江西师范大学

硕士学位论文

印度之行，失败之旅—《印度之行》的文化解读

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摘 要

爱德华·摩根·福斯特（1879-1970）是二十世纪英国最伟大的小说家之一。他的杰作《印度之行》是一部典型的跨文化小说，象征主义和神秘主义的运用是小说当中一个突出的特点。本论文试图探讨异源文化和宗教之间的冲突，分析欧洲人的印度之旅失败的原因。福斯特很多小说的主题都是关于分离和隔阂，这也是这部小说的所要表达的主题内容。在印度，特别在是在殖民地时期的印度，文化和宗教差异导致了印度人和英国人之间的隔阂。因此西方人的印度之旅注定要走向失败。论文由三部分组成。

第一章先阐述福斯特自由主义的观点，正是福斯特所持有的这种观点使他能够从一个更加客观的角度展现出一个真实的印度世界。福斯特在小说中批判了英印人欧洲中心主义的观点，这些英印人认为他们自己的英欧文化比殖民地文化优越，这也是阻碍西方人了解印度的一个重要因素。与此同时，福斯特自己被印度宗教和神秘特色所吸引，他表达了倾向于赞扬印度人的观点。

第二章分析了印度社会里的异源宗教信仰之间的冲突。小说主要是描写不同特性的种族和宗教之间的冲突。福斯特赞扬了伊斯兰教的代表人物阿齐兹。印度教强调的是人和神之间的和谐关系，它具有伊斯兰教和基督教所不具备的神秘意义。作者一直在批判基督教，他认为基督教难以拯救人类以及印度社会。基督教的观点是阻碍了英国人理解印度社会和印度神秘文化的能力，也阻碍了英国人和印度人民建立和谐关系的可能性。

第三章具体分析了小说的象征意义——敌对的马拉巴山。马拉巴山和它的回声也象征了印度的神秘、混乱和强大力量，它最终导致阿德拉陷入错觉和穆尔夫人失去宗教信仰。阿德拉陷入感情危机，表明西方理性思想的不足。穆尔夫人的精神危机体现了基督教的弱点。马拉巴山否定了西方人的印度之旅，他们的印度之行最终只能以挫败和灾难而告终。

通过分析小说的文化和宗教差异，本人认为在印度社会里，西方人是根本无法了解印度文化的，这是导致他们和印度社会的分离的原因。

关键词：失败；欧洲中心主义；文化冲突；宗教差异；神秘印度

Abstract

Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970) is regarded as one of the greatest novelists in 20th century Britain. And his masterpiece *A Passage to India* is a typically cross-cultural novel. The employment of symbolism and mysticism is an outstanding characteristic of the novel. This thesis attempts to discuss the conflicts of heterogeneous cultures and religions, and analyze the reason of European's failure in India, so that readers could have a better comprehension of its theme and its artistic values. The theme of separateness and barriers, which runs through all Forster's novels, is hugely expanded and everywhere dominant in this novel. Cultural and religious differences keep Indian and Englishman apart, especially in an imperial India. And the westerner's passage to India is doomed to a failure. The thesis consists of three parts.

Chapter one starts by presenting Forster's liberal ideas, which help him to shape a realistic world and describe the Indian landscape from a more objective point of view. Forster is fascinated by Indian religions and the mysterious features of India. He criticizes the Euro-centrism of the Anglo-Indians who believe in the superiority of their own Anglo-European culture to that of the colonized. It is a negative factor for westerners to understand India. At the same time, Forster shows his sympathy for the Indian people.

Chapter two analyzes the conflicts between heterogeneous religious beliefs in Indian society. The book teems with the collisions between the different identities in different races and religions. Forster praises Aziz, as a representative of Islam, for the spontaneity and real sensuousness of his passion. By emphasizing the idea of man's nearness to God, Hinduism gives religion a significance and mystery which Islam and Christianity do not have, while Christianity is always debased by the author for its uncongeniality with human beings and with Indian society. It is also an impediment element which presents Britons from understanding Indian society and its mysterious culture, and from establishing a harmonious relationship with Indian people.

Chapter three describes the hostile Marabar and its echoes, symbolized as the mystery, chaos and power of India, which brings on Adela's delusion and Mrs. Moore's breakdown of religious belief. Adela's emotional crisis shows the inadequacy of western reasons, while Mrs. Moore's spiritual crisis is an evidence of the weakness

of Christian belief. The Marabar Caves give a negation to the westerner's passage to India, which begets frustration and disaster.

Through the analysis of cultural and religious differences, the thesis concludes that it is impossible for the westerners to understand Indian culture. They are aliens in Indian society. That is the reason why they are separated from Indian society.

Key Words: Failure; Euro-Centrism; Cultural Conflicts; Religious Differences; The Mystical India

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Introduction

E. M. Forster and *A Passage to India*

Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970) is a famous English novelist and essayist of the 20th century, who enjoys equal popularity with Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. The famous American literary critic Lionel Trilling wrote in his critical book *E. M. Forster*, 'E. M. Forster is for me the only living novelist who can be read again and again and who, after each reading, gives me what few writers can give us after our first days of novel-reading, the sensation of having learned something.'[①] This assessment is no exaggeration. The famous English literary critic John Sayre Martin has almost the same idea with Trilling. He wrote that Forster's novel 'carries overtones richer and more suggestive than the literal significance of the elements that compose it'[②].

Forster's main literary achievements are a collection of novel theory, *Aspects of Novel* and the five novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread,* published in 1905, followed by *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1909), and the famous novel *A passage to India* in 1924. As one of the major twentieth-century novelists Forster bears the transitory mark from realism to modernism. The immense suggestive power of his work not only comes from the elegant, subtle and comic writing of the characters and their relationships, but also from the employment of techniques such as rhythm, image, symbolism and mysticism that elevate his works to a higher aesthetic realm. This combination gives his novels enduring fame and makes his works rich in interpretative possibilities. Many critics agree on that Forster' works are filled with riddling elements that make his readers puzzled. Virginia Woolf believes that Forster's novels are queer and different in a sense. In particular, his novels have something elusive and abstruse.[③]

Forster consistently explores personal relationships and the values of human life.

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① Lionel Trilling. *E. M. Forster* [M]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. p.3

② John Sayre Martin. *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* [C]. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. p143

③ 弗吉尼亚.伍尔夫. E.M.福斯特的小说[M]. 上海: 上海外语教育出版社, 1992, 第 342 页

His lifetime literary themes are about building up harmonious relationships between man and man, man and himself, and human and nature. Forster believes that the main problem of western modern civilization is that the 'undeveloped heart' of the westerners makes them lose their human nature and the real meaning as a human being. They are more and more separated from their living environment. His writings often satirize British behavior in foreign lands. We can easily see how these themes are reflected in *A Passage to India.*

A Passage to India is a typically cross-cultural novel, which was the result of his two trips to India, in 1912-13 and again in 1921. After its publication, the novel was immediately regarded as Forster's masterpiece and is now recognized as one of the great classics of the 20th century, and Forster also achieved international recognition. In this novel, Forster focuses on the racial misunderstandings and prejudices that characterize the complex relations between native Indians and English colonials in imperial India. With the employment of symbolism and mysticism, Forster depicts widely diverse religions and cultures—Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity, and the failures and conflicts inherent in their coexistence. The differences between western and eastern perceptions are complicated, it is impossible for the westerners to understand Indian society.

Literature Review of the Studies on the Novel

After its publication, critics and commentators in both England and America readily acknowledge the artistic talent Forster displayed in this classic presentation of a liberal point of view. However critical responses to *A Passage to India* were somewhat mixed. Soon after its publication, L. P. Hartley discovered the novel's cosmic significance. '*A Passage to India*', he wrote, 'is much more than a study of racial contrasts and disabilities. It is intensely personal and (if the phrase may be pardoned) intensely cosmic'[①]. In appreciating the immediate impact of the novel, the *Times of India* recognized it as a 'powerful, original, and thought-provoking'[②] contribution to an understanding of interracial relations in contemporary India. Contrary to these high opinions of this novel, some other critics had complained that Forster overlooked larger political and ideological issues in the novel. In his chapter on the novel in *E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism*, F. C. Crews said that it

① V. A. Shahane. *York Notes: A Passage to India* [C]. Longman York Press, 1989. p.6

② Adwaita. P. Ganguly. *India: Mystic, Complex and Real* [M]. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Private Limited, 1990. p.3

seemed to him 'that Lionel Trilling comes closest to the truth when he says that *A Passage to India*, rather than telling us what is to be done, simply restates the familiar political and social dilemmas in the light of the total situation.'[①] And there was so much resentment on the part of those who felt their community had been maligned. Some Indian critics, such as M. K. Naik, and Nirad Chaudhuri, took the view that the novel gave an unreal and distorted description of India and its people. But other Indian critics had the ideas that the novel could give a true and justified account of India and its people. For instance, a semi-anonymous Indian once in 1928 offered his opinions as below:

When I read A passage to India, I was filled with a sense of great relief and an almost personal gratitude to Mr. Forster.....It was because for the first time I saw myself reflected in the mind of an English author, without losing all semblance of a human face. [②]

The early critics tended to emphasize the social and political aspects of the novel, with endless arguments on whether it was fair or unfair. Rebecca West described it in a review as a 'study of a certain problem of the British empire'.[③] And Burra said it was 'a book which no student of the Indian question can disregard'[④]. However Forster declared the novel was more than a political novel. He explained that the intention of this novel was 'philosophic and poetic'[⑤].

Then, *A Passage to India* was studied in the context of liberal humanism. Like most critics of this period, they emphasized the pessimism of the novel. *A passage to India* was read as a novel about human frustrations and troubles. It was seen as dealing with the complex human relationships which were not satisfactory with so many misunderstandings and prejudices between the characters in imperial India. This developed a new direction to the interpretation of this novel.

In the 1970s, Forster's *A Passage to India* was observed and reassessed from a different point of view. The focus shifted to more directly social and political concerns. The most influential and representative work was Benita Parry's *Delusions and*

① Frederick C. Crews. *E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism* [C]. London: Oxford University Press, 1962. p.142

② Oliver Stallybrass, ed. *A Passage to India* [M]. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd. 1936. pp.22-23

③ Norman Page. *E. M. Forster* [C]. Macmillan Education Ltd., 1987. p.96

④ P. Burra, *The Novels of E. M. Forster* [A]. 1934. In Bradbury Malcolm, ed. *E. M. Forster: A Passage to India* [C]. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1970. p.57

⑤ Oliver Stallybrass, ed. *A Passage to India* [M]. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd. 1936. p.25

Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination, which applied a direct post-colonial approach to the study on this novel. The tendency engendered by reinterpretation of *A Passage to India* and other works from post-colonial literary critical perspective began in the mid and late 1980s with the appearance of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a book that suggested that the world was dominated by western culture and ideas, the oriental societies were marginalized to different degrees. From then on, the interpretations of *A Passage to India* in a post-colonial perspective had been flourished because of the wide influence of this literary critical approach in the field of literary criticism. Most of the post-colonial readings noticed the racial discrimination and conflicts embedded in the novel.

