

## Chapter - II

Edward Morgan Forster, the writer of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *A Room with a View* (1908), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *Howards End* (1910), and *A Passage to India* (1924) was born in London on Jan 1, 1879. He wrote only five novels in his life time, and one *Maurice* was published posthumously. In 1911, he made his first visit to India and he felt attracted towards the Indian people and Indian culture. He also served as Secretary to the Maharaja of Dewas for some time. His experiences in India served as the inspiration behind the novel *A Passage to India*. This novel is considered as his masterpiece. This novel deals with the life in the India of the days of pre-independence era. The story is set in the city of Chandrapore, which “except for Marabar Caves”, “presents nothing extraordinary” (1).

The city is situated on the bank of the river Gange where people from different races (Indians and the English), and from different religions (Muslims and Hindus) live together and share love-hate relationships with each-other. In this city, the English people constitute the ruling class in the city and have the power to treat the Indians the way they like, and the Indians were no better than the slaves. All the characters and the events in the novel depict the general truth about the social and political condition of India under the British rule. The novel depicts the insulting treatment which the Indians were receiving at the hands of the British at that time. They were compelled to live the life of slaves in their own native country. They were considered inferior to the British in rank, and they were frequently misbehaved by them. So, by belonging to the colonized class, the Indian characters in the novel *A Passage to India*, are the “subaltern” characters. In this chapter, the focus would be on this exploitative and insulting treatment of the Indians by the English people.

The events in the novel depict the general, social and political condition in any colonized nation, and the characters have typical relations of the colonizer and the colonized. But, these events and the characters have much deeper meaning than this surface meaning. On the first glance, we find that the novel is:

...about India—which at the time was a colonial possession of Britain—and about the relations between British and Indian people in that country. It is also about the necessity of friendship, and about

the difficulty of establishing friendship across cultural boundaries. On a more symbolic level, the novel also addresses questions of faith (both religious faith and faith in social conventions).<sup>1</sup>

The landscape of the city of Chandrapore, described in the chapter-I, itself makes explicit the difference between the English and the Indian. In the city, the area where the Indians live “the streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and...whose filth deters all but the invited guests ” and the general life here is “...like some low but indestructible form of life” (API 1). In this place, even “the Ganges happens not to be holy here,” but in the Eurasian people’s region which is described as “a tropical pleasance,” (API 1) the river is described as “the noble river.” (API 1)

The houses belonging to the Eurasians “stand on the high ground by the railway station.” (API 1) The Civil Station or “...the city to the English people” (API 2) is situated on the second rise, “and viewed hence Chandrapore appears to be a totally different place.” (API 1) The “red-brick Club” (API 2) the symbol of the British Empire and authority over the India (so the Indians are not allowed in it) is situated on the highest place in the Civil Station. “It has nothing hideous in it, and only beautiful; it shares nothing with the city except the overarching sky” (API 2). The Civil Station:

is screened from Indian Chandrapore behind the exuberant vegetation, suggesting perhaps that the Anglo-Indian world may be cut off from the realities of the native culture. Such is also the implication of the idea that newcomers do not understand what Chandrapore is, and are rather impressed by it until driven down into it to ‘acquire disillusionment’ and here, in a sardonic phrase, is part of the fate of the earnest Adela who desired to see the real India.

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The English people live at the heights of the hill, and the Indian reside at the bottom of the hill. This geographical difference between the abode of two races, symbolizes the difference of the political power and the social difference between both the races. The English who live at the height has the power to control the life of the Indian who live down alley, and the Indian who live down alley, have no power over their own life.

This description of the landscape also makes explicit “the racial division that the novel

partly deals with. Indian Chandrapore is separated from the Civil Station peopled by the Anglo-Indians.”<sup>3</sup> The last paragraph of the previous chapter describes the beauties of the sky and the earth. This description also symbolizes the difference between the two races. Here, the sky can be said to represent the English and the earth represents the Indian. In this paragraph, the powers of the sky and the passiveness of the earth are described:

The sky settles everything—not only climates and seasons, but when the earth shall be beautiful. By herself she can do little—only feeble outbursts of flowers. But when the sky chooses, glory can rain into the Chandrapore bazaars, or a benediction pass from horizon to horizon. The sky can do this because it is so strong and so enormous. (API 2)

And, the earth is described as “the prostrate earth” which does not disturb or cause any interruption to the sky as it “lies flat” (API 2) before the sky. But in the southwards, there are some hills which interrupts and “the endless expansion” (API 2) of the sky, which are “the Marabar Caves, containing the extraordinary caves”. (API 3) They are presented as the “fist and fingers” (API 2) of the earth.

The opening chapter sets the scene, describing the fact that Chandrapore is really two cities, or a city that can be experienced from two points of view, the Indian and the English. Chapter 2 and 3 then introduce the main characters on each side of this racial and cultural divide. Each talks obsessively about the other. The Indian are aware of their humiliation at the hands of the English and complain vigourously about it. This is then vividly illustrated in Aziz's experience at Mayor Callendar's bungalow.<sup>4</sup>

*A Passage to India* is divided into three parts: *Mosque*, *Caves* and *Temple*. In the first part, we get an introduction of the characters and the setting of the novel. We also get a glimpse of the kind of relationship which the native people share with the ruling class, i.e., the English people. We can clearly see the tension between the two races. And, not only these two races have hatred and misconceptions about each-other, but the people of the same class also have certain misconceptions and a sense of hatred for each-other such as the Hindus and the Moslems

have misunderstanding between themselves.

