

Colonial Dilemma in Forester's *A Passage to India*: Shall the Twain Ever Meet?

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ABSTRACT

E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) continues to fascinate readers and scholars alike with its subtle exploration of colonialism, cultural difference, and the complexities of human relationships. Through the lens of Franz Fanon's notion of psychopathic politics of colonialism, and Edward Said's notions of cultural imperialism and Orientalism, the paper offers a contemporary re-examination of the novel's representation of colonial anxiety, situated within the broader context of Britain's imperial legacy and ongoing debates about colonialism's enduring impact on postcolonial societies. The novel centers on a poignant philosophical inquiry: Can an Englishman and an Oriental, particularly an Indian, ever form a meaningful friendship within a complex web of colonial context? Through a close reading of the text, this study explores the literary tropes and narrative structures that capture the tensions and contradictions inherent in colonial relationships, as well as the ways in which these tensions are refracted through the experiences of individual characters. By exposing Adela Quested's and Mr. Fielding's colonial idealism and cultural biases, the paper demonstrates how *A Passage to India* remains an enduring representational narrative of colonial fetishization and its Orientalist discourse that is still resonating in the contemporary discourse of globalization and Americanization interventions.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, colonial anxiety, E.M. Forster, Orientalism, psycho-political theory.

المعضلة الاستعمارية في كتاب فورستر ممر إلى الهند: هل سيلتقي التوأم؟

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وزارة التربية / مديرية تربية ذي قار

المخلص

لا يزال كتاب إي إم فورستر "ممر إلى الهند" (١٩٢٤) يفتن القراء والعلماء على حدٍ سواء من خلال استكشافه الدقيق للاستعمار والاختلاف الثقافي وتعقيدات العلاقات الإنسانية. من خلال عدسة فكرة فرانز فانون عن السياسات السيكوباتية للاستعمار، ومفاهيم إدوارد سعيد عن الإمبريالية الثقافية والاستشراق، تقدم الورقة إعادة فحص معاصرة لتمثيل الرواية للقلق الاستعماري، الواقع ضمن السياق الأوسع للإرث الإمبراطوري البريطاني والسياسة المستمرة. مناقشات حول التأثير الدائم للاستعمار على مجتمعات ما بعد الاستعمار. تركز الرواية على سؤال فلسفي مؤثر: هل يمكن لرجل إنجليزي شرقي، وخاصة الهندي، أن يشكل صداقة ذات معنى ضمن شبكة معقدة من السياق الاستعماري؟ من خلال قراءة متأنية للنص، تستكشف هذه الدراسة الاستعارات الأدبية والهياكل السردية التي تجسد التوترات والتناقضات الكامنة في العلاقات الاستعمارية، وكذلك الطرق التي تتكسر بها هذه التوترات من خلال تجارب الشخصيات الفردية. من خلال فضح المثالية الاستعمارية والتحيزات الثقافية لأديلا كويستد والسيد فيلدنج، توضح الورقة كيف يظل الممر إلى الهند سرًا تمثيليًا دائمًا للفتنة الاستعمارية وخطابها الاستشراقي الذي لا يزال يتردد صده في الخطاب المعاصر للعولمة وتدخلات الأمريكية. الكلمات المفتاحية: ما بعد الاستعمار، القلق الاستعماري، إي إم فورستر، الاستشراق، النظرية النفسية السياسية.

Introduction

Any scholarly inquiry into E.M. Forster's seminal work *A Passage to India* (1924) will be rendered incomplete without a due consideration of its multifaceted representation and subtle exploration of colonialism, identity, and cultural difference. Despite its enduring popularity and critical acclaim, the novel's depiction of colonialism has been subject to varying interpretations. This paper aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation by offering a Fanonian–Saidian reading of Forster's colonial

dilemma in the novel, and the failure of the Indian and British characters to forge a meaningful friendship.

Set against the backdrop of British colonial rule in India during the early 20th century, *A Passage to India* underpins the idea of "colonial anxiety" represented in the Britishers' contradictory behavior, muddling experience and the sense of unease when encountering unfamiliar cultural Indian norms. This anxiety can manifest itself in various ways, including through feelings of superiority or inferiority, confusion or frustration, or even outright hostility or aggression.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The concept of colonial anxiety is at heart of colonial project. To undergird their imperial enterprise, the British, as Lisa Lowe (2015, p.7) explained, intersected class, race and gender to demarcate the "boundaries of the human", from the "non-human" who are "unfit for liberty" or "incapable of civilization", and thus beyond human rights and freedoms.