Some of the contemporary studies of *A Passage to India* are still based on post-colonial approaches which focus on issues of sexual and racial politics. Jeremy Tambling's *E. M. Forster*, a collection of critical essays provides a comprehensive view of current interpretations of *A Passage to India*. Another influential trend is to draw on stylistics which, simply stated, is the study of language in literature. The most representative is R. A. Buck who studies *A Passage to India* and Forster's other novels by applying linguistic theories, politeness theory in particular to uncover racial conflicts. His study reveals stylistics as a powerful tool to further explore the novel.

China introduced the film adaptation of *A Passage to India* in the 1980s. After that, more and more Chinese critics show their interests in the novel. In China, studies on *A Passage to India* are not comprehensive. Recent discussions are mainly from cross-cultural perspective or from post-colonial point of view. Some critics think that only love can surpass barriers of the two different cultures, and thus the true communication between different nations can be achieved. Otherwise, race discrimination will never disappear in the process of intercourse.[①] Meanwhile, some other writers hold the different opinions. They argue that the intention of the novelist is to show the isolated state of human beings and the impossible connection of human intercourse in a broader and more complicated social background.[②] And Zhu Gang gives an explanation of the novel from point of view of post-colonialism, saying that 'postcolonial studies keeps its momentum into the new century'[③], because 'the problem of the relationships between the cultures has continued, either as a legacy of the colonial past, or as a modern political issue within the African and Asian countries

① 张海华. 让爱穿越文化障碍[J]. 山西师大学报, 2004, 第 2 期, 第 109 页

② 骆文琳. 迷惘与隔膜的《印度之行》[J]. 外国文学研究, 1999, 第 2 期, 第 63 页

③ Zhu Gang. *Twentieth Century Western Critical Theories* [C]. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press, 2001. p.288

in question.'[①] And there are also some critics who focus on the novelists' collusion with imperialism or identify a pervasive anti-female sentiment and the linkage of racism and rape in the novel.

The Aims of My Thesis

Because of its characteristics of heterogeneous cultures, my thesis is to do some researches from cultural and religious perspectives. By presenting two completely opposed social orders and patterns, several personal relationships and three major religions, Forster expresses his sense of mystery and muddle in a disordered and multifarious world. And the isolated state of the westerners in India, the failure of two races' conversation, and westerners' obsession in an alien Indian country are those important themes of the novel.

And the thesis will analyze the use of the Marabar Caves to produce symbolic efforts. The Marabar Cave is one of the most confusing symbols in the novel, which is the barrier for the Britons to see real India and to understand Indian society. The westerners are lost in the chaotic India which is beyond their comprehension. And the thesis expresses the theme of separateness and failure. The Britons' desire to see real India brings them into catastrophic consequence. They lose their beliefs and creeds and become confused with the universe. So the thesis will give reader a better understanding of Forster's unique charms and the novel's artistic features.

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① Edward Said. *Peace and Its Discontents, Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process* [C]. In Zhu Gang. *Twentieth Century Western Critical Theories* [C]. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press, 2001. p.288

Chapter 1 Forster's Different Views on Westerners and Indians

When *A Passage to India* appeared in 1924, many Anglo-Indians were outraged. They thought that the portrayal of the Anglo-Indians in the novel was somewhat exaggerated. Ronny's views on his career are parallel to the sympathies of contemporary young Anglo-Indians for whom the east was a career. India was also regarded, from this kiplingesque perspective, as a training ground, a frontier, and a gymnasium within which qualities such as manliness and character were to be assessed. We also find echoes of the influence of such views of India in Rudyard Kipling's portrayal of his experiences in the east.

Forster clearly ironies such views of the India as career, as gymnasium or testing ground. In common with a number of upper middle class intellectuals, he was no doubt an anti-imperialist. However, his criticism of imperialism is liberal, as opposed to Socialist or Marxist. Forster, with his liberal emphasis on education and individualism, approaches the critique of Anglo-Indian Euro-centrism in terms of the predominance and arrogance amongst the upper middle classes, which the novel presents in the Anglo-Indians. Forster regards it as the testimony of something deficient within the English national character.

In *A Passage to India*, Forster rejected the racist, Eurocentric doctrines of the 'white man's burden' despite the fact that they were a central tenet of the liberal humanistic tradition which created him. Forster had the illuminating ability to view his culture as an outsider. He tries to explain actions and phenomena of a people whose culture is radically different from his own, and shows his fascination on their exotic land and mysterious power.

1.1 Forster as a Liberal

Forster attended King's College, Cambridge (1897-1901), where he met members for the later formed Bloomsbury group. In the atmosphere of skepticism, he got influenced from Sir Jamer Frazer, Nathaniel Wedd, Goldworthy Lowes Dickenson,

and G. E. Moore, and discarded his not very deep Christian faith. He "dislike of the personality of Christ, who failed to provide him with a sufficiently attractive 'father-figure, brother-figure, son, friend' and lacked both intellect and humor and much else that Forster valued."[①]

Though many critics hold that the central conception of liberalism is political, its literary and aesthetic context seems to govern Forster's mind and values in *A Passage to India*. The liberalism politically implies a system of government in accordance with people's will, and this view is linked with the English idea of human progress through the use of science and technology. The liberal idea is also allied with the concepts of tolerance, of dissent and individual freedom. Forster, as a non-believer, is an undoubted liberal humanist. As Negel Rapport writes in his essay:

'I belong to the fag-end of Victorian liberalism', Forster proclaimed in 1946, looking back with some nostalgia on 'an admirable age' of benevolence and philanthropy, humane and intellectual curiosity, free speech, little color-prejudice, imbued by a belief in the proper difference of individuals and in the progress of society through spreading parliamentary institutions...[②]

From the above quotation it is clearly such a voice of liberal humanism which speaks out. As a liberal-humanist, Forster expresses his emphasis on the central importance of personal relations, personal vision and curiosity. And he also holds the belief in 'good taste, in a free mind, and in humankind's possible decent response to life; and in an individual's necessary conscience and an enlargening of his sensitivity through his engaging with the social environment and his organizing of impressions into a cognitive whole.'[③]

Forster sees oneself as a mortal whole which can lead one to act morally in the world. Connecting up all the different parts of oneself causes one to see one's weakness and faults. If one knows of his nature, he can be balanced by one's strengths and hence opposed. 'It also means a better understanding of the situation of others, pity and tolerance toward them, and the possibility of working towards justice

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① John Colmer. *E. M. Forster: The Personal Voice* [M]. London: Routledge & kegan Paul, 1975. p.7

② Nigel Rapport. *E. M. Forster as a Liberal* [A]. In G. K. Das & Christel R Devadawson, ed. *Forster's A Passage to India: An Anthology of Recent Criticism* [C]. D. K. Fine Art Press Ltd., 2005. p.18

③ Ibid., p.19

between you.' [①]

Forster has a commitment to the liberal tradition of progress, freedom and humanitarian in his novel, his novel is a mirror reflecting the liberal and human idea in human and social relationships. *A Passage to India* shows Forster's conception of liberalism. His view of India is 'little color-prejudice', freed from the European national stereotype of India. As novelist Mulk Raj Anand wrote in a letter-essay to Forster on his ninetieth birthday, 'you are perhaps the only Englishman of this century who came near enough to understanding Indian people.'[②]

In the first chapter of *A Passage to India*, Forster describes in details the beautiful sky of the Chandrapore.

Clouds map it up at times, but it is normally a dome of blending tints, and the main tint blue. By day the blue will pale down into white where it touches the white of the land, after sunset it has a new circumference—orange, melting upwards into tenderest purple. But the core of blue persists, and so it is by night. Then the stars hang like lamps from the immense vault. [③]

And due to Forster's close relationship with an Indian Syed Ross Masood and other Indian friends, Forster is able to know the Indians more comprehensively than other English novelists. The combination of his liberalism and his familiarity of India offers him a chance to give a realistic description of Indian society and its exotic landscape.

Only when a writer writes with objectivity can he create a truly picture of a country and its people. The Anglo-Indians regard that the colonized India as the 'white man's burden,' and hold the idea that it is also the white's duty to bring civilization to the natives. Here Forster seems to show more sympathy towards the natives. He tries to create some negative figures of Englishmen on the exotic land. Forster criticizes the loyal and rational imperialists such as Ronny and other colonials. In Forster's characterization of the Anglo-Indians, the Kipling-type heroes become Forster's villains. From Hamidullah and Aziz's conversation, we see clearly the

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① Nigel Rapport. *E. M. Forster as a Liberal* [A]. In G. K. Das & Christel R Devadawson, ed. *Forster's A Passage to India: An Anthology of Recent Criticism* [C]. D. K. Fine Art Press Ltd., 2005. pp.20-21

② Judith Scherer Herz. *A Passage to India: Nation and Narration* [M]. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993. p.31

③ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.9

author's irony on Anglo-Indians.

'No, that is where Mrs. Turton is so skilful. When we poor blacks take bribes, we perform what we are bribed to perform, and the law discovers us in consequence. The English take and do nothing. I admire them.' ①

And India, in Forster's eyes, though full of chaos and mystery, is teemed with vigor and vitality; and Indian people are human beings who are affectionate and spontaneous, acting out of their nature.

And Fielding is a key character to express Forster's liberal ideas advocated by this novel. Fielding is honorable, decent and fair-minded, and a favorable representative of those liberal humanistic values that Forster cherishes, for it is him who tries to bridge the gap between the English and the Indians. He is the one character that has some sense of social autonomy. He is in some ways an outsider among the English, particularly among the Anglo-Indian circle. He holds a great enthusiasm for education, and has no racial feeling.

He did not mind whom he taught; public school-boys, mental defectives and policemen, had all come his way, ad he had no objection to adding Indians.

*The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence...*②

The wives of the English officers dislike Fielding for his liberal racial views, and Fielding discovers that it is impossible to keep company with both Indians and the Englishmen. Fielding has the ability to move among Indian people, but he must sacrifice certain privileges that are normally afforded to the English. So here Fielding stands for different ideas of liberalism and justice. However, Fielding is not equal to the author himself. As a rational Englishman, Fielding often feels the gulf between himself and the native Indians. The following passage is a good example for the cultural differences between the westerners and the Indians.