In the first part, we meet Dr. Aziz, the protagonist of the novel, who is a well-established doctor, working at a govt. Hospital. He is a good natured and friendly person. He befriends with whoever he comes into contact with. He has, both Indians as well as British friends. He is not much bothered about the English rule over his country as he says to Mr. Fielding, that he would leave the “dirty business” of getting the country free from the colonial rule to the politicians only. (API 142) He does not mind the English people ruling the country politically, but officially. Aziz does not like his superior the Civil Surgeon of the city, Major Callendar and his wife because of their frequent misbehaviour. Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested are two newly-reached ladies from England who are very curious to see and know about India. Mrs. Moore is the mother of Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate of Chandrapore, who has come to India with Adela, the would-be future wife of Ronny. Through Mr. Fielding, the principal of the Government College, and who wants “to slink through India unlabelled,” (155) they come into contact with Aziz.

Once, Aziz organizes a picnic to the Marabar caves for his British friends, Mrs. Moore, Miss Adela Quested, Mr. Fielding, and Professor Godbole, which Aziz describes as “an expedition of friends” which has “nothing to do with English or Indians” (API 142). But, everything goes wrong on this fateful day. Fielding and Professor Godbole miss the train to the Marabar Caves, the weather is very hot, Aziz is not able to explain the significance of the caves, and Mrs. Moore feels dizzy when enters the first cave, refuses to see the other caves and stays outside. But Miss Quested, who is over-enthusiastic about India and Indians, is willing to see the other caves, and goes to see the next cave alone with the guide and Aziz. She has a strange experience in the caves, feels as if someone has tried to molest her. She accuses Aziz of trying to molest her while alone in the caves.

The “expedition of friends” (API 142) is ruined. A case is filed against him, and he is arrested when reaches the Chandrapore. Differences were always there between the Indians and the English, but this case against Aziz exaggerates these differences. Very soon the case turned into a kind of “cold war” between the Indians and the British. And, this “war” is no more between Miss Adela and Aziz, but between the two races. The case becomes a question of reputation for both the parties. In this war between the two races, people from both the sides try their level hard to win the war and to prove the superiority of their race over the other. “The gulf between East and West”, (21) which Mr. Turton tried to bridge through the bridge party, is widened further

because of this case. Both the armies are gathered against each-other.

All the differences between the people of different sections of the Indian and the English societies were perished, and both the sides become united against each-other. Adela suddenly becomes “our sister” (API 159) for the English ladies, and “my own darling girl” (API 159) for Mrs. Turton who called her once “cranky”, “ungracious” and not “pukka” (API 21) for wanting to see India and to meet the Indians. Banita Parry says that

to the Anglo-Indians, Miss Quested is the victim of the infamous lust of Indian men; and in the story of her derangement, the Indian landscape figures as violent male principle – the rocks of the Marabar hills appearing to rise “abruptly, insanely”, and her body pierced by the spines of cactuses growing on the hillside. (137)

The differences between the Hindus and Muslims are also perished, and they become united against the English people.

A famous barrister from Calcutta, Amritrao who is a Hindu is called to plead Aziz’s case, as Hamidullah suggested that by employing a Hindu barrister, “the defence would then make a wider appeal” (API 154). The sweepers start a strike in favour of Aziz, and many Mohammedan women start fasting for the victory of Aziz. Fielding is expelled from the English Club for siding with Aziz. On the last day of a very pious festival of the Mohammedans Mohurram, “there had nearly been a riot” (API 173). Mr. Turton, the Collector gives the responsibility to judge the case to a Hindu magistrate Mr. Das as he is an Indian.

Mr. McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police tries his level best to prove Aziz guilty. He has a very strange theory about why every Indian is a criminal. His odd theory is that "All unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simplest 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" (API 148). But, he himself is the exception to his own theory as "Born at Karachi, he seemed to contradict his theory, and would sometimes admit as much with a sad, quite smile" (API 148). Aziz’s house is all searched for the evidence against him. Mr. McBryde tries to use his private letters, even the photograph of his dead wife, are used as evidence against him in the court.

But on the day of the trial, Adela while standing on the pulpit suddenly realized her misunderstanding and she declares that Aziz is innocent. She withdraws all her charges against

Aziz. This sudden reversal in the situation creates a state of anarchy in the court and in the city as well. After the court, there is a procession in the market. In the night, the Indian side celebrates their win at the farmhouse of Nawab Bahadur who has now become “plain Mr. Zulfiqar” (210) after the case. Indians become exalted at their win over the English people. As Fielding rightly observes his Indian friends in the novel:

His Indian friends were, on the other hand, a bit above themselves. Victory, which would have made the English sanctimonious, made them aggressive, they wanted to develop an offensive, and tried to do so by discovering new grievances and wrongs, many of which had no existence. They suffered from the usual disillusion that attends warfare...Loud talk and trivial lawlessness were attempted, and behind them continued a genuine but vague desire for education.  
(230)

Aziz wants to take revenge for the harm of his reputation, so he wants to file a case against Adela for compensation and to demand a good amount of money from her. But Fielding persuaded him to let her go, and advises Adela to write an apology letter to Aziz. Fielding goes back to England and Aziz also left Chandrapore for the state of Mau, a Hindu state to work as a surgeon there.