For Fanon, colonial anxiety is a key factor in perpetuating colonialism, as it leads to feelings of superiority and dominance among colonizers (Fanon, 1986). To justify its colonial anxiety and imperial fetishism, the British imperial project tethered to displacing its brutalities onto this "zone of non-being", (p.10). Consequently, peoples, culture and histories inhabiting this zone have to be coerced to erasures either by cultural assimilation or segregated subjectivity of exclusion. Fischer-Tiné, H. (2016, p.1) aptly observes that "the history of colonial empires has been shaped to a considerable extent by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and embarrassment, as well as by the regular occurrence of panics".

Fanon and Said critical writings cultivated an anti-imperial perspective among an entire generation of Western scholars. Said

(1978) discusses examines as a struggle over territory, mediated through knowledge /power constellation machinery. Orientalism is a "Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p.3). This Orientalist episteme is employed to construct Europe's inferior dark Other, which specifically refers to racialized ideas of savagery and barbarity. These notions have frequently been used to demonize and, subsequently, rationalize the use of force to dominate and control the entire nation. Said argued that colonialism is not merely a historical phenomenon but an ongoing process that continues to shape global power dynamics and relationships. Hence, the paranoid colonial self is the result of anxiety and fetishism constructed by the imperialist drive and perception of non-Western peoples and cultures as savage, irrational, exotic and inferior (Said, 1994). The desire to control and exercise power and dominance over other people, economies and territories was tethered by the fear of this "Other". This led to a heinous atrocity against the natives under the pretext of security measures to counter the imagined threats posed by the "Other".

In the same line of thought, Fanon analyzes the isolating impact of imperialist colonization, which institutionalizes a dehumanized condition for non-Western people and justifies colonial domination. In (2004), he examines the psychological effects of racial inequality and colonization. His theory posits that Black individuals were denied full phenomenological development due to their experiences being shaped by a super-ego tainted by White domination. The pervasive nature of White racism created an inferiority complex within the Black psyche, leading to a fundamental distortion of Black consciousness and identity, even in efforts to transcend it. Fanon argued that colonialism is "a systematized negation of the other," and a machine of "naked violence"

that “forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: Who am I in reality?” (2004, p.23, p.182)

Building upon these theoretical underpinnings, the present paper explores *A Passage to India's* relevance to contemporary debates about colonialism, imperialism, and globalization, as well as the American hegemonic cultural homogeneity that markets global imaginaries and values without acknowledging the cultural relativism of other societies. This phenomenon is driven by an ingrained epistemic and psychic anxiety among both past and present colonizers, who view the "other" as unequal to them. Adela's character exemplifies this colonial anxiety and the contradictions inherent in the colonial psyche. Throughout the novel, the colonial encounter is characterized by a perpetual state of paranoia, in which both colonizers and the colonized are trapped in a cycle of suspicion and mistrust. This paranoia is perpetuated through the establishment of structures of alienation, misrecognition, and phantasmatic desire, ultimately leading to the maintenance of colonial domination over the colonized.

British Raj in India

The British Raj refers to period of direct British rule over the Indian subcontinent that extended from 1858, following the dissolution of the East India Company, until 1947, with the independence of India and Pakistan. This colonial period was characterized by a centralized administration rule and a hierarchal racial ideology that reinforced notions of racial superiority of the Britishers and justified their imperial dominance over Indians, whereby India was manifested as a symbol of imperial possession. (Parry, 1972, p.9)

The British Raj in India is often cited as one of the longest, most brutal, racist, imperialist projects in the history of nations. The British not only subjugated the Indian people and economy, but also exploited them to

fuel their imperial ambitions and colonial expansions in other territories and nations across Asia and Africa. According to Gopal (1967), under the devastating British imperial rule, "India was made to serve as the supplier of raw materials to Britain's new industries and as the market for her manufactured goods." (Gopal, 1967, p.7)