At the moment when he (Fielding) was throwing in his lot with them, he realized the profundity of the gulf which separated them. They always do something

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.11

② Ibid., pp.61-62

disappointing.[①]

1.2 Forster's Criticism on Anglo-Indians' Euro-Centrism

Euro-centrism is about the issue of East and West struggle. Euro-centrism is 'the attitude, the use of European culture as the standard to which all other cultures are negatively contrasted.'[②] And the colonial ideology of Europe is inherently Eurocentric. Those colonizers believe that their own Anglo-European culture is superior to that of the colonized. They view themselves as civilized, sophisticated, rational, progressive and democratic. In colonized India, the colonizers hold that 'our mission is a high and holy mission. We are here to govern India as delegates of a Christian and civilized power...in this talk we shall not falter...if you agitate, you will be punished; if you preach, you will be imprisoned; if you assassinate, you will be hanged; if you rise, you will be shot down'[③] Under the social and political circumstances, it is a pervasive force in the British schools established in the colonies to implant British culture and value in the indigenous people and thereby withdraw their notion of overthrowing their governance. They see India in ways shaped by the Empire, and none can truly love Indians. Colonizers are oblivious of natives as individuals or sometimes as humans; the natives are held in contempt or low esteem; those persons who serve the natives is out of a sense of duty—religious or professional obligation. Colonizers are of the opinion that people are geographically determined. In keeping with these beliefs and attitudes, the colonizers simply superimpose their ways upon the colonies.

Edward Said wrote a book named *Orientalism*. Its purpose is to produce a positive national self-definition for western nations by contrast with eastern nations upon which the west projects all the negative characteristics that they do not want to believe to exist upon their own people. In *A Passage to India*, India is still a colonized country of Britain. The colonizers (mainly Anglo-Indians) believe that only their own Anglo-European culture is civilized and sophisticated. Therefore, native people are defined as savage, backward, and undeveloped. The colonizers believe that their technology and culture are more highly advanced. They ignore the religions, customs, and codes of behavior of people they subjugated. So the colonizers see themselves at

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.173

② B. M. Gilbert. *Postcolonial Criticism* [M]. Longman Company, 1997. p.21

③ Benita Parry. *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination* [M]. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972. p.27

the center of the world, the colonized are at the margins. They also see themselves as the embodiment of what a human being should be, the superior beings, while they regard the native Indians as inferior 'other'. Thus citizens of the west then define themselves, in contrast with the imagery 'oriental' they've created, as kind, straightforward, good, upright, honest, and moral. The Orientals are defined as cruel, sneaky, evil, cunning, dishonest, given to sexual promiscuity and perversion, and the like.

In *A Passage to India*, those Anglo-Indians publicly declare their nobleness and privilege which are considered as perfectly justified. Mrs. Turton displays her superiority by telling Mrs. Moore, 'You're superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that you're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the Rains'[①]. And Ronny expresses his Euro-centric view, 'What I say. We're out here (India) to do justice and keep the peace. Them's my sentiments...'[②]

The communications between the Indians and the Anglo-Indians strongly show the stereotypes and prejudice. And there is a superintendent of Police in Chandrapore, named Mr. McBryde, as one of the most reflective and best educated of the English officials, he has a queer theory about India and Indians.

'All unfortunate natives are criminals 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 them if we settled here.'[③]

In short, the 'oriental' is an invention of the west, by contrast to whom it has been able to define itself positively and justify any act of military or economic aggression.

Forster clearly ironies such views of the India in the novel. As a liberal humanist, Forster's representation of Anglo-Indians shows a different hue from other novelists' Imperialism to some extent. Forster's criticism of the evils of British superiority in India can be obviously seen in his portrayal of the Anglo-Indian officials and his satirizing of the public-school code. The Anglo-Indians stand for much that Mr. Forster dislikes: insensitiveness, officialdom, stupidity, repressiveness, rudeness. The

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.42
② Ibid., p.50
③ Ibid., pp.166-167

novel shows Forster's negative attitude toward 'Public School Attitude'[①]: the priggishness, snobbery, complacency, censoriousness, the lack of imagination and subtlety, the philistinism and narrow-mindedness which the novel presents in the Anglo-Indians. The colonizers represent the most wretched traits of the English temperament. It is because of such kind of idiosyncrasy that prevents them from understanding Indian society and from establishing harmonious relationship with the Indians. As Benita Parry observes, 'by temperament and choice the Anglo-Indians are outsiders, hostile to India whether it be mosques, cave or temple, participating in none, understand none, resenting all.'[②]

The novel is set in such an imperial India, the superiority of the Anglo-Indians and the inferior status of Indian people work together to make it impossible for the two races to communicate in an equal level. It suffocates the two ladies' desire to see real India. And it is also a crucial element for Aziz's failure to seek an ideal friendship and establish a harmonious relationship with the Britons. The imperial state and the Euro-centrism are important elements to ruin their contact and bring into separation and failure. Forster has given the real reason for Anglo-Indians' failure and the alien state in India.

1.3 Forster's Preference for Indian World

The 'mysterious' world of the orient has always fascinated Europeans. However, as Edward Said reminds us in his pioneering study *Orientalism*, the oriental is not so much a reality as 'a European invention, ...a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.' [③] The British Orientalism can be traced back from the time of Shakespeare to the early 20th century, with the special attention given to 18th century and Romantic oriental tales, and to the novels dealing with India in the late 19th and early 20th century, like Kipling's *Kim* and Forster's *A Passage to India*. Kipling glorifies the imperialism as a gallant and noble institution that actually benefits its victims. In his eye, the Orientals are racially devoid of the moral and intellectual faculties that European males possess in abundance. Forster, who detests imperialism, expresses diametric opinions toward India and Indian people. Forster's preference on India mostly molded after his liberal

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① E. M. Forster. *The Hill of Devi* [M]. New York: Harcourt Brace Company, 1953. p.160

② Benita Parry. *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination* [M]. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972. p.279

③ Edward Said. *Orientalism* [M]. New York: Vintage, 1979. p.103

ideas and his fascination in mystery and uncertain things.

The novel *A Passage to India* is derived from Forster's two trips to India. Forster's visit to India in 1921-2 coincided with the momentous period of the Indian non-cooperation movement against British rule. The movement expressed India's protest against imperialism, social apartheid and repression, and Forster's novel shows the impact it has made on him. In *A Passage to India*, Forster's achievements in the depiction of the easterners and their campaigns are based on the changed social climate. And also his personal encounter with his Indian friends, among whom Syed Ross Masood is a most important one, is a very important source for his writing. Forster wrote:

My own debt to him is incalculable. He woke up out of my suburban and academic life, showed me new horizons and a new civilization and helped me towards the understanding of a continent...I dedicate it [A Passage to India] to him out of gratitude as well as out of love. For it would never have been written without him. [①]

After he went to India, he was deeply affected by the mysticism, especially by Hinduism and Jainism, which stimulated him to write a novel about India. In his letters, Forster frequently used the word 'queer' to express his feeling about India. In a letter to Florence Barger, he wrote, 'I am in the middle of a queer life, whether typically oriental I have no means of knowing, but it isn't English'[②]. And in the same letter Forster continued, '...I then saw the Friday prayers—impressive yet ridiculous to see hundreds of people squatting at once, with their faces on the ground'[③]. Here Forster objectively comments on Indian customs and depicts an exotic life. Most Indian characters in *A Passage to India* are exotic to the Britons. The two British visitors, Adela and Mrs. Moore, possess the curiosity to see the 'real India'. They have the 'desire for the exotic or erotic, the dangerously sublime, for difference itself, for visual and experiential novelty'[④].

A Passage to India is a refreshing book, refreshing in its candor, sincerity, fairness, and art. It is a clever picture of Englishmen in India, a subtle portraiture of

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① Mulk Raj Anand. *The Hindu View of Art* [M]. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1987. p.88

② Mary Lago & D. N. Furbank. *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster* [C]. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983. p.146

③ Ibid., p.146

④ Julie F. Codell & Dianne Sachko Macleod, ed. *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* [C]. Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998. p.3

the Indians, especially the Hindu mind, and a fascinating study of the problems arising out of the contact of Indians with Britons. Forster objectively records with sincerity and insight the impressions of Englishmen in colonized India. Most Anglo-Indian writers, as we have seen, write of India and of the Indians with contempt; only a very few will go to the other extreme. Forster's novel records with how people behave in relation to one another in India at that time, which should be one of the bright points in the novel. It seems impossible for a novelist who dislikes India to describe the country in such a kind of inclinable tone.

In the novel, Forster takes for his subject the conflicts of culture and religions, which is also influenced by the politics—the colonized state of India. The racial feeling is strong in the Anglo-Indian officials. On the other hand, the Indians, as a conquered nation, are very sensitive to the Briton's manner.

In delineation of the English colony at Chandrapore, it has to be admitted that most of the Anglo-Indians, from the collector downwards, do not appear in a favorable light. Mr. Turton is a 'burra sahib', much too care for his position. Even Fielding, as a liberalist, he is estranged from the British club, paying price for his contact with Indians. But as a rational Englishman, he is far away from the Indian society. In description the two British ladies' misfortune in India, Forster focuses on the conflicts of different races and creeds, because they have no racial feeling, they just want to see the real India. Forster shows his preference on the native Indians, who are affectionate, courteous and sincere. Forster praises Aziz for his sincere wish to make friend with Englishman and highlights Godbole for his inclusive Hindu mind.

Forster seems to like the uncertain feature of things. 'As McDowell observes, for Forster the essence of life must always elude definition; its circumstances are haphazard, chaotic, contradictory, irrational, unpredictable, unmanageable, and ambiguous, however simple they may superficially seem.'[①] It justifies Forster's depiction of the mysterious and chaotic feature of India and his fancy with them.

In *A Passage to India*, Forster's description of Indian religions contributes a lot to the mysterious features of India. Hinduism is a representative of Indian culture and religion. Their way of thinking and action is not easy to comprehend. It is a kind of metaphysical philosophy. And the Indian scenes are full of muddle-like and mysterious elements. Forster uses his imaginative power to produce such an oriental country which is teemed with large numbers of uncertain and mystical matters. If the

[①] Nigel Rapport. *E. M. Forster as a Liberal* [A]. In G. K. Das & Christel R Devadawson, ed. *Forster's A Passage to India: An anthology of Recent Criticism* [C]. D. K. Fine Art Press Ltd., 2005. pp.20-21

unknown bird is one small example of unknowable India, then the unidentified 'hairy beast' that causes the Nawab's car to crash later is another. Forster adds so many mysterious elements such as Indian religions, eastern philosophy, and Indian characters, into the novel. And mystery is proved to be a kind of unpredictable power in the Indian society which can crush the rational thoughts of the Britons and their inadequate religion. So we can say that it is the Indian ways of thinking, Indian customs and Indian religions which work together to break down the English rationalists and the uncongenial Christianity. It is impossible for them to understand India.