Aziz thinks that Fielding has cheated him as he convinced Aziz to let Adela go without paying him the compensation. But now, Fielding would marry Adela, and get the money as dowry. This creates a misunderstanding in the mind of Aziz, and he starts hating Fielding as much as he hates any other English man. Two years pass, and we see Aziz living at Mau with his children. Now, he is a changed man. He does not want to talk about Chandrapore or the Marabar Caves, and to meet Mr. Fielding. He wants to “clear out” (286) all the English people from his nation. We see that the festival of Gokul Ashtami is being celebrated in the Mau. Here, Aziz again meets Fielding who is in Mau as a government officer to inspect the school at Mau. He is with his brother-in-law Ralph and his wife Stella, the children of Mrs. Moore. His wife is not Adela, as Aziz has supposed, but Stella, the daughter of Mrs. Moore. Aziz and Fielding spend some good time together and go for a horse ride. But they part in the end because they feel that they can’t be friends, at least “not yet” (API 288). They reach at the conclusion that they cannot be friends, though it is what they

both want.

This novel is full of different kind of characters, and all the characters have their own specific parts to play. Since the story is set in the pre-independence India, the English characters in the novel constitute the ruling or the colonizer class in the novel and the Indian people are the colonized people. So the Indians are at the subaltern position in the novel. The leading characters of the novel are Aziz, Fielding, Mrs. Moore, Adela, Ronny Heaslop, Mr. Turton, Hamidullah, and Professor Godbole, and each character has his/her own specific qualities. In the novel, there are many British characters, some of which are friendly towards the Indian people and some are not. In the same way there are Indian characters like Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali, who are not very friendly with the British people.

In this novel, we can see how the Indian people are looked down upon by the English people and how they are exploited and ill-treated. Mrs. Moore is a kind lady and treats Aziz very kindly. She is very sympathetic towards Indians and wants to know about them. She never approves the indifferent behavior of his son Ronny towards the Indians. Mr. Fielding, the Principal of the Government College is also a British man, who is sympathetic towards the Indians. He easily becomes a good friend of Aziz and he is the only one who sides with him during the court trial. For his friendship with Aziz, he quarrels with other English people in club.

Ronny Heaslop, the son of Mrs. Moore and the city Magistrate does not share his mother's views about India and Indians, and at the same time does not want to be involved with them. He looks Indians as only his subjects, and not as someone to befriend with. Miss Quested is very enthusiastic about India, and also very curious to know more about India, and accompanies Aziz and Mrs. Moore to the Marabar caves. Dr. Aziz, the protagonist of the novel, comes into contact with many British characters in the novel and he shares different kind of relationships with these characters. Mr. McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police of Chandrapore believes that every Indian is criminal at heart, and he thinks that "another of them found out" (148) when Aziz gets arrested.

The Indians are given a fixed identity and a fixed personality by the English. The English officials do not have a favorable opinion about the Indian. They are considered as careless, lusty, and unable to do any important work which involves responsibility. The Indian doctors cannot treat the English people, as Aziz says to Fielding that he had wished that Mr. Fielding as-well-as

the Civil Surgeon also should be ill, so that Aziz would be called to treat Fielding. And this way, he would be able to meet him for the first time. The Indian judges were not allowed to trial the case of the English people. In the novel, Mr. Das is chosen to take the case between Adela and Aziz, as "...from one point of view—it was good that an Indian was taking the case. Conviction was inevitable; so better let an Indian pronounce it, there would be less fuss in the long run" (191). Thus, the novel truly depicts the harsh conditions of life which the Indians were compelled to face at that time.

The voices of Indians always remain unheard as the English people do not pay much attention to them. The sweepers who begin a strike in favour of Aziz do not matter for the English as they call the sweepers from "the District, who felt less strongly about the innocence of Dr. Aziz..." (API 190). The English are not bothered about the women who start hunger strike. The death of these women "...would make little difference..." (190) as by "...being invisible, they seemed dead already..." (API 190).