In addition to its the imperial onslaught of Indian land and economy, the British colonial experience was associated with profound cultural distortions, epistemological misrepresentation and social segregation of Indian identity. In all its way, Europeans colonizers consistently justified their colonial interventions with the assumptions of the "Whiteman's burden" and "civilizing mission". As stated by Parry (1972), "British rule over India in the late nineteenth century took on the ideology of an Anglo-Saxon mission to the dark peoples of the globe" (p.2). This self-assured righteousness and sense of noble mission were rooted in their belief in racial supremacy, paving the way for their imperialist project as a destined burden to save the so-called "Other" nations. James F. Stephen (1883), served as a Legal Member of the Civil Service Council in India 1869 and 1872, emphasized this view when he declared that "our government implies at every point the superiority of the conquering race" and to introduce "European civilization into a country ... indifferent to most of what we regard as the evils of life" (p.566). Recurring Stephen's ideas, Sir John Strachey stated that " we [...] are the representatives of a belligerent civilization which has to wage constant warfare against strange barbarisms, horrid customs and cruel superstitions, ancient survivals" so, "the foundations of our power do not rest on the interested approval of the noisy few but on justice and on the contentment of the silent millions" (1888, p.432). Writing on his thirty years in India, the British officer and a member of Western Education Mission in the 1880s, Sir Richard Temple stated that the object of

British rule was to mould "the character as well as the intellect" of the Indian. (1882, p.494)

Consequently, the British Raj in India was driven by this colonial ideology that constructed a perceived stereotypical image of Indians as an ignorant and backward race, in need of Whiteman's control. Their perception of India was fundamentally flawed, since as "once people are segregated because of race, class or religion," Parry argued "delusions and fantasies about each other will grow rampant". (1972, p.3). Explaining the racial superiority of the British officials, Philip Woodruff claimed that "The English Guardians certainly believed there was something in their composition that distinguished them from the people they ruled". (Vol. 2, p.76)

Based on this moral ground, during Indian uprising against the British rule, the British officer, Calcraft–Kennedy, reminded his government of their ultimate role: "Our mission is a high and holy mission. We are here to govern India as delegates ... of Christ and Caesar to maintain this land against Shiva and Khalifa. ... We shall maintain the directorate and the chief executive in our own hands" (Carhill, 1924, p.236)

Colonial Episteme in *A Passage to India*

The episteme is described by Foucault as "a world–view", a "total set of relations that unite ... the discursive practices that give rise to ... formalized systems" (1972, p.191). Located within this broad perspective, the concept of colonial episteme refers to the set of constructed images and discursive system of knowledge produced by the colonial powers to subsequently establish a hierarchical world–view that classified the colonizer as superior to the colonized. As argued by Said, colonial experience is based on "a style of thinking centered on the epistemological and ontological difference between the “East” and the “West,” as well as a scholarly discourse (Said, 1978, p. 2).

The colonizers framed their conceptually constructed knowledge of the "Other" through the imposition of their own language, customs, and values onto colonized societies, often erasing or suppressing indigenous ways of knowing (Fanon, 1961). Othering, then, is the result of this discursive epistemological process in which individuals are classified as a dominant in-group (Us, the Self) and dominated out-groups ("them", Other) by stigmatizing a difference—real or imagined—presented as a negation of identity (Staszak, 2008, p.2). As for Crang (1998, p. 61), othering is a “a process ... through which identities are established in an unequal relationship.” Constructed on racial and stereotypical distinction, the concept of the "othering" is a colonial tool of distorting the reality of the colonized and perpetuating colonial domination.

A Passage to India is infused with an ideology of superiority that reinforces damaging stereotypes about India, its people, and its culture. Forster views Indian characters through a colonial and simplistic lens. As a manifestation, Mrs. Turton's reminds Mrs. Moore of her superiority: "You're superior to them anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India" (p.33). Mrs. Callender and Mrs. Lesley take Aziz's "tonga", arrogantly considering it their right to "Take the gifts the gods provide, anyhow" (p.10). Mrs. Callendar believes that "the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die" (p.19), not to make him a bridge party. Mr. Ronny Heaslop insists that "India isn't home" (p.25).

