on the other side Dr. Aziz, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali, Godbole and Nawab Bahadur. These two groups are against each other. Between the two opposing groups, there is a third group of Adela Quested, Fielding and Mrs. Moore. This third group creates all complications in the plot.

Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested were against the Anglo-Indians through the treatment of sympathy and open mixing with the natives. They broke the accepted principle of the British rule that the natives should be kept at arms length. This attitude results in complication in the plot.

To test the strength of the relationship between the Indians and the Englishmen, an expedition to the Marabar Caves was arranged. Dr. Aziz, Adela, Mrs. Moore, Fielding and Godbole were to attend it. Fielding and Godbole missed the train. The rest of the party made the trip and it became the cause of the big trouble. Adela Quested had a hallucination and accused Dr. Aziz of sex assault. Aziz was arrested and the trial began. Fielding stood by his friend to the annoyance of his community. Adela withdrew the charge as she was not sure of the fact. Adela's engagement thus broke and she left for England. The experiment at the mosque met a failure in the cave. Aziz became anti-English.

Purposeful

The story seems to come to an end here. It is dragged forcibly, according to some critics, in the third part called "*Temple*" to give purposeful finale to the whole design. Godbole, Fielding and Aziz were brought together again in the Hindu state of Mau. Godbole was the minister of Education, Fielding was inspector of schools in India and Dr. Aziz was the head of the health services of the state. Though the misunderstanding between Fielding and Aziz were removed yet the question of racialism still persisted.

The problem of human relationship is not solved in the second section. *Mosque* held the promise; caves showed the failure of the attempt to connect the Indians and the English. *Temple* symbolizes the reconciliation through love.

Compactness

The plot of the novel seems to be compact. There is nothing irrelevant or unnecessary. Even the smallest detail promotes the action and develops the character and fulfils the purpose of the novel. All the strings are gathered at the end to give the final touch.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE

Allegorical in Meaning

It is significant that Forster chose the title of the novel from Whitman's poem "Passage to India". Outwardly the title of the novel may signify the journey to India. There have been invaders attacking the country and establishing their rule. The missionaries have been coming here to spread the gospel. India has been attracting the tourist to visit its lakes, rivers, forts and even it has been the abode of spiritual mystics. Thus the title suggests the journey to India. But it is a layman's view.

The problem is not as simple as it appears to be. The title suggests the careful study to unfold the real meaning. It is symbolic and allegorical. It signifies the emotion and feelings between the three racial and religious communities. The relationship between the imperialists and the natives is presented in the novel and its purpose was to bridge the gap between the rulers and the ruled. The hatred between the Englishmen and the Indians and their reactions against each other is the meaning between the lines.

The Journey of the Soul

If we study deeply the novel we come to know that it is not simple journey to India but it is the journey of mind to search for the new ventures and the journey of soul to understand what really India is. It is the journey of a nation to the other. Its purpose is to discover can there be a relation between the rulers and the ruled one? That is the precise question posed in the book and it is an attempt to find a solution of the problem.

Clash of Two Cultures

Different make-ups and different minds are presented in the novel to search for the suitable solution of the problem. Fielding represented the best Englishman to project the real image of the English character to the Indians. His journey was from one heart to the other. He talked of friendship to understand the Indians.

The officials tried to understand the Indians from a respectable distance. They had their own point of view. They looked upon the Indians from an angle of superiority. They were prejudiced.

Mrs. Moore and Miss Adela Quested attempted to understand and explore the inner secrets of the Indian mind. Mrs. Moore was quite sincere in her effort to understand not only India but the Indians too. Hers was the journey of soul. Her approach was based on justice and fairplay. She visited the mosque to understand Islam and its followers.

Major Callendar remarked that the Indians knew one language and it was the language of force. He wanted the city to be handed over to army to make the natives behave properly.

Prof. Godbole travelled on the path of universalism. He stated, "Let us all live and let live". Dr. Aziz talked of brotherhood. Truly speaking, this was the journey of reactions to the central problem.

E.M. Forster tried to find the conclusion in the state of Mau. But the problem was so ticklish that it evaded solution. Forster admitted that the mutual confidence failed in crisis. Secondly, the racial question was admittedly insoluble. The novel comes to an end with the temporary coming together of Aziz and Fielding only to separate again.

Attempt at Reconciliation

An attempt has been made to bring Aziz and Godbole closer in Mau. But this attempt also did not succeed. It is not a union of hearts. It is union of convenience. Dr. Aziz could not live in British India anymore after what had happened.

Miss Quested's journey also failed. She had tried to understand India without knowing the Indians. Mrs. Moore's last journey was very significant. She could not leave the Indian Ocean because it was she who tried to understand India and the Indians. She was the only lady who got success in her goal. She was buried in the Indian Ocean but it appears that her soul travelled back to India to influence Aziz, Fielding and the common man. The title, "A Passage to India" is apparently the most suitable title.