The English officials do not treat their Indian employees as human beings having feelings. The way in which the Indian are exploited by the English is explicit by the way the English talk or think about Indians. The way Ronny treats his peon Krishna who was to get some files to Ronny, but could not arrive at time. "Ronny stormed, shouted, howled, and any experienced observer could tell that he was not angry, did not much want the files, and only made a row because it was a custom" (83) not to leave out even a single chance to insult and ill-treat the natives, as Ronny "fined the absent peon eight annas, and sat down to his arrears in the next room" (83). Not only the English officials but their wives also have a derogatory opinion about the natives as Mrs. Callendar says that "the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die." (20)

The opening scene in the chapter 2 is very significant. This scene gives us the idea about the social and political life of the Chandrapore, about the tension in the relationship of the Indians and the English, and also makes explicit the cultural misunderstanding between the two races. It introduces the most important theme of the novel i.e., inter-racial friendship. It also shows the place of the women in the society who are not allowed to live outside the "purdah". In this scene, we meet Dr. Aziz, who reaches to one of his relatives Hamidullah, to have dinner with Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali. In this scene we see a small group of Indians discussing whether it is possible or not to befriend with the British, for an Indian. Everyone has different opinion. Hamidullah says



that it is not possible in India, but in England since there is no barrier between the British and the Indians. The Indians are treated at par with the English people in England, and people from both the races Indian and English can have good relations. But, in India they share the relationship of the ruler and the subject. Here the situation is totally different from that of in England. He gives his own example, and says that he still remembers “cordial welcome at Cambridge.” (6)

Hamidullah gives a very touching account of what harm does this kind of behaviour of English people in India has done to Indians. He has been to England and he still has the reminiscent memories of the time spent at the Cambridge. He recalls the memories of his days spent in Cambridge, and his friends there, the Reverent and Mrs. Bannister. The son of there’s is now in India and Hamidullah wants to meet him, but he is in a fix whether he should meet him or not. He expresses his grief over the situation, saying:

Imagine how I long to see him and to pay his fare that this house may be his home. But it is useless. The other Anglo-Indians will have got hold of him long ago. He will probably think that I want something, and I cannot face that from the son of my friend. Oh, what in this country has gone wrong with everything, Vakil Sahib? I ask you. (API 7)

The other person in the group Mahmoud Ali says that in India, it is almost impossible that an Indian and English man would become friends. He narrates his own personal bitter experience which he had with the British people. He says that “It is impossible here, Aziz!”(API 6)

He is frequently insulted by the City Magistrate of the Chandrapore, Ronny Heaslop at the court. He says that “The red-nosed boy [Ronny Heaslop] has again insulted me in court. I do not blame him. He was told that he ought to insult me. Until lately, he was quite a nice boy, but others have got hold of him.”(6) He recalls that when Ronny Heaslop first reached India, he was a good-natured person, but with the passing of time he started insulting him in the court. Mahmoud Ali opines that the English people are good towards the Indians when they are new to India, but with the passing of time they are taught by their superiors to misbehave with the Indians or may be they themselves get the impression that they are more important than the natives and start misbehaving with them.

Hamidullah also agrees with him and says that the English people come to India “intending

to be gentleman, and are told it will not do” (API 6). He says that “they all become exactly the same – not worse, not better. I give any English man two years, be he Turton or Burton. It is only the difference of a letter. And I give any Englishwoman six months. All are exactly alike” (API 6). This small gathering of Indians tries to find out defects in the English character. They criticize the English people for taking bribes. They say that when any Indian,” we poor blacks take bribes, we performs, and the law discovers us in consequence. The English take and do nothing.”(API 6)

This scene of the novel is very significant as in it the small group of Indians are discussing a very important topic, the possibilities of friendship between the people of two races. And it also tells us a lot about the relations which the Indians and the English people share with each other. We come to know that the Indians don’t like the English. Forster rightly suggests here that the members of a subject race have no other option but to generalize from their experiences and disappointments. It implies that the people from the subject race have no chance to have any interaction with the people of the ruling class. They can have no contact with these people, and there is always a sense of alienation or a lack of confidence between these people. People from both the classes make opinions about each other without knowing each other. Both generalize from their own experiences and disappointments. This point can be exemplified by considering the story of Ronny Heaslop and Mahmoud Ali. As Ronny describes to his mother the incident when he tried to befriend with one of the pleaders, Mahmoud Ali that once he:

...asked one of the pleaders to have a smoke with me – only a cigarette, mind. I found afterwards that he had sent touts all over the bazaar to announce the fact -- told all the litigants, “Oh, you’d better come to my Vakil Mahmoud Ali – he’s in with the City Magistrate.” Ever since then I’ve dropped on him in court as hard as I could. It’s taught me a lesson, and I hope him. (22)

But, Mahmoud Ali has his own version of story. He thinks that “the red-nosed boy” (API 6) i.e., Ronny Heaslop, misbehaves intentionally with the Indian pleaders to humiliate them. Thus, we can see the misunderstandings pervaded between the people of the two races. Ronny knows the Indians by their types as Forster narrates that “...he knew all the types...” (65) and Aziz is “the spoilt westernized” (API 65) for him. Ronny is concerned with the Indian only officially as Forster narrates in the novel that “...the only link he could be conscious of with an Indian was the

official...As private individuals he forgot them.” (65) We can take Ronny as the spokesperson of the English in the novel. Most of the misconceptions about the Indians in the minds of the English people and the derogatory images of the Indians are expressed through Ronny's speeches. He becomes upset when Mrs. Moore talks sympathetically about the doctor whom she met at the mosque. He tries to convince her that there was certainly some wrong intention in the heart of the person whom she met at the mosque. He says:

It's the educated native's latest dodge. They used to cringe, but the younger generation believe in a show of manly independence. They think it will pay better with the itinerant M.P. But whether the native swaggers or cringes there's always something behind every remark he makes, always something, and if nothing else he's trying to increase his izzat – in plain Anglo-Saxon, to score. Of course there are exceptions. (API 26)