In Forster's novel, the Indian is always the Other. Ronny's speech is representative of the colonial episteme. He does not "want an English lass in the company with two Indians smoking" (p.66). He thinks that Aziz can never be friendly, simply because "he is a creature, good for nothing" (p.53). Aziz is relegated by the British colonists as a social pariah and a pampered Westerner who aspires for the Whiteman's friendship in order to be recognized as a man. Major Callendar calls

Indians "Hogs", and laughs at Nureddin's complexion and face (pp.203–204). At Bridge party, Mr. and Mrs. Turton humiliating and ridiculing the Purdah women (p.47). The alleged rape of Miss Quested proves Fanon's (1986) view of scapegoat for the Collector to urge the white for the good old days where he used to satisfy his own honor without any questions asked afterward.

India is seen by the British colonizers as a dark and mysterious muddle, a space and a place of “massive incomprehensibility” (Said, 1994, p.202), or in Bhabha's words, the “otherness which is at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity” (1994, p.96). The British colonizers attempted to appropriate Indian people and landscape by naming and organizing the Indian space in their own way, they cast their textual and cultural conventions on it.

The topography serves a symbolic significance in the novel, showcasing the epistemic gaze of the British colonizers and their constructed view of the Indians. The colonialists significantly depend on "the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness" (Bhabha, 1994, p.94). Forster's portrayal of the imaginary Indian town of Chandrapore is bleak and insulting. The city of Chandrapore crystalizes the entirety of India's landscape and identity as a whole in the British epistemological gaze. The Indian–inhabited side of the city is "So abased, so monotonous is everything that meets the eye ..." while "the Civil Station" created by the British "has nothing hideous in it, and . . . the view is beautiful" (pp.31–32). Mrs Moore's ironical talk with the wasp reveals the underlying constructed epistemic image of the Indian identity: "...no Indian animal has any sense of an interior. Bats, rats, birds, insects will as soon nest inside a house as out; it is to them a normal growth of the eternal jungle, which alternately produces houses trees, houses trees". (p.35)

This epistemic ferocity is exemplified in the dialogue between Aziz, Mr Fielding, Adela, Mrs Moore, about India as a muddle (p.86). They resort to epistemic violence of labeling it as a “mystery” and a “muddle” because it resists their appropriation strategies. Another example is the ironically constructed label of "The Bridge Party". Though declared to be an event for bridging the gap between the British and the “friendly Indians” (p. 62), it turns to be actually a means for the British to exercise their power and superiority over the Indians.

Adela's romanticized notions of the "exotic" and "oriental" India represents the colonialist orientalist constructed knowledge that is based on cultural biases and preconceptions. Aziz's cultural identity stands in stark contrast with Adela's. Aziz's identity is rooted in his truthful representation of the rich cultural heritage and genuine and open naturalness. Aziz's character can be construed as a subversion of the Western stereotypical episteme and Eurocentric view. Adela's desire of knowing "real India" is actually found in Aziz's character and the mutual understanding, while the muddle is revealed to be Adela's colonial dilemma.

Colonial Anxiety in *A Passage to India*

Forster's *A Passage to India* offers a valuable source for examining the complex psychological dynamics of colonialism. By delving into the intricate social and political relationships between British and Indian characters, the novel exposes the inner workings of the British colonial psyche as well as the entrenched preconceptions and psycho-political power structures that perpetuate the colonial project.

Colonial endeavors are engrained on the paradoxical positionality of racial superiority and colonial anxiety. According to (Fischer-Tiné, 2016, p.1), “the history of colonial empires has been shaped to a considerable extent by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and embarrassment,

as well as by the regular occurrence of panics". Anxiety grows as a result of "an inherent tension, a feeling of threat, because one's identity depends on recognition by the other" (Sarup, 1993, p.13). In the novel, this tension stems from the British's attempt to assert their identity as superior. This evident during the Bridge Party wherein Mrs. Turton feels threatened by the fluency of the Indian women's conversation with her: "Her manner had grown more distant since she had discovered that some of the group was westernized, and might apply her own standards to her" (p.42). Under the fear of losing superiority gaze of the Other, she resorts to recalling the superego of dominant self. Mrs. Turton's statement reverberates the words of an Anglo-Indian lady, who once warned a visitor to India during the British Raj: "You'll never understand the dark and tortuous minds of the natives . . . and if you do I shan't like you – you won't be health." (Ackerley, 1952, pp. 23–4)