Chapter 2 Clashes between Christianity and Hinduism

In *A Passage to India*, religion can be seen as a kind of culture embodying the relationships between human beings from different cultures in a mysterious and complicated way. Here Forster has mainly discussed three religions: Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. the three parts, 'Mosque', 'Caves', and 'Temple' represent the Moslem, Christian and Hindu elements and their interactions in the Indian scenes. 'Mosque' emphasizes the Moslem world of Aziz and Mrs. Moore's Christianity. 'Caves' mainly focuses on the conflicts and separation of British or Anglo-Indian elements and Indian culture, and 'Temple' is the characteristics and power of Hinduism. And the real preoccupation of the book is with the collision between the separate identity of races and religions.

In the novel, the different religious beliefs can reason the separateness between different religions, especially between Christianity and Hinduism. Here Christianity is a symbol of European creeds and Hinduism is of Indian society. It is commonly believed that Islam and Hinduism are celebrated in a different way while Christianity is always debased by the author. Here Forster describes the peace and beauty of Islam and praises the spontaneity and real sensuousness of Aziz's passion. By emphasizing the idea of man's nearness to God, Hinduism gives religion a significance and mystery which Islam and Christianity do not have. As for Christianity, Forster criticizes its uncongeniality with human beings and with Indian society. It is an impediment element which presents Britons from understanding Indian society and its mysterious culture, and from establishing a harmonious relationship with Indian people.

2.1 The Western Christianity—The Uncongeniality and Inadequacy in India

Christianity assumes an all-loving God, who shares man's moral ideals, hears man's prayers and is concerned about human lives. God is supposed to be 'omnipresent' and 'omnipotent' in the eyes of Christians. And Christianity preaches

freedom, equality and independence of human beings and God's love for all creatures.

As an Englishman, Forster's negative attitude towards Christianity is often discussed by the critics. Forster announces that he is a non-believer. In *Abinger Harvest*, he describes himself frankly as 'a child of unbelief'[①]. And in somewhere else he declares that 'I do not believe in Belief.'[②] In his final novel *A Passage to India*, Forster shows his disapproval in Christianity because his faith in Christianity disappears when he studies at Cambridge University. So based on his suspicion of Christianity, in Forster's eyes, Christ is seen as cold and distant figure from human beings that He is not worth worshipping.

In the novel, westerners come up against different crises in the atmosphere of mysteries and chaos in India. Mrs. Moore, Adela, Fielding and other Anglo-Indians are all separated from Indian culture or Indian lands, they are aliens of Indian society. Mrs. Moore's disillusionment is the embodiment of the collision and separateness between the Christians and Indians, who died of the unwholesome complexities of Indian climate and landscape, eventually turned into a Hindu goddess in the novel.

Forster sharply mocked Christianity in the novel. Mr. Turton, the highest official in Chandrapore, is ridiculed as a 'little god', which refers to the divine right to control the world. In Forster's view, this pseudo-Christian rule does not influence the Anglo-Indian officials out of faith in Christianity but as a prop to protect British imperial rule in India. They never really bring love and freedom to the conquered people, but they are quite rude even cruel to them. Forster writes of the British officials in India as 'people who have built up an Empire with a Bible in one hand, a pistol in the other hand, and financial concessions in both pockets.'[③] Obviously Forster is scorning at the British colonials that govern India in the name of Christianity.

Mr. Turton has learned how to reveal himself 'like a god in a shrine'[④] Mrs. Moore says that the Anglo-Indians 'like posing as gods',[⑤] since they believe in their divine right to rule India and their superiority over the native Indians. Ronny always attempts to justify his mission in India. He declares to his mother that the weather is

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① E. M. Forster. *Abinger Harvest and England's Pleasant Land* [M]. London: Ander Deutsch Ltd., 1996. p.32

② E. M. Forster. *Two Cheers for Democracy* [M]. London: Edward Arnold, 1972. p.65

③ E. M. Forster. *Abinger Harvest and England's Pleasant Land* [M]. London: Ander Deutsch Ltd., 1996. p.10

④ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.162

⑤ Ibid., p.50

the 'alpha and omega'[①] of Indian's problems. He is a product of England's school system and adopts quickly and completely the attitude of his British colleagues in India. So their Christianity is exclusive rather than inclusive, a kind of churchy counterpart of the British club. They have the right to choose their partner and exclude someone from their gathering. Their God is the one who saves the king, supports the police and blesses the British Empire. And Mr. Sorley, the younger of the missionaries for example, he would like to admit mammals to a heaven, but cannot include wasps, and he balks completely at plants, mud, and batteries. Forster here seems, by implication, to indicate the discrepancies between Christian culture and Indian culture. They can not coexist harmoniously.

Compared to the other members of the British colony, Mrs. Moore's Christianity is purer. Mrs. Moore has her firm faith in Christianity on her first arrival at Chandrapore. For her, God is omnipresent, even in India, and oneness with the universe seems an easy desirable goal. In the mosque where she meets Aziz, her admitting of God's presence pleases Aziz and she wins his love immediately through her righteousness and kindness. Mrs. Moore applies her own simple and benevolent Christian outlook:

India is part of the earth. And God has put us on the earth in order to be pleasant to each other, 'God...is...love.' She hesitated, seeing how much he disliked the argument, but something made her go on. 'God has put us on earth to love our neighbors and to show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding.[②]

Her approach to person is equally intuitive and direct. With none of the racial snobbery that characterizes most of the Anglo-Indians in the novel, Mrs. Moore seems to transcend the barriers that separate man for man. She looks at India as part of the Mother Earth, part of the benign cosmos. Moreover, Mrs. Moore is a Christian with a touch of mysticism. Looking up at the night sky soon after her arrival in Chandrapore, the fictitious town where most of the actions are set, she feels a sudden, refreshing kinship with the moon and stars. To some extent, Mrs. Moore's faith shares some similarity with the mysterious Hinduism. The wasp symbol which crops up throughout the novel appears in chapter 3 for the first time is associated with Mr.

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.49

② Ibid., p.51

Moore's oriental proneness. Unlike other Englishmen, she calls them 'pretty dear'[①].

But the inadequateness of her Christianity drives her into disillusionment in her religion later. From her misunderstanding of Godbole's song and Mrs. Bhattacharya's invitation, to her discomfort of Indian climate and the Marabar Caves, Mrs. Moore's Christian values and the Christian God become vaguer and vaguer in her mind. Mrs. Moore dislikes muddle, which violates her vision of 'an orderly Christian cosmos.'[②] The Indian landscape that Forster depicts, however, is both muddled and mysterious. The Marabar Caves can be regarded as the very symbol of the mysterious India. Mrs. Moore goes into a cave and experiences the sound of echo, which finally destroys her. It seems to murmur, "Pathos, piety, courage—they exist, nothing has value."[③] Under the spell of the echo, Mrs. Moore suffers from a spiritual breakdown—a crisis of faith. Mrs. Moore begins to doubt whether her simple Christian faith can adequately comprehend the muddle and mystery around her. She doubts whether the name of Jehovah can be meaningful in the vast impersonality of India. She thinks, 'outside the arch there seemed always an arch, beyond the remotest echo a silence.'[④] In the vast, mysterious eastern country, Mrs. Moore's Christian religion seems to be helpless. Her Christian belief is reduced to 'poor little talkative Christianity'[⑤]. The disillusion of Christianity in Mrs. Moore results in her indifference to anything and anyone in the world. She becomes cynical and withdrawn taking no further interest in human affairs, and wishing only to be left alone, to retire into a cave of her own—where no young people will come to ask questions and expect answers. 'Her Christian tenderness had gone, or had developed into hardness, a just irritation against the human race'[⑥].

Though, Mrs. Moore has an understanding heart and adheres to Christian tradition. They served her well in England. In India, where the problems are more complex, she finds it inadequate. And although her innate sympathy with many of the tenets of Hinduism shows her appreciation of all of god's creation, her religion is inadequate for her to survive the hostile India, while the Hindu Professor Godbole can withdraw peacefully into himself from human turmoil. The noise and confusion of India make the Britons suffer. Mrs. Moore's own withdrawal is far from a peaceful

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.35

② John Sayre Martin. *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* [C]. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. p.153

③ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p. 149

④ Ibid., p.52

⑤ Ibid., p.150

⑥ Ibid., p.199

one. Her death is the failure and separateness of Christianity from Indian mystery and Hinduism.

2.2 Aziz's Islamic World—An Failed Attempt to Win Love and Friendship

Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is a monotheistic religion. It is based on the teaching of the prophet Mohammed. The Koran is the Moslem holy book. Mohammed is not divine; he is simply the messenger of Allah. The term 'Moslem' is to define the person and 'Islam' to mean the religion. The name of Islam is derived from the word 'Salam' with the connotation of 'the peace which comes by surrendering to God' and the corresponding adjective is Moslem. Islam was founded by the Arab prophet, Mohammed. For Moslems, there is only one God, Allah. The name derives from joining 'al' which means 'the' with 'lah' which means 'God'. Islam, an attitude toward life both exquisite and durable, where Moslems' body and their thoughts found their home, is shown in a decadent state reveling in past glory. Moslem values of Islam, such as the equality of all men and universal brotherhood. In a letter he wrote to his mother from the Hindu State of Chhatarpur, Forster says that 'I do like Islam."[①] So in *A Passage to India*, Forster chooses the lovely figure Aziz to represent Islam. Aziz is intoxicated with traditional Islam poems with theme of the collapse of Persian history and temporary love. All he appears to have left is sadness because of the decline of Islam. 'Islam is more sympathetically treated,' as Martin says, 'less amenable than Christianity to nationalistic bias. It appears to Aziz's sense of beauty and history, enabling him to write sentimental poetry glorifying the Islam past.'[②] There is the congenial friendship, the beautiful poetry which reminds them of departed greatness, the ancient India. Because 'for the time India seemed one and their own'[③]; Mosques are beautiful; they may refresh and inspire the devout Moslem.

The principal representative Aziz is a devout Moslem. He is a highly emotional person, hospitable to friends and sensitive in artistic creation. Aziz always dreams of an Islamic world of poetry and justice. His idealization of the rule is the Mogul

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① E. M. Forster. *The Hill of Devi* [M]. New York: Harcourt Brace Company, 1953. p.126

② John Sayre Martin. *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* [C]. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. p.144

③ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.17

emperors in India, and his yearning is for the 'ideal friend'. As an Indian Moslem, he follows the eastern traditional customs and Islamic creeds. He thinks it is of great significance when he shows Fielding his dead wife's photo, because in India the only men to see women's faces are the men in their immediate families. Aziz's marriage is also of an old pattern—an arranged marriage. He once remarked he at first knew nothing about his wife and had no fancy on her. In accordance with his aunt's words, man should marry a woman, or 'what is to become of all our daughters if men refuse to marry?'[①] Somehow, it is also the reflection of Islam's life value which is unlike the Christianity, permits man to enjoy life and lust. Meanwhile, circumcision is mentioned during their conversation since it is a custom of Islam due to the health care. Aziz's own Islamic attitude was one which we would call mal chauvinism as we can see from the following paragraph, and it also can be seen as a kind of difference between Indians and Englishmen:

It enraged him that he had been accused by a woman who had no personal beauty; sexually, he was a snob. This had puzzled and worried Fielding. Sensuality, as long as it is straight forward, did not repel him, but this derived sensuality—the sort that classes a mistress among motor-car if she is beautiful, and among eye-flies if she isn't—was alien to his own emotions, and he felt a barrier between himself and Aziz whenever it arouse.[②]

On the other hand, the westernized Aziz is influenced by the western civilization and modern thoughts. He ponders getting rid of the purdah system in his poem creation. When comes to Adela's question 'Have you one wife or more than one?' Aziz, as an enlightened and modern man, who is opposed the polygamy and would never think of having more that one wife, is unquestionably shocked, 'to ask an educated Indian Moslem how many wives he has—appalling, hideous!'[③] And meantime Aziz desires equality with the British colonials in social relations and is eager to establish friendship with the humanistic 'Indian discoverers'. However, Aziz is Indian man by nature.