He is annoyed about “why hadn't she indicated by the tone of her voice that she was talking about an Indian”? (API 24) He tries to convince his mother saying that “India isn't home.” (API 26) He says to his mother that “We're out here to do justice and keep the peace. Them's my sentiments. India isn't a drawing-room” (API 41). He represents the point of view of the English officials towards the Indians. He is a typical example of the English officers working in India. He believes:

...I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force. I'm not a missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentiment sympathetic literary man. I'm just a servant of the Government...and that's that. We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do.  
(41)

When Aziz is introduced in the novel for the first time, he is untroubled about the English, ruling his country, and who “felt that the English are a comic institution, and he enjoyed being misunderstood by them. But it was an amusement of the emotions and nerves, which an accident or the passage of time might destroy...” (API 44) and this accident does occur, when Adela accuses him of trying to molest her. He has nothing to do with the English people ruling the country as he

is not in any kind of direct contact with the English, except for the Civil Surgeon of the city, Major Callendar.

Not only Mr. Callendar, but his wife also, is not very helpful or friendly towards Aziz. She takes “the gift the gods provide” (API 11) i.e., the tonga for which Aziz pays, without caring for him, and thanking him. Though, Mr. Callendar knows that Aziz is an efficient and dutiful doctor, but he does not miss any chance to humiliate Aziz. He knows “in his heart...that if Aziz and not he had operated last year on Mrs. Graysford’s appendix the old lady would probably have lived. And this did not dispose him any better towards his subordinate” (API 44). He never treats him as a human being, but only as his subordinate who is supposed to obey all his orders. All the English officials are the same. They all think Indians as incapable of doing something important and inferior to themselves.

At many points, he tries to protest against the ill-treatment by the Civil Surgeon. But, he always drops the idea. In the very scene, when he goes to meet the Civil Surgeon, Hamidullah asks him to clean his teeth after pan, but Aziz refuses saying that “...it is an Indian habit to take pan. The Civil Surgeon must put up with it.” (API 10) But on his way to the Civil Surgeon’s residence, he stops to clean his teeth. Aziz has to leave his tonga outside the campus of the residence of the Civil Surgeon, and enters on foot, as it is the way in which the Indians are supposed to go to meet the English officials. He is reminded of one such “case” happened last year—“an Indian gentleman had driven up to an official’s house and been turned back by the servants and told to approach more suitably” (API 11) Aziz finds that the Civil Surgeon has already left for the Club, making a derogatory statement about him, i.e., “Damn Aziz.” (API 12)

He now wants to register his protest against such behaviour of the Civil Surgeon, so he writes a letter to him, but he suddenly changes his mind and tears “the protest up.” (12) Here, Mrs. Callendar steals away his tonga and he has to walk on foot. When he passes through the roads in the Civil Station, named after various English Generals, he feels as if he is entangled in the net of Great Britain. “The roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes” (API 11). In this net, symbolic of the English reign over the India, not only Aziz but the whole India is stuck in this net, only Aziz is experiencing it at this moment. He tells Fielding that the friendship between both the races can be possible, if the English would try to learn few things about the natives. He

says:

Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize it how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope. (API 100)

Aziz is the victim of the exploitative colonial system, and is well aware of the mistreatment which the Indians are compelled to face under the English rule, but he does not want to fight for the freedom of the country, as he tells Fielding:

Oh, kick you out? Why should I trouble over that dirty job? Leave it to the politicians.....No, when I was a student I got excited over your damned countrymen, certainly; but if they'll let me get on with profession, and not be too rude to me officially, I really don't ask for more. (API 142)

But he also, like any other Indian dislikes the English people and English reign over his native country. Aziz often recalls the old days when India was not a colony of England. He likes the reign of the Moguls. He is an expert in the Moghul history and Arabic poetry. In the poetry of Hafiz, Hali and Iqbal, Aziz finds a kind of escape from the colonial India. He finds comfort and shelter in the Arabic and Islamic poetry. When he recites poems of these writers not only to him, but to his Indian listeners also "India seemed one and their own, and they regained their departed greatness by hearing its departure lamented" (API 10).

He often mourns over the loss of the Moghul Empire at the hands of the English. He says to Fielding that "Sometime I shut my eyes and dream I have splendid clothes again and am riding into battle behind Alamgir. Mr. Fielding, must not India have been beautiful then, with the Mogul Empire at its height and Alamgir reigning at Delhi upon the Peacock Throne?" (55) It is very obvious that he does not like the English rule and the way these people treat Indians. But, he becomes friend with Mrs. Moore because she is a benevolent and a good-hearted woman. The class-consciousness never comes in the way of their mutual friendship. And there are so many similarities between the both, Aziz and Mrs. Moore that Aziz says to Mrs. Moore that "...you are an Oriental." (API 17)

Aziz feels proud to have friends in the English community. He tries to maintain his friendship with his English friends, so he organizes a picnic for his English guests to the Marabar Caves. He spends a lot of money on this picnic to make his guests comfortable. He even arranges an elephant which “apparently eats gold” (API 142) for the ride to the Caves for his guest, and he gets a herd of servants for his guests’ comfort. Forster rightly narrates:

Like most Orientals, Aziz overrated hospitality, mistaking it for intimacy, and not seeing that it is tainted with the sense of possession. He loved them [Mr. Fielding and Mrs. Moore] even better than the Hamidullahs, because he had surmounted obstacles to meet them, and this stimulates a generous mind. Their images remained somewhere in his soul up to his dying days, permanent additions. (API 126)

He tries his best to make his English guests comfortable, but after the picnic, Adela falsely accuses him of molesting her. His “amusement of emotions and nerves” (API 44) is destroyed. It brings a big change in his life, and in him.