The Malabar Caves episodes serves as a prism for exploring impact of phenomenological landscape colonial British psyche. These episodes highlight the Lacanian concept of "personality phenomenology" as an articulate reflection of Adela's, and in extension, Englishmen's simultaneously conscious act of delusion and unconscious lived experience, as well as manifestations of psychical tensions of the imposed relations. The paranoid colonialist knowledge, represented in Adela's first accusing Aziz of sexual harassment, and later in clearing him of this charge, exposes the colonial panic when encountering reality. Adela's accusation of Aziz is seen as an assertion of colonial power over the Other, but this act is soon withdrawn for fear of losing her status and dignity as a superior master being molested by the Other. Furthermore, the Caves defy identification. So, any "the visitor" to them will be "uncertain" and "finds it difficult to discuss the caves" (p.124). The Caves become a muddle, resisting any appropriation. For Indians, the

Caves are a symbol of their identity that transcends binary logic of Western metaphysics; for the British, the Caves represent the threatening Other, that which is mysterious and inexplicable. The echo in the Caves symbolizes the uninterpretable, the durable resistance to any identification or classification moment. Forster describes the "Bourn, ouboum" as "the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it" (p.147). Elliott (2005) argued that "the Marabar Caves is the central psychological symbol of the narrative, representing what Jung calls the collective unconscious" (p.2).

In psychopathic terms, the echo represents the repressed feelings of guilt and inertia. Adela and Mrs Moore keep hearing the echo even after leaving the caves is symptomatic of "All the fragments of repressed material—desires, memories" as "the unconscious speaks to us through symptoms" (Britton,2008, p.201). The inflicted delusion on Adela's psyche caused by the echo represents the colonial dilemma in India. She starts objectifying and idealizing the concept of "India". What caused Adela's hallucinations is the psychic disparity between her constructed vision of the Orient's licentiousness, and Aziz's innocence and gentleness, in contrast to her Ronny's vicious behavior. According to Clubb (1963), the Caves episode epitomizes the colonial anxiety in sexually Lacanian terms. By sexualizing Aziz, Adela consciously rejects Ronny, and subconsciously desires Aziz whereby the "conflict is set up between the conscious and the subconscious minds" (p.192), between a conscious superiority of assault and the subconscious intimidation of accepting a relationship.

Located within Fanon's psycho-political theory of colonialism, Adela expediently projects her experience in the Caves onto Aziz as "the racially Other", (Chandler, 2006, p. 369). Furthermore, McBryde's psyche in Aziz's trial reveals the psycho-political anxiety of the colonists

and their phobia and ambivalence (Fanon, 1986). This is evident with the English justice structure that relies on racial edifice rather than evidences. For a local Indian to set free and guiltless is a threatening act to the colonial presence.

Adela's allegation can also be interpreted as a suppressed revenge against Aziz's objections to her approval of Akbar's new religion. She feels in Aziz's rejection a threat to her exercise of power. So, he has to be silenced. In her superconscious knowledge, the Other must abide by their masters. So, Aziz's protest is seen as a sign of social ascendancy. This psychological colonial anxiety is reverberated at him during the trial by McBryde, the police superintendent, who proclaims that "the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but not *vice versa*" (pp.218–219).

The colonial politico–psychological dilemma in the novel is best articulated by Parry in the following words: "Many of the British ideas and images of India suggest that Indians were feared not only as subjects who had once rebelled" and who could do so again, but as pervers threatening to invade and seduce the white world." (1972, p.4).

The muddling encounter: Shall the twain ever meet?

Forster's *A Passage to India* thematically reproduces Kipling's infamous refrain: "East is East and West is West and the two shall never meet". Indeed, the novel's poses a fundamental question: is it feasible for an Englishman and an Indian to forge a genuine friendship, particularly within the context of British colonialism? This inquiry serves as a framework for exploring the broader issue of Britain's political dominance in India through the personally poignant relationship between Aziz and Fielding. The question itself is reflective of the colonial dilemma, as it highlights the difficulties of bridging the cultural divide between two societies with fundamentally different values and experiences.

The novel explores the unlikely friendship formed under colonialism and racial discrimination. It begins with "Mosque", and ends with "Temple", showcasing the