The mosque is a symbol of Aziz's pilgrim for friendship and love. The mosque can be seen as an expression in architecture of a recognizable human aspiration,

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.14

② Ibid., p.241

③ Ibid., p.153

culturally and historically specific. For Aziz, The mosque is the Holy Land. After he is snubbed by Major Calledner and the two Anglo-Indian ladies, Aziz goes into the mosque in search for peace. The graciousness and the arrangement of the mosque please him immediately and the Islam emblem looses his imagination. As a sanctum of rest, mosque is the place where 'his body and his thoughts found their home.'[①] From the perspective of John Sayer Martin, Islam is the religion of Aziz; 'it appeals to Aziz's sense of beauty and history, enabling him to write sentimental poetry glorifying the Islamic past.'[②] The gracious and beautiful mosque refreshes and inspires Aziz, the devout Moslem. He felt immensely happy in the mosque and so totally absorbed in an intuitive adherence to the Islamic faith. It is in the mosque where Mrs. Moore and Aziz meet, understand each other and establish a quick friendship. His first words spoken to Mrs. Moore in the mosque reflect his genuine affection. He calls the phrase 'the secret understanding of the heart'[③] with tears in his eyes. His later utterance to Mrs. Moore in the mosque 'Then you are an oriental'[④] is also an embodiment of his deep affection and admiration for her and a total reversal of his earlier snarl.

The conflicts of the oriental mind and the western mind are very important in the novel, especially for Aziz who has a strong desire to make friends with Englishmen. It is the basis for much of the misunderstanding. The key to Aziz's character is provided by the phrase 'the secret understanding of the heart'[⑤]. He is a creation of impulse, emotion and instinct with excitable and changeable temperaments. He is highly affectionate by nature and extends his affection to Indian and English alike when they exhibit traits of understanding and sincerity—when he feels they understand his heart. This accounts for his quick acceptance of Mrs. Moore and Fielding. By the same token, he is quick to condemn both Indian and English for insincerity and lack of courtesy. The completely reverse of his character brings in the failure of his friendly attempt. What' more, it is during his relations with Mrs. Moore and Fielding, which work together to bring into the trial of the sexual assault eventually. At the beginning, Aziz bears the vague of nationality, and after the trial he identifies with India as a motherland, crying, 'Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons' and 'India shall be a

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.19

② John Sayre Martin. *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* [C]. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. p.153

③ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.20

④ Ibid., p.23

nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and sikh and all shall be one'[①]. Although he can not restrain his desire for friendship, Aziz insistently want to 'drive away every blasted Englishman into the sea'[②]. His patriotism grows with the hatred of the Britons, and also with the development of his friendship with them. So It is an important proof of the separation of Britons and Aziz—the Indian Moslem, in general, the separation of the westerners and easterners. The 'Mosque' part is just a sequence of invitations attempting to bridge racial and cultural divisions. Contrarily, those attempts for contact and interaction only result in a catastrophic chain of events.

As for Hinduism, Aziz, who despises Hinduism, wishes that Hindus do not remind him of cow-dung. And the Hindu Mr. Das also thinks that Moslems are very violent. 'Between people of distant climes there is always the possibility of romance, but the various branches of Indians know too much about each other to surmount the unknowable easily.'[③] When Fielding tells Aziz that he wants to discover the spiritual side of Hinduism, Aziz opposes: 'It is useless discussing Hindus with me.'[④] He has no interest in Hinduism mainly because he cannot understand the religion. In the first part of the novel, the peaceful and congenial mosque of Islam pleases Aziz, while 'The temple of another creed, Hindu, Christian, or Greek would have bored him and failed to awaken his sense of beauty.'[⑤] But, after the Marabar event, Aziz's attitude toward Hinduism has changed. When the Hindu Judge Mr. Das asks him to write a poem for a Hindu magazine, Aziz accepts his request. 'The mere fact that Aziz, a strict Moslem, could accept a request by Mr. Das, a Hindu and his opponent in court indicates a significant change'[⑥], although he is not yet freed from his antipathy toward Hindus. So at a certain extent, Forster suggests that the Marabar event symbolized the forbidden friendship between the Anglo-Indian community and the Indian society. And its by-product is to draw different religions and people in India nearer.

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.322

② Ibid., p.322

③ Ibid., p.267

④ Ibid., p.319

⑤ Ibid., p.19

⑥ G. K. Das& Christel R. Devadawson. *Forster's A Passage to India: An Anthology of Recent Criticism* [C]. D. K. Fine Art Press Ltd., 2005. p.157

2.3 Godbole's Hinduism—The Unfathomed Indian World for Westerners

The Hindus are the real representatives of India. Hinduism also provides the most paradoxical philosophy in the novel. As Forster wrote, "It is true that Hinduism emphasizes the fact that we are all different. But is also emphasizes the other side of the human paradox—the fact that we are all the same."[①]

Hinduism is an ancient religion of India. It is based on the Vedas, the holy writings in Sanskrit. Unlike Islam, it is a polytheistic religion whose three principal gods, the Triaf are: Brahma, the 'supreme god', Vishnu, the 'preserver', and Shiva, 'the destroyer'. The invocation of Krishna is an invocation of life in all its wholeness.

Like the mosque, the 'temple is another architectural image of human worship'[②]. But unlike Islam and Christianity, which seek for the order and uniqueness in the universe, while Hinduism is inclusive and accepts all kinds of chaos and confusions. And what Forster appreciates in Hinduism is its universal love and inclusiveness. In McDowell's view, 'In Hinduism Forster found an encompassing reality that could unify the world and bind together animate and inanimate life, an impersonal spiritual force with which one might identify mystically, and a belief in love as a binding spiritual and moral value.'[③] The 'real' India is Hindu, for only the formless and mystical Hindu religion, with its one all-pervading, indefinable, "philosophical" god, seems to take into account all the mysteries and muddles of the inexplicable cosmos that India symbolizes. That is to say, Hinduism fully demonstrates the mystery and chaos of India. Martin says, 'As for Hinduism, it comes closer than either Islam or Christianity to expressing and comprehending the monumental confusions of Indian life.'[④] The complicated world of India and its religion are beyond the westerners' understanding. It is difficult for them to sympathize with jumble and disorder in Hinduism, also in India.

Unlike Islam or Christianity, Hinduism is presented as 'a living force' by

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① John Sayre Martin. *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* [C]. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. p.145

② Nigel Messenger. *How to Study an E. M. Forster Novel* [M]. London: Macmillan Education Ltd. 1991. p.168

③ Frederick P. W. McDowell. *E. M. Forster: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him* [C]. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976. p.110

④ John Sayre Martin. *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* [C]. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. p.154

conceiving God as an immediate reality apprehensible by man; and it 'can at certain moments fling down everything that is petty and temporary in their natures.'[①] Hinduism emphasizes the idea of man's nearness to God, while Islam and Christianity, both of which worship only one God, distance the creator from human beings. Hinduism is much more on Forster's heart, though it is rather too incomprehensive for him. According to Alan Wilde, Forster 'admires the inclusiveness, the vitality, and the anti-ascetic attitude of the Hindus, despite he is acutely aware of the muddles, the confusion, and the transitory nature of the ceremony that symbolizes their response to life.'[②]

Although Hinduism does not appear to dominate the book until the final section, it is a necessary part for the novel. Forster, in his 1952 interview, said that the last section was 'architecturally necessary. I needed a lump, or Hindu temple if you like—a mountain standing up. It is well placed; and it gathers up some strings. But there ought to be a more after it.'[③] The final section entitled 'Temple' happens two years later, which narrates the glorious birth ceremony of Krishna, the Hindu Lord. According to Hinduism, the birth festival of Krishna indicates universal love and joy that can be shared by the entire world. With the birth of Krishna, 'All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways and the stars; all became joy, all laughter.'[④] Behind the rituals that celebrate the birth of Krishna, Forster expresses an appreciation of the Hindu God. Hindu God is more human than Christ in Forster's eyes. Hinduism has the ability to hold together all the seemingly irreconcilable feelings and desires of men. It is the inclusiveness of Hinduism that Forster most admires. Forster comments that 'by sacrificing good taste, this worship achieved what Christianity has shirked: the inclusion of merriment.'[⑤] That is why the idea of Krishna is nearer to him than the idea of Christ.

Professor Godbole represents Hindu spirit in the novel. He always expresses the seemingly paradoxical ideas of Hinduism. His name seems to have significance. Godbole may symbolize something holy because it contains the word "God", so in the festival he gathers up Mrs. Moore, the wasp and some of those 'strings' like a god.

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.304

② Alan Wilde. *Critical Essays on E. M. Forster* [C]. Boston, Mass: G. K. Hall, 1985. p.151

③ Bradbury Malcolm. *E. M. Forster: A Passage to India* [C]. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1970. p.28

④ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. pp.287-288

⑤ Ibid., p.289

Godbole loves God, he is a mysterious Hindu, but his attitude toward people appears both friendless and friendly. At Fielding's party, he sits apart, quiet, enigmatic, showing a complete incapacity for ordinary conversation. When Aziz offers a visit to the Marabar Caves, the group then encourages the odd professor to speak about them. However, he seems strangely unwilling to, and always keeps silent. Forster writes, 'Somehow there seems to be no reserve of tranquility to draw upon in India. Either none, or also tranquility swallowed up everything, as it appeared to do for Professor Godbole.'[①] When Fielding asks his opinion of Aziz's guilty or innocence, he enigmatically replies that whatever happened in the cave is done by everyone, which reflects no concern for either Aziz or Fielding. 'When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe,' he goes on to explain that good and evil "are both of them aspects of my Lord, he is present in the one, absent in the other...yet absence implies presence, absence is non-existence, and we are therefore entitle to repeat 'come, come, come, come'."[②] The answer is absolutely a metaphysical one endowed with social and religious overtones.