After this incident, he is not the same Aziz who never used to take the British rule seriously. Now, he starts hating the English people, and he does not want to befriend with any English man, not only with Fielding who sided with him during the trial. In the end of the novel, a transformation occurs in his character, and he discards all kind of connection with the English people, even his friendship with Fielding which he calls "a foolish experiment" (API 261). He starts believing that Indians and the British can never become friends. After the case is trialed in the court and he is acquitted of all the charges, he does not want to live in Chandrapore which is under the British rule. So, he seeks a job in some of the Hindu states which are still under the reign of their respective kings. He goes to the state of Mau to work as a surgeon to the king. “They [the English] had frightened him permanently, and there are only two reactions against fright: to kick and scream on committees, or to retreat to a remote jungle, where the sahib seldom comes.” (API 261) He chooses the second option and retreats to Mau. He says to Hamidullah:

I do want to get away from British India, even to a poor job. I think I could write poetry there. I wish I had lived in Babur’s time and fought and written for him. Gone, gone, and not even any use to say

“Gone, gone,” for it weakens us while we say it . We need a king, Hamidullah; it would make our lives easier. As it is, we must try to appreciate these quaint Hindus. My notion now is to try for some post as doctor in one of their states. (API 238)

In Mau, he does not want to think about Fielding as “it disturbs his life” (API 260). Though, he knows that Fielding has made many sacrifices for him, “it was now all confused with his genuine hatred of the English” (261). He does not want to meet Fielding in the Mau, but when he goes with his children for a walk, he comes upon Fielding and his brother-in-law. Aziz received them with “gentle, yet enthusiastic assent to his words” (API 267) as they are the State guests. Aziz greets them with “a comic salaam; like all Indians, he was skillful in the slighter impertinences. ‘I tremble, I obey,’ the gesture said, and it was not lost upon Fielding” (API 268). The ghost of the Marabar Caves does not leave him even at Mau as “The Criminal Investigation Department kept an eye on Aziz ever since the trial—they had nothing actionable against him, but Indians who have been unfortunate must be watched, and to the end of his life he remained under observation, thanks to Miss Quested’s mistake” (API 262). In Mau, he is changed man. Now, he does not want to meet Fielding or any other Englishman, as he says "I wish no Englishman or Englishwoman to be my friend.” (API 270) He bluntly asks Fielding to leave him alone as he does not want Fielding to be his friend any more. He says:

Don’t trouble me here at Mau is all I ask. I do not want you, I do not want any one of you in my private life, with my dying breath I say it. Yes, yes, I made a foolish blunder; despise me and feel cold...I thought you’d stolen my money, but’...‘it’s as if you stole it. I forgive Mahmoud Ali all things, because he loves me.’ Then posing, while the rain exploded like pistols, he said, ‘My heart is for my people henceforth,’ and turned away. (API 270)

Here in Mau, the situation is different from that of the Chandrapore. Here, "the cleavage was between Brahman and non-Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the running" (API 261). Now, he is no more untroubled about the English rule. He wants to fight for the freedom of India. He wants to take revenge on the English people. He thinks of treating Ralph in the same way in which “Callendar had treated Nureddin” (API 276). He says to Fielding that “clear out, all

you Turtons and Burtons. We wanted to know you ten years back – now it's too late. If we see you and sit on your committees, it's for political reasons, don't you make any mistake" (API 286-287). He opines:

we may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's fifty hundreds years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then'—he rode against him [Fielding] furiously—'and then,' he concluded, half kissing him,—'you and I shall be friends'. (API 288)

He wants to have India such a country where people from all the religions and the sections of the society, would live together without any difference or any misunderstanding. He declares "India shall be a nation! No foreigner of any sort! Hindus and Moslems and Sikh and all shall be one!" (287) He says to Fielding that they can be friends only when the India will become a free country and the Indians and the English would be equals. He does not to establish friendship or any kind of relation with the English people. He does not want to start again the cycle of "Mosque, caves, mosque, caves" (API 278). Fielding also is changed. He is married to the Ronny Heaslop's sister, and now he "felt surprise at his own past heroism. Would he today defy all his own people for the sake of a stray Indian? Aziz was a memento, a trophy, they were proud of each other, yet they must inevitably part." (API 285)

The cultural conflicts or the cultural difference is also an important factor responsible for creating misunderstanding between the two classes. "Differing cultural ideas and expectations regarding hospitality, social proprieties, and the role of religion in daily life are responsible for misunderstandings between the English and the Muslim Indians, the English and the Hindu Indians, and between the Muslims and Hindus." <sup>5</sup> As Aziz expresses his grief over the situation saying that "If I'm biking in English dress—starch collar, hat with ditch—they take no notice. When I wear a fez, they cry, "Your lamp's out!" Lord Curzon did not consider this when he urged natives of India to retain their picturesque costumes" (API 55).