Written and Composed by:

Prof. A. R. Somroo

M.A. English, M.A. Education

Cell: 03339971417

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

SIGNIFICANCE OF MOSQUE, CAVES & TEMPLE

“A Passage to India” is Forster’s novel on India and its racial problem. It is divided into three parts—Mosque, Caves and Temple. The novel opens with the description of the city of Chandrapore and a brief reference to the extraordinary caves. After this the action of the novel starts and brings almost all the major characters together at Fielding’s party.

Aziz and Fielding become friends and Adela and Mrs. Moore are invited to the picnic to Marabar Caves. The unfortunate incident in the caves brings the climax of the novel. Adela accuses Aziz of sex assault. A trial follows and the whole town is agitated over it. Adela Quested withdraws her charge and Aziz is released. He becomes a nationalist and anti-British. Then the misunderstandings are cleared and the novel ends on a melodramatic note.

Mosque

The first section of the novel “Mosque” deals with the possibilities of personal relationships. Mosque represents Islamic brotherhood and Oneness of God. Through a series of side by side scenes, the section on the Mosque shows us its central position in relationship between an Englishman and an Indian. In this section the novelist has developed two different points of view--- mystery and muddle. Muddle produces misunderstanding. In spite of mutual struggle for forming a bond between the two races on their side, the relationship between Aziz and Fielding is shattered by temperamental differences. Aziz is impulsive but lacks patience while, Fielding is patient but lacks impulse. But there are few moments when muddle is transformed into mystery. Towards the end of the section one is made aware more and more of the impact of circumstances on human relationships.

Caves

The second section – Caves is the answer of the question raised in the first section. The relationship between the two races and the rulers and the ruled ones can never be friendly any longer. The friendship of the Englishmen and the natives is subjected to the test of time. The crisis in the circumstances shows the weak bond between the two. The echoes in the caves spell disaster. The difference in their attitude which was clear before now comes in their way and the friendship is subjected to a test. The mystery that began in the first section becomes deeper in the second.

Temple

Temple is the last section of the novel. Though the story apparently ends in the second section yet it is dragged to the third one in order to satisfy the readers. This criticism though show the simple view about the plot of the novel yet it is far deeper significant. It is restorative of harmony and friendship that was breached in the second section. The

essence of the novel consisted in this section is love. The author tried to bridge the gap between the races in India through love and fairplay. He has shown all the characters united again in the state of Mau. Though it is also a temporary union yet very significant. The final solution to the racial problem is never suggested by the author. It means that the problem is insoluble. There can never be permanent friendship and good will between the ruler and the ruled. Even the spiritual philosophy of Godbole is not capable of resolving the spiritual dilemma of "A Passage to India". The journey may seem unending, but if one does not loose heart like Mrs. Moore, one may at moment outside time, perceive the end.

Various Interpretations of the Three Sections

Different t critics have interpreted in different ways the three sections of the novel. Gertrude M. White considers the division of the novel in "Mosque, Caves and Temple" as thesis, antithesis and synthesis of the Hegelian arguments. G.D. Allen rejects the contention saying that the three sections represent the ways of work of knowledge and of love as specified in Hindu philosophy as well in Islam and Christianity. Wilbur Cross says that Forster has tried to show in the three sections the natives of India through his own eyes and through the eyes of the Englishmen and as they really are.

Most of these interpretations are partial and fail to understand Forster's basic intention. The truth is that the three sections represent the three phases of man's spiritual quest.

"Money is Honey my little Sunny
A rich man's joke is always funny".

- ❖ Hope is the dream of a waking man.
- ❖ With every "Right" there is always a "Responsibility".
- ❖ Great and successful persons are always learning.

Written and Composed By:

Prof. A. R. Samrao

M.A. English, M.A. Education

SYMBOLISM IN “A PASSAGE TO INDIA”

“A Passage to India” has been praised by many critics as a social comedy. It deals with the racial problem in India. Forster has made a powerful use of symbolism in this novel. The use of symbolism has given a larger meaning to an otherwise a simple story.

Mosque---- A Symbol

The novel is divided into three sections: Mosque, Caves and Temple. These sections are full of symbolic significance. The Mosque, Caves and Temple are in fact three symbols. The mosque is the symbol of brotherhood and fraternity. Mrs. Moore meets Dr. Aziz in the mosque and treats him affectionately. This represents the personal relationship of the two people of the two different races. However, at the bridge party give an ironical message that the two persons of two different races cannot remain friend for long. Thus the symbol is much complex and shows the friendship of two persons of different races at personal level and the impossibility of the friendship between the two races at racial level.