Another significant event happens at Fielding's party, is that Godbole is invited to sing a song. It is the haunting song that affects both Adela and Mrs. Moore; in a sense it haunts them as Hinduism haunts every part of the book. Forster records, 'Ever since Professor Godbole had sung his queer little song, they (Adela and Mrs. Moore) had lived more or less inside cocoons.'[③]

So Godbole's presence in the text is always enigmatic and his statements have a cryptic significance. Such a mystical way of thinking is alien to both Moslem and Christian thought, for these religions are concerned with God as an authenticating power, a 'presence' granting meaning, individuality and exclusivity, for Aziz, like all faithful Moslems, 'there is no God but God'[④] and his ninety-nine attributes are written, black against white, in the marbled mosque. When Mrs. Moore meets Aziz there, she is confident that 'God is here'[⑤]. So at Fielding's party, Godbole sings a song which is about the desire of the milk maiden to attain communion with her Lord, Krishna. The milk maiden worships Lord Krishna and prays, 'come to me only, but he refuses to come.' when Godbole repeated that Krishna refused to come, Mrs. Moore

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.78-79
② Ibid., p.80
③ James Macconkey. *The Novels of E. M. Forster* [M]. Cornell University, 1957. p.95
④ E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.272
⑤ Ibid., p.42

was worried at Krishna's failure to come and thought that Krishna may come in some other songs, which shows a great gulf fixed between her Christianity and mystical Hinduism. Mrs. Moore's religion depends on simple-minded certainties. As she tells Ronny in Chapter 5, rebuking his colonial arrogance, 'God is love'[①]. Thus India represented in Hinduism has the capacity to undermine such certainties and test the insufficiency and uncongeniality of Christian beliefs. They are totally excluded from Indian society. Difficulties in communication have been a profound feature permeated in the novel. It seems a stiff task for human beings with different cultural and religious backgrounds to understanding each other.

Professor Godbole's singing performance holds a significant place in the structure of the novel. It is a 'muddle' to Western ears. As if he sings the confusions and mysteries of India, it seems to end as inconclusively and suddenly as it began, with no recognizable harmony. But what is expressed as a muddle is a keenly appreciated delight to the servants in Fielding's garden. The water chestnut gatherers emerge naked from the tank, 'his lips parted with delight'[②]. Once again India challenges the limitations of an exclusively European view of the world.

At Fielding's tea party, Godbole calls to Krishna in the guise of a milk maiden, and much to Mrs. Moore's distress, he 'neglects to come'. Here, finally, at the ceremony of his birth, Krishna does appear to 'come'. In his efforts to transcend his individuality and become one with God, Godbole attends to the tiny 'splinters of detail', fragments of memory that come unbidden into his consciousness. Mrs. Moore and the wasp come to Godbole's mind. He is attempting to love them all equally and, by doing so, invest them with fresh meaning and a renewed existence. Mrs. Moore should be present when Krishna is absent at Fielding's tea party, but that now, in earth and absent herself, her memory should make her present at Krishna's birth. And the wasp is excluded from the conventional Christian heaven but, through Godbole, finds a place in the birth of Krishna. Hinduism can be taken as the most metaphysical and abstruse philosophy in the novel.

The festival shows a temporary compromise between Hindu and Moslem, and between Brahman and non-Brahman. English and Moslem meet in the flooded river, in a flow of Hindu religious fervor. But westerners can not understand the inclusiveness of Hinduism and its mystery all the while. For them, Professor Godbole is an enigmatical figure. They can never get his points. The Hinduism and India

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.51

② Ibid., p.79

always challenge their rational minds and orderly life, and eventually pushes them into the separation from Indian society. The last paragraph expresses the tendency that Europeans and Indians are inevitably taken apart.

'the horses didn't want it—they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest house, that came into view as they issues from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet, ' and the sky said, "No, not here."'[①]

[①] E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.322

Chapter 3 The Marabar Caves—The Barriers of East-West Relations

Forster always tries to observe human beings under certain conditions. The environment and the atmosphere as influential elements are specially marked in his novel. Forster once wrote to a friend in 1922, 'the characters are not sufficiently interesting for the atmosphere. This tempts me to emphasize the atmosphere, and so to produce a meditation rather than a drama.'[①] So Forster has his own writing style of which the subtle and systematic use of symbolism is one of the most distinctive. Symbols in his works are not used as decorations but are means toward a full, complete statement. They are used with a consistency of meaning and they carry much of the weight of deeper meaning of the book.

Full understanding of symbolism in the book is certainly indispensable to full grasping of its themes. Symbolism in *A Passage to India* contributes greatly to its vivid presentation of its various themes, especially that of 'separateness'. There are numerous symbols. Nature, places, animals, incidents names and even 'India' all have their symbolic meanings. such as the wasp, the echo, the 'come, come, come' of Godbole's song which recurs throughout the novel and whose full significance is not apparent until the end of the book. Almost all the symbols, whether it is that of the Marabar Caves, the landscape, the climate, the characters or the incidents, combine to convey the central theme of separateness and failure of east-west relations.

'India as an ache, for which one has a great tenderness, but from which at length one always wishes to separate oneself.'[②] The rational westerners have no privileges in the hostile India, the two ladies' desire to see 'real' India is plunged into religious and spiritual meaningless. The antipathetic features of the Marabar and its echoes symbolize the mysteries and chaos of India, which beget Adela's hysterics and Mrs. Moore's breakdown of Christian beliefs. Here human beings' dream for contact and friendship always fail into frustration and disaster.

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① Christopher Gillie. *A Preface to Forster* [C]. Longman Company, 1988. p.130

② V. S. Naipaul. *The Overcrowded Barracoon* [M], London: Penguin, 1972. pp.50-51

3.1 Adela's Emotional Crisis—The Failure of Western Rationalists

Adela is an independent, serious-minded girl, who comes to India for her marriage with Ronny and for seeing the real India. Adela, unlike Mrs. Moore, lacks an intuitive understanding toward oriental events. This is why she suffers much more than Mrs. Moore in India.

Adela is a sincere girl. She has no prejudice against Indians and always worries that she may become an arrogant Anglo-Indian. She feels ashamed that some Anglo-Indian women are so 'ungenerous and snobby about Indians'[①]. Since she will marry Ronny, she can not avoid the label of Anglo-Indian, but, at least, she wants to avoid the mentality. She tells Aziz her worries about that:

...I should feel ashamed for words if I turned like them, but—and here is my difficulty—there is nothing special about me, nothing specially good or strong, which will help me to resist my environment and avoid becoming like them. I've most lamentable defeat. That's why I want Akbar's 'universal religion' or the equivalent to keep me decent and sensible.[②]

Her worries show her sincere wish. Adela's purpose of coming to India is to find out if she and Ronny can be united together. If they get married, she would live in India. So partly her intention to see the 'real India' is to make sure whether she can understand India and thus enable her to control her life experience here. After her marriage is settled down, it is natural for Adela to think about her marriage with Ronny who disappointed her by his behavior in India. She seems to have no enthusiastic to see the Marabar Caves but flings herself into her own problems.

'Her wish (too see the real India) had been granted, but too late. She could not get excited over Aziz and his arrangements. She was not the least unhappy or depressed, and the various odd objects that surrounded her... [③]

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.146

② Ibid., p.146

③ Ibid., p.133

The reason for Adela's trouble is that she is a British rationalist, 'a product of Christian rationality and Anglo-Saxon common sense'[①]. Adela wants to define everything. She cannot stand mysticism and muddle. 'I do so hate mysteries'[②], Adela announced in the tea party. At the polo ground, Adela tries to identify the unknown bird in the tree. To her disappointment, 'nothing in India is identifiable. The mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge in something else'[③].

So it is understandable for Indian mystery confuses the rational understanding and violates Adela's belief that everything theoretically comprehensible. The rational ways of thinking which she believes in and serve her well in Britain can cut no ice for her in India. The central episode of the 'Caves' part, and ever of the entire novel, is the experience and psychological movements of Adela. The Marabar Caves seem to be the very symbol of hostile and negation of her trip to India and her marriage with Ronny. It drives Adela to break with Ronny and gets into the brink of madness. We can see from the following passage that Adela suddenly realizes she doesn't love Ronny during the expedition.

But as she toiled over a rock that resembled an inverted saucer, she thought, 'What about love?' The rock was nicked by a double row of footholds, and somehow the question was suggested by them. Where had she seen footholds before? Oh yes, they were the pattern traced in the dust by the wheels of the Nawab Bahadur's car. She and Ronny—no, they did not love each other.

'Do I take you too fast?' inquired Aziz for she had paused, a doubtful expression on her face. The discovery had come so suddenly that she felt like a mountaineer whose rope had broken. Not to love the man one's going to marry! Not to find out till this moment! Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! ..... 'No, I'm all right thanks,' she said, and, her emotion well under control, resumed the climb, though she felt a bit dashed. Aziz held her hand, the guide adhered to the surface like a lizard and scampered about as if governed by a personal centre of gravity.[④]

During their mountain climbing, Adela is preoccupied with thoughts of her forthcoming marriage. We all know Adela is tormented by her marriage. It seems that

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992 p.73
② Ibid., p.69
③ Ibid., p.85
④ Ibid., pp.151-152

both the presence of Aziz and the Marabar rocks play a part in her suddenly discovers that she does not love Ronny. The strange Indian scenery exposes the dangerous gap between her thoughts and feelings—Adela is suffering from her gathering emotional muddle and her attempts to repress her growing confusion. From the point, The Marabar expedition can be taken as Adela's spiritual trip, to see her own emotions imprisoned in her heart. So once again Adela's search for the 'real India' leads her into troubling and confusing discoveries about herself. It is in this state of mind that the Marabar rock seems to challenge her rational mind and force her to confront the truth.

In the build-up to this scene, the Marabar is shown to be hostile and alien to human scale and human values. Even the guide becomes a scampering lizard adhering to the rock in an unnatural fashion. Toiling up its smooth, bare surface, Adela is exposed and vulnerable; the plainness of the scenery draws her attention to her own emotional barrenness: 'What about love?' By a train of association, the 'nicked' footholds in the rock remind her of the 'nicked lozenges' in the Nawab's car tyres that she saw in the dust after the accident. She had traced the pattern of them there until 'all went mad'[①]. On that occasion, a sudden, hostile force had come out of the night to make the car swerve violently; it had also caused a sudden 'swerve' in her relationship with Ronny. In a matter that prefigures the trial scene later, Adela again relives the experience of the 'esteem and animal contact at dusk' in the present blazing heat. 'Eyes on the sparkling rock', she faces up to the truth: 'She and Ronny—no, they did not love each other.' Once again, a dark, unacknowledged force has broken into her orderly life and could cause it to 'swerve' violently.