The English people have no trust over the Indian. They always have a low opinion of them. Ronny becomes upset when he sees Adela smoking with Aziz and professor Godbole. He says "Well . . . I'm the sun-dried bureaucrat, no doubt; still I don't like to see an English girl left



smoking with two Indians” (API 66). The novel *A Passage to India* represent “a modern sensibility about the impasse of representation is brought to the impossibility of configuring a distant, alien culture invaded by empire, and its story of an unconsummated journey mimics the arrest of imperialism’s vaunting trajectory” (117) as Parry says in "Signs of empire in metropolitan fiction." On the other hand, we can see differences between the Hindus and Muslims in the novel. Aziz describes the Hindus to Mrs. Moore and Adela:

Slack Hindus – they have no idea of society: I know them very well because of a doctor at the hospital. Such a slack unpunctual fellow! It is as well you did not go to their house, for it would give you a wrong idea of India. Nothing sanitary. I think for my own part they grew ashamed of their house and that is why they did not send. (API 58)

He works in Mau which is a Hindu State, but even though, he knows “nothing at all the religion here” (API 269) as he never tries to learn about their religion. He says to Fielding that “living with them [the Hindus] teaches me no more. When I think I annoy them, I do not. When I think I don’t annoy them, I do.” (API 285)

This novel truly depicts the kind of life which the women are compelled to live in a colonized and a male-dominated society. They are supposed to live in purdah and are not allowed to be active socially. Hamidullah Begum, though she is a distant aunt of Aziz, is allowed to meet him in purdah only. She is not supposed to join the guests at her own house as women are not supposed to be seen by the males of the society without purdah, even if the guests are her relatives. She wants to talk to Aziz about his marriage. She gives an example of a woman who belongs to a noble family and who is unmarried at the age of thirty. Hamidullah Begum says that the woman would probably “die unwed, for no one would have her now”(API 9). Aziz’s wife is dead, and he has two sons and one daughter, and he can still get married according to the social norms. Society allows a widow man with three children to remarry, but an unmarried girl cannot get a husband because she is over-aged for marriage. This example clearly states how the male dominated society discriminates between and makes different rules for male and female. The females are considered as only the sub-ordinate to the males.

Through the description of the married life of Aziz, Forster narrates the bad effects of the

traditional Indian institution of marriage, where a woman is married to someone whom she does not love, even have not met in life without taking their consent as their consent did not matter. Aziz remembers his married life that they were married without any love for each-other. He recalls his married life that "...he disliked union with a woman whom he had never seen; moreover, when he did see her, she disappointed him, and he begat his first child in mere animality" (API 45). And, after so many years of her death "...he desired to remember his wife and could not. Why could he remember people whom he did not love?" (46) Aziz introduces his dead wife to Fielding saying that he would see her because he would introduce Fielding to her as his brother, as Forster has described that "The lady faced the world at her husband's wish and her own, but now bewildering she found the echoing contradictory world!" (API 101)

The Indian dislike the English women more than the English men. Though, Mahmoud Ali cites some examples of the occasional kindness of some English ladies, but Hamidullah says that all these examples are just the exceptions and "the average woman is like Mrs. Turton"(API 8). The English ladies also dislike the Indian women. They consider all the Indians not trustworthy as they were inferior to the English people. So the English women did not want any kind of interaction with the Indians. As, Fielding observes in the novel that "...it is possible to keep in with Indians and Englishmen, but that who would keep in with Englishwomen must drop the Indians. The two wouldn't combine." (52)

The English ladies dislike not only the Indian males, but the Indian ladies also. They think them as the "purdah women" (33) only with whom they did not want any kind of interaction. They think them inferior to themselves as indicated by Mrs. Turton's dialogue to Mrs. Moore and Adela while introducing with the Indian ladies at the party that "you are superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to anyone in India except one or two of the ranis, and they're on an equality" (API 33). The standard of the ladies was not very high in the then society. They were considered inferior to the men. The decisions of their life were taken by others for them. The Indian society was very orthodox and a male-dominated society. The women were supposed to live in the purdah. They were not to be seen publically, and not to talk to the men freely. But, the English society was an open and free society than the Indian society. The English ladies had some rights, and their condition was better than the Indian ladies. They could be active socially. The Indian males "...envied the easy intercourse that is only possible in a nation whose women are free." (API 275)

In this novel, there is one more character that is unforgettable i.e., Mohammed Latif. He is addressed as “the poor relation” (10) constantly in the novel. He is introduced in the novel as “a distant cousin of the house, Mohammed Latif,” (9) who:

...occupied the position of neither of a servant nor of an equal. He did not speak unless spoken to, and since no one spoke kept unoffended silence...So long as someone of his relatives had a house he was sure of a home, and it was unlikely that so large a family would all go bankrupt. His wife led a similar existence some hundreds of miles away – he did not visit her, owing to the expense of the railway ticket.(API 9)

He is constantly ill-treated by his own people, as he is poor and is dependent on his family for his living, and his family members misbehave with him. Aziz constantly plays practical jokes on him to amuse his English guests on the picnic which annoys Fielding. In the last chapter also, he is present there to be made fun of by the children of Aziz.