The Symbolic Caves

In the first chapter of the second part we are told of the Marabar caves. These caves are pre-historic and extraordinary. They are still unexplored. They are older than Islam, Christianity and Hinduism which are the oldest religion in the world. They stand for chaos and darkness. If the mosque was the world of cool weather and atmosphere of favourable union, the caves represent the blazing heat negating man's attempt to live in harmony. The walls of the caves were wonderfully polished and if someone struck a match it reflected on the other side of the cave. But the two flames shown on two walls never merge. It seemed that the stone of the wall prevented the flame, the soul from merging with the universal flame, the Brahma. Virginia Woolf identifies the caves with the soul of India which is beyond the comprehension of the foreigners.

The Marabar Caves illustrate the evil that exists. The horrible experience of Lady Moore and Adela Quested posed a challenge to the comfortable Christianity of the former and the rationalist liberal claims of the other. The dark and empty caves showed the hollowness of life. In the echo of the caves, she lost her concentration. The echo is the symbol of nothingness.

Prof. Godbole explains that evil is also a part of the universe. The happening in the caves indicates that evil has conquered the goodness. This evil influence of the caves decreased as she travelled to the town of Aligarh. What she saw in the caves was not reality. This was a phase to pass to have clear vision of the goodness. This means that the opposite thing always reveals the reality. The suffering sharpens the intellect and the darkness reveals the charm and beauty of life.

The Temple

If the caves stand for failure, the temple symbolizes the meeting together of different people for reconciliation. The four important scenes of this section are full of meaning:

1. The scene of the birth of lord Krishna.
2. Meeting of Ralph Moore and Aziz.
3. Colliding of boats in the river.
4. The last ride of Fielding and Aziz.

Firstly, Godbole had a vision of love where every thing melted into love.

Secondly, Aziz squeezed the hand of Ralph out of hatred for the Englishmen. Ralph's objection of Aziz's rough behavior reminded him of being oriental like his mother.

Thirdly, colliding of boats represents coming together of Aziz and Fielding. Both of them were purified in the sacred water of the tank at Mau.

Fourthly, Aziz told Fielding during his last ride with him that friendship could be lasting only between two equals. As for as the Britishers were the masters, he could not become the friend of an Englishman although might be Fielding or anyone else.

In the last section the atmosphere of union is created all around.. Here, we have escaped in space and time from the Marabar Caves and we are promised of harmony. At the birth of lord Krishna, all sorrows ended not only for the Indians but for the foreigners as well. Ralph was the forerunner of love which engulfed bitterness of the caves. The dipping of the characters in the tank represented the spiritual baptism. The washing away of the letters of Ronny and Adela which had caused misunderstanding suggests that all causes of misunderstanding had vanished.

❖ *Think big, life is too short to be little.*

❖ *Shoot for the moon, if you miss, you are still high.*

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

THE THEME OF THE NOVEL

The title of the novel is borrowed from the Whitman's poem "A Passage to India". The novel is sometimes called a political novel because it deals with the conflict between the English ruler and the ruled Indians. They British ruled over India with force.

The basic theme is the racial problem in India. The background of the story is distrust and mutual hatred. Forster undertakes in "A Passage to India" on historical and prophetic levels. On historical level two English ladies took the passage to understand India.

Love a Cosmic Notion.

Love is a cosmic notion which extends beyond human relations. It embraces all forms of life. We come to know that Mrs. Moore felt a surge of love for the wasp on her clothes' peg. The spontaneous love after her quarrel with her son Ronny over Aziz is in contrast with Ronny's narrow outlook. Mrs. Moore's love had crossed the barrier of race and class. But the question is, can love always win the battle? How weak is the foundation, on which Mrs. Moore's and Adela's passage to India rests. She failed to achieve what she wanted. Mrs. Moore was the symbol of love and kept influencing the events even after her death. She told her son to be pleasant to Indians, as they were also created by God and lived on the same earth.

Religion

Mrs. Moore was attracted towards Hinduism because it taught universal love to human beings. This religion stressed that the service to the others was the real religion. Religion for her was the part of her life. Ronny approved the religion as long as it did not interfere with his work.

Love does not always triumph

The failure of love runs throughout the action. Ronny's attempt to fall in love with Adela failed. The attempts of the British to bridge the different races also failed. The friendship of Aziz and Fielding was the only hope, that love between the two might bridge the gap. But in the end Aziz found that no friendship was possible between the ruler and the ruled.

No Final Despair

In spite the every thing, Forster does not show final despair over the human conditions. Ugliness and beauty, love and hatred were to be accepted as they were. In the third part, the Hinduism accepts the muddle and the chaos which lies at the heart of the universe. Forster ends the novel with the words, "Not now, not yet, hope is postponed, not abandoned.