Forster captures well Adela's momentary panic and loss of calmness as she tries to regain her emotional balance. Like the mountaineer 'whose rope had broken' there's a sudden sense of danger and suspension that she discovers her emotion. However her reason and common sense intellectually repress her emotional fears, she emphasizes particularly on selfishness and the inconvenience of breaking off the engagement. While love, she reasons, is not essential to a 'successful union'. In this mood and 'a bit dashed', she continues her climb to the caves.

The bleak inhospitality of the Marabar is a fit setting for Adela's depressing revelation. For her, its barren stone, smooth like a 'saucer', becomes symbolic of harsh, unyielding truths that must be accepted, and gives no solace or escape. Adela does attempt to repress her discovery because of her British reason and social

[①] E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.93

convenience—and the result is break-down and sexual hysteria. Although Forster has prepared us well for the catastrophe to come by showing us the state of Adela's mind at this point, events seem to have a logic that transcends individual psychology and incorporate the menace of the Indian landscape itself. At this more mysterious, irrational level, the manner in which the 'nicked' footholds activate the memory trace of the car accident is an anticipation of the more violent 'swerve' events, which are going to happen when Adela enters the cave and is taken over by forces she and her rational mind cannot understand or control.

During the process of the cave trip, Adela is confused by a psychological panic and emotional chaos. Will she marry Ronny or not? Should she stay in the country or leave for her own country? So before she enters into the caves, she instinctively asks Doctor Aziz a question about his marriage. At this moment Adela unconsciously probes in her inner realities from the angle of love and even sex. Under such a condition she comes into a cave and suddenly hears a strange echo. The strange echo frightens and tortures her.

...And consequently the echo flourished, raging up and down like a nerve in the faculty of her hearing, and the noise in the cave, so unimportant intellectually, was prolonged over the surface of her life. She had struck the polished wall—for no reason—and before the comment had died away he followed her, and the climax was the falling of her field-glasses. The sound had spouted after her when she escaped, and was going on still like a river that gradually floods the plain...[①]

The caves and the echoes eventually stimulate Adela's sex illusion. In other words, the echoes of the caves or the mysteries of India arouse her sub-consciousness, which she always attempts to use her reason to repress the unfavorable truth that her does not love Ronny. The bareness and wildness of the Marabar Hills and its monotonously occurring echoes are the very symbols of their unharmonious state. The unspeakable power of the hostile land surpasses her thoughts. Adela falls into illusion and hysterics.

Adela is puzzled by the echoes, only when she eventually confronts her interior feeling and her emotion breaks out, that she can free herself from the torture of the echoes. The experience of the Marabar Hills is a spiritual travel for Adela. We can see her change from the following section before her departure from India.

[①] E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.194

...Were there worlds beyond which they could never touch, or did all that is possible enter their consciousness? They could not tell. They only realized that their outlook was more or less similar, and found in this a satisfaction. Perhaps life is a mystery, not a muddle; they could not tell. Perhaps the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble so tiresomely are one, and the universe they mirror is one. They had not the apparatus for judging.[①]

This is taken from the end of the 'Caves' section just before Adela left India. Adela and Fielding seek to evaluate and provide some sort of rational explanation for the caves and the echoes before they part. There is a tension between their desire for the truth and the realization that they will never find it. Adela now is more chastened and philosophic, showing a greater understanding of herself and her needs. What happened in the cave is a mystery, they must be accepted and cannot be explained in terms that she or Fielding could understand. There seem to be worlds closed to them, like those imprisoned in the polished Mrarbar reflections that Adela touched but could not reach. She simply could not 'get further'. So once again this passage to the Marabar shows the inadequacy of western rationalism in the world of a 'hundred Indias', a world of confusing elements that might be 'muddle' or 'mystery' —'they had not the apparatus for judging'. Adela and Fielding are shrunk, reduced to this new scale of things—limited by class, education and race, they are at the end of their spiritual tethers—their only consolation the knowledge of shared values. As Forster writes at their parting, 'A friendliness as of dwarfs shaking hands, was in the air'[②].

Here the Marabar symbolizes for India, India is a muddle, the voice of 'the hundred Indias', has become a kind of metaphor for the universe itself, where man—certainly western Christian and rational man—is no longer felt to have a privileged place in the world with the ability to confirm meaning.

Through Adela's 'passage' through India, we seem to have gone beyond her own personal domestic drama, to a critique of the national mentality of England and their doomed frustration in India. They are aliens in Indian society. The failure and inadequacy of the Britons are predestined in Indian society.

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.263

② Ibid., p.264

3.2 Mrs. Moore's Spiritual Crisis—The Failure of Western Christians

From her arrival in India at the beginning, Mrs. Moore believes India is part of the world where people were born from God to live happily. She sincerely expresses her wish to see India. With a warm heart and pure Christian belief, she has been trying to comprehend Indian religion and tolerate the heat and dirty of India, and the differences between her and the natives. However, the open mind and good will do not bring in the understanding of Indian culture and society. As she comes to know the 'real' India, Mrs. Moore's character undergoes a strange metamorphosis, in which all her loyalties to religion, race and family are shaken. The change begins on her encounter with the echo. The expedition of the Marabar Caves bears a fateful effect. It is proved as a horrid experience for Mrs. Moore. For it crushes her spirit, religion and later ruins her body. The moment she enters the caves, she is suffering from the torture of the caves:

Crammed with villagers and servants, the circular chamber began to smell. She lost Aziz and Adela in the dark, did not know who touched her, could not breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her mouth like a pad. She tried to regain the entrance tunnel, but an influx of villagers swept her back. She hit her head. For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not only did the crush and stench alarm her; there was also a terrifying echo. [①]

What so frightened Mrs. Moore in the cave are the echoes, which have been haunting her mind and will destroy her belief later. The Marabar Caves is a negative experience for Mrs. Moore, which proved the limitedness of the Christian view of the world. The novel describes Mrs. Moore's mental panic in the caves. Her collapse implies the crisis of Christian beliefs. Christian religion is limited and inadequate compared with the supernatural elements of the Marabar and mysterious features of Indian scenes. The dullness and loneliness of the Marabar Hills, the terrible climate, the uncertainty of Hinduism—all these affect Mrs. Moore's psychological peace and her values. She found it is feeble to use her Christian to comprehend India. She cannot

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.147

tolerate the muddle of the alien country, and she has totally lost herself in the hostile caves. Converse with God, she has no interest in everything. Knowing Aziz is innocent, she says nothing in his behalf except a few sour words that upset Adela's certainty. She allows Ronny to send her away, and died on her way home. So the cave is a destructive force for Mrs. Moore, she is in a devil of hole. Everything becomes meaningless. The following passage is a good example.

She took out her writing pad, and began, 'Dear Stella, Dear Ralph,' then stopped, and looked at the queer valley and their feeble invasion of it. Even the elephant had become a nobody. Her eye rose from it to the entrance tunnel. No, she did not wish to repeat that experience. The more she thought over it, the more disagreeable and frightening it become. She minded it much more now that at the time. The crush and smells she could forget, but the echo *began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life. Coming at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued, it had managed to murmur, 'Pathos, pith, courage—they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value.' If one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same—'ou-boum'.*[①]

The sinister echo in the caves, and Mrs. Moore's reaction to it, has generally been recognized as a climax—a focal point of some kind. It is as if the whole text is gathered around a hole, an empty space, which we would like to fill with some kind of meaning and significance, but can't. There is nothing but 'muddle' on a cosmic scale in the Marabar Caves. Mrs. Moore 'liked mysteries' but 'rather disliked muddles'[②], and there is nothing but 'muddle' on a cosmic scale in the Marabar Caves. 'Everything exists, nothing has value.' The tedious empty syllable 'ou-boum', apart from duplicating itself into its mirror image of bou-oum', reduces the distinction and meaning out of everything: pathos, pity, courage, filth, vileness, poetry. It all sounds the same, with the suggestion that it is all the same, there is no special meaning in them. Mrs. Moore's cannot absorb and counter such radical nihilism with her 'poor little talkative Christianity'[③], consequently the echo begins to 'undermine her hold on life'. The elephant, Ralph and Stella may 'exist' but they no longer have 'value'.

In the Marabar Caves, not only do the caves resist meaning themselves, but their

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.149
② Ibid., p.69
③ Ibid., p.150

echo casts doubt on our capacity to 'label' anything and make proper sense of it. Above all, the echo represents a challenge to language for it is through language that human beings make meanings, and the echo undermines those distinctions upon which meaning depends. So it is only when Mrs. Moore began to write her letter home that the full horror of the cave's message descended on her. The caves are an ordeal that Mrs. Moore has to undergo, and their echo is an expensive symbol which runs through the novel and haunts over Mrs. Moore's mind, undermining and disturbing her fixed position, making for the uncertainty and inadequacy of Christianity. After the Marabar trip, Mrs. Moore has moved closer and closer to Indian ways of feeling. She has had the beginning of the Hindu vision of things and it has crushed her. She abandons everything, even moral duty, died on her way home and became 'Esmiss Esmoor'—a Hindu goddess in Indian mythology. In the guise of the Hindu goddess she saved Aziz. Then she recurs again, together with the wasp, in the mind of Professor Godbole in that wonderful scene of religious muddle. She remains everlastingly in the mind of Aziz who hates—or tries to hate—all the other Britons.

Here it is worthy to notice that the reason why Mrs. Moore recurs in Indian people mind is because she is being taken as an 'oriental'. Her Marabar trip, on one hand can be seen as her breakup with Christianity. On the other hand, it is a symbol of her transcendence into mysterious thoughts of Hinduism. Her death is a symbol of the defeat of the Christian philosophy in an oriental country as India.

3.3 The Marabar Hills—A Testing Stone for Westerners' Weakness

The three parts of the novel structurally bear great significance. The whole novel can be seen as a melody. 'Mosque, Caves, Temple" —those are planned like symphonies in three movements that are given their shapes and their interconnections by related and contrasted localities. They are the keynote in the symphony to which the strange melody always returns. During the first half of the book constant reference to them directs attention forward to the catastrophe of the caves. After this, every reference to them directs our attention back to the centre, to the mystery which is never solved.

So the Marabar is the climax of the novel. Its symbolic significance is complicated. Forster has ever given his own explanation about the mysterious caves and echoes.

In the cave it is either a man, or the supernatural, or an illusion. If I say, it becomes whatever the answer a different book. And even if I know! My writing mind therefore is a blur here—i.e. I will it to remain a blur, and to be uncertain, as I am of many facts in daily life. This isn't a philosophy of aesthetics. It is a particular trick I felt justified in trying because my theme is India. It sprang straight from my subject matter. I wouldn't have attempted it in other countries which though they contain mysteries and muddles, manage to draw rings round them. Without the trick I doubt whether I could have got the spiritual reverberation going. I call it "trick"; but 'voluntary surrender to infection between expresses my state.[①]

Here Forster created the mystery and muddle of landscape by intention. The caves are rich in symbols and have many layers of meanings signified in the novel. They are supernatural and eternal. They are isolated from the outside world, forming a closed and separated world, with unfathomable power. From cultural perspective, the Marabar can be seen as a destructive power for the failure of westerners' attempt to see the real India.