The novel truly depicts the difficulties and the tension in the relationship of the Indians and the English. The English people have a fixed image of the Indians in their mind, and look at them with suspicion. Mr. Turton thinks that the Nawab Bahadur has come to the bridge party for the contract and "to get the right side of me [Mr. Turton] for the Mohurram, and he's the astrologer who wants to dodge the municipal building regulations..." (API 33). Ronny also at one point in the novel says that "For every servant I've got is a spy'...They all hate us" (API 181). The English are at the position of the rulers, and the Indians are the people who are being ruled by the English. Though, some Indians are the government servants, and a part of the governing body. But, even these Indians are also constantly ill-treated by the English. The Indian people are presented in a certain manner by the English. The Indians are given a certain "subaltern identity" by the English people. The English think Indians as sycophant, lusty and weak. Thus, the Indians are given a fixed image, and Indians constantly struggle against this subaltern image and the subaltern identity. The novel *A Passage to India* depicts the struggle of the colonized people against this identity.

The last scene of the novel is very significant, as it carries the message of the Forster. Here we can see the desire to maintain the friendship, and also the helplessness of Aziz and Fielding to continue it. In this scene, Aziz and Fielding go for their last ride together as friends. They talk on

many subjects including politics, Marabar Caves, the Hindu festival of Gokul Ashtami for the time as friends. They are aware of the fact that they are having this friendly talk for the last time. They both know that they cannot continue their friendship because they belong to different races and nations, and they have to return to their people in the last. In the end of the novel, Forster suggests that mutual understanding or the friendship between the two races is not possible, until the Indians would not drive "every blasted Englishman into the sea" (API 288).

The separation occurs in the last scene when Aziz and Fielding part while they both want to maintain their friendship. But, both belong to different cultures, nations, and races. And, there is no possibility of any friendship or any interaction between these two races. As it is depicted in the novel:

...the horse 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 come into view...they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.' (API 288)

This novel shows the racial, social and political biases against the Indians in the hearts of the English people. The two races can never come close until they have biases against each-other. The novel "revolves around the theme of cultural understanding and friendship beyond governments and politics. Forster attempts to show how people of different races can understand each-other despite their differences through Mrs. Moore's relationship with Aziz and the Fielding-Aziz friendship" (Nayar 305). But, at the end of the day, Fielding and Aziz are the members of two different races that can never live together in harmony.

The novel raises "the issue of reconciliation in order to confound it: "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet", as Kipling would say ("The Ballad of East and West")...Aziz, Miss Quested and Fielding also retain their national characteristics and must go their separate ways. There is an element of reconciliation behind Forster's interpretation of the Mutiny as an hysteria capable of occurring in either culture but he affords no compromise or

resolution.<sup>6</sup>

There are cultural, social and political differences between the two races which create a wide gulf of misunderstanding between the two races. And, there is no bridge over this gulf where the two races can meet. India always remains a "muddle" (API 58) for the English people. As Forster rightly narrates in the novel that there is "...a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be thrown apprehended except when it is unattainable." (API 281) "The final image presented by the novel is not one of union but of separation. Individuals may be reconciled to each other, but the gap between cultures remains unbridgeable, at least for the time being."<sup>7</sup> Banita Parry in her essay "Materiality and Mystification in *A Passage to India*" quotes Edward Said to call the ending of the novel "a paralyzed gesture of aesthetic powerlessness" where "Forster notes and confirms the history behind a political conflict between Dr. Aziz and Fielding—Britain's subjugation of India—and yet can neither recommend decolonization nor continued colonization." (174)

"Forster's novel *A Passage to India* portrays a colonial India under British rule, before its liberation. For convenience's sake, Western civilization has created an Other as counterpart to itself, and a set of characteristics to go with it. An 'us versus them' attitude is exemplified in Forster's representation of The Other."<sup>8</sup>

The native people have to suffer due to the creation of their image as the Other. They have to face many difficulties and miseries as they are looked down upon as inferior and unable to govern. The Indian people are the victim of this exploitative system of colonialism. They have to face all the ill-treatment by the English people because they belong to a certain race. There are many racial biases at work against them. They are not considered equals to the English people, and are treated as the second class people in their own native place.

### End Notes

1. *A Passage to India*: Introduction. "Novels for Students." Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol.3. Detroit: Gale, 1998. Enotes.com. January 2006. Web. 20<sup>th</sup> June 2010. <<http://www.enotes.com/passage-to-india/introduction>>.
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3. *ibid.*
4. *A Passage to India*. novelguide.com. web. 27<sup>th</sup> July 2010. <<http://www.novelguide.com/APassagetoIndia/novelsummary.html>>
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6. "Colonial Representations of India in Prose Fiction." 123helpme.com. web. 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010. <<http://www.123helpme.com/view.asp?Id=38735>>.

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