And the novel starts with the description of the Marabar Caves, which are always teemed with mysterious force like India. The first chapter ends with words as follows:

Only in the south, where a group of fists and fingers are thrust up through the soil, is the endless expanse interrupted. These fists and fingers are the Marabar Hills, containing the extraordinary caves.[②]

The repetition of the word 'endless' expresses significant implication. It ominously hints at the infinite impossibility of the meaning of the caves. The manner in which Forster describes them gives them an extraordinary presence and significance.

And the whole of Chapter 12 stresses the incredible age of the caves. "To call them 'uncanny' suggests ghosts, and they are older than all spirit'[③]. The Marabar hills are part of the oldest rocks on earth, as if they live side by side with the universe—they were there before anything else, historical or prehistorical. They

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① Oliver Stallybrass ed. *A Passage to India* [M]. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1936. p.50

② E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.9

③ Ibid., p.124

function as a kind of primeval blank page that people can not reach. They contain nothing and represent nothing, yet paradoxically this is what makes them extraordinary. It is proved that Marabar Caves become the richest, most connotative symbol in the novel as well as the most important physical location for the plot.

There seems to be two different sorts of structure in this novel. One is narrative, and another that is less tangible, more poetic. Clearly the caves are necessary to both of them. On the narrative level something—or nothing—happened to Adela, which is a crucial part to the plot. The cave made Adela get in delusion, which is the turning point for all subsequent events. In the interview in 1952, Forster said that 'the Marabar Caves represented an area in which concentration can take place. A cavity.' 'They were something to focus everything up: they were to engender an event like an egg.'[①] All characters have to pass through it. At a more poetic and suggestive level, Mrs. Moore's experience in the caves is equally important, it drives us to see the weakness of western Christians. Mrs. Moore's spiritual decline and her refusal to attend the trial as a witness for Aziz could be taken as a sign for the alienation of Christians from Indian society. The caves seem to be a symbol of something overwhelmingly menacing and sinister towards westerners. The threatening 'fists and fingers'[②] of the Marabar Hills are ominously presented from the opening chapter onwards, and during the fateful expedition to see the caves the whole environment is described in very negative terms.

However, we need to think over the matters: are they actively evil, or do they merely amplify whatever human moods and emotions that are brought into them? The following passage is the depiction of the mysterious caves in the opening chapter to the 'Caves' section of the novel.

They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the wall of the circular chambers have been most marvelously polished. They two flames approach and strive to unit, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours

① Bradbury Malcolm. *E. M. Forster: A Passage to India* [C]. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1970. p.28

② E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.9

divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of the gravity, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil—here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more voluptuous than love. The radiance increase, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves.[①]

They are 'dark caves' and so resistant to the power of the sun which Forster suggests is all-powerful elsewhere in India. No natural light can enter them. Just through the efforts of human beings can give them light and reveal their amazing beauty.

The Marabar hills are menacing when viewed from the outside, their 'fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil', but their skin, as an outside covering, can only be discovered by going inside the caves. And the inside makes a world of difference, a strange, rather confused reversal. This skin is extremely delicate; Forster emphasizes its sensuousness which exceeds all other things whether they are living ('finer than any animals'), natural ('smoother than windless water'), or sensation ('more voluptuous than love'). The effect of all this makes the rock the most fantastic and excellent things instead of the most dead and horrible images.

In the opening chapter of the novel, the structural counterpart to this one that introduces the 'Mosque' section, Forster stresses the power of the 'overarching sky' [②] that expands, in ever-widening circles, away from the earth throughout the universe. It is a key idea that occurs repeatedly in the first section. At the beginning of the 'Bridge Party' in Chapter 5, Forster writes: 'Beyond the sky must not there be something that overarches all the skies, more impartial even than they?'[③] The above passage we are talking about is to achieve a strange reversal effect, which shows that the caves are more powerful than the sun. Once illuminated, the polished surface of the cave reveals hidden depths that seem in a temporary and 'evanescent' way. It can contain all the beauty of the universe—comets, moons, stars and nebulae. In the caves, the cosmos is turned inside out, concentrated and reduced in scale, so here the cave is a mimic of the universe. This is a powerful and imaginative notion. Instead of being in an artifical architecture and man-made beauty in the 'Mosque' section, here we are sucked into a

① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. pp.124-125
② Ibid., p.8
③ Ibid., p.40

vortex of erotic and infinite world. The cave is represented as the inclusiveness of Indian philosophy: mysterious, incorporable and powerful.

However, the match's illumination of the beautiful surface of the rock is almost an incidental by-product, while its true intention is to unite with the other flame it reflects on the skin. It is caught in the rock 'like an imprisoned spirit', 'the two flames...strive to unite'. Although they are similar, they are actually of different elements. Forster here is at pains to suggest the independent nature of the rock flame—breathing rock rather than air, it seems more than a passive reflection, the flames are destined never to unite and become one: they can only touch, kiss and die in mutual extinction.

The effect of the depiction is mysterious, beautiful and symbolical. It could be seen as a suggestion of the doomed nature of westerners and Indians' relationship. It expresses the idea that westerner's visit to the caves inevitably gets them into separating from Indian society. Their touch is not only temporary, but also accelerates the speed of their separation. The flames will never be able to do more than just reach out for each other, the temporary touch of their fulfillment is sufficient to extinguish their desire and part from each other. Such a notion is associated with the two ladies' yearning for seeing real India, but failure at all levels that is such a pervasive theme in the novel. We need to remember the frustration of Adela who 'ran' her 'finger along that polished wall'[1] of the cave but could not 'get further'. A sign represents the failure for her attempt to know India. Their failure is doomed from the very beginning of the expedition. And the caves are not by nature evil and hostile, they just reflect the entrants' psychological realities and changes. For Indians, They seem to be a place of mystery and poetic presence. The native Indians are accustomed to the climate and environment of India that they have no emotional turbulence when they enter into the caves. Through Adela and Mrs. Moore's disastrous experience in the caves, we know that the cave produces a negative and destructive force on the westerners who hold a heterogeneous culture and religion. They are not accepted by India. The cave is like a testing stone, which crushes the weak Christians and the rational westerners. They are the aliens in Indian land. Their breakdowns uncover the inadequacy of western philosophy when encountered the mysterious oriental country.

[1] E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.260

Conclusion

A Passage to India represents the furthest reach of Forster's explorations. It is a tribute to Forster's imaginative power that he is able to create a thoroughly convincing character, religion and society, which belongs to a culture so different from his own.

Forster borrowed its title from a poem written by Walt Whitman, the famous American poet. In his poem, Whitman expresses an optimistic view on international communication, implying the infinite possibilities of human relationship. On the contrary, Forster shows a doubt on this issue in the novel. *A Passage to India* is a novel which describes conflicts and differences that hamper and threaten human communication. At the beginning of the novel, Forster presents that 'whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman.'[①] It is the focus point of the novel, and at the end of the novel, Forster gives his answer: 'No, not yet,...No, not there.'[②] So unlike Whitman's poem, it is a novel dealing with the failures and the frustration of westerner efforts to establish a relationship with India.

Separateness is one of Forster's most persistent and inclusive concerns. Society is built on the relationship between man and man. When human relationship goes wrong, mistakes or even disasters follow close behind. Many of the disasters in the novel result from the separateness of different men, different cultures and different religions.

In *A Passage to India*, the setting is India, A place far away from Europe. The separation of race from race, sex from sex, culture form culture, even of man from himself, is what undermines many relationships. The separation of the Britons from the Indians is one of the most dramatic gulfs in this novel. Cultural and religious differences keep Indian and Englishman apart. The inadequacy of western Christians and Anglo-Indians brings into their failure in India. Fielding, who aligns himself with the Indians at the trial of Aziz, becomes an alien in British club. And Mrs. Moore is separated from all people, from God, from the universe, died in hostile India. Most of people in *A Passage to India* are isolated from each other.

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① E. M. Forster. *A Passage to India* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1992. p.10

② Ibid., p.322

Another aspect of the theme of the novel is the clashes between the west and the east. The atmosphere in *A Passage in India* is deliberately queer, tumultuous, and chaotic. India, in Forster's description, is both muddled and mysterious. Throughout the novel, the very landscape of India is full of muddles and mysteries, making westerners seek for order and clarity impossible. This 'muddle' theme is peculiar of India, the order of western world and the chaos of Indian society is a significant distinction. The whole incident of the Marabar Caves is full of muddle and symbolism. It is never clear what actually happens. The muddles and chaos of India represent uncertain and hostile nature of India, even the primeval universe. Its muddle and mystery threaten the Britons. The novel is full of the failure of the westerners. Adela meets a ghost and undergoes hallucination in the mysterious Marabar Caves. Her experience in India only ends in her departure from India. And it is proved that Mrs. Moore's passage to India is a more catastrophic one, for it not only breakdowns her Christian beliefs, but also costs her life. After hearing the terrible echo in the Marabar Caves, both Adela and Mrs. Moore are caught in crises. The Indian elements reveal the weakness and uncongeniality of European rationalism and Christian relief.

One of the reasons that makes *A Passage to India* so profoundly satisfying a novel is due to its perfect combination of symbolic suggestions with the psychological insight and social realism. 'Symbols have their own value in the enrichment of life, they stimulate emotion, they help concentration...'[①] In the novel, Forster skillfully arranges his novel with symbolic meanings. We can say that symbolism is one of the most significant features of the novel. There are many kinds of symbols. Among them, the caves—the most uncertain symbol in the novel—as geographical factors have been parts of the landscape of the novel from the first sentence, where they stand as the extraordinary exception to everything else beneath the over-arching sky. They stand outside of human experience altogether, lonely but with unpredictable power. All the characters have to go through the caves and its echoes. It is also proved the uncongeniality of westerners.

In *A Passage to India*, the mysterious atmosphere is also embodied by Indian landscape and its religions. And the Indian religion—Hinduism is a muddle-like religion as its enigmatic believer—Godbole. They confuse the westerners and show a large discrepancy between them. All these elements make India unspeakable and horrible in the westerner's eye.

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① G. K. Chesterton. *The New Jerusalem* [M]. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1920. p344

Forster, as a liberal humanist, criticizes the superiority of the Anglo-Indians and the insufficiency of the westerners in the novel by analyzing the conflicts of the two nations. It seems to be impossible for them to establish a harmonious relationship in colonized India. The true intention of his novel is to study the conflicts and separateness between the two different kinds of races and cultures. Forster's objective description of the Indian society and depiction of the exotic world is the eternal charm of his novel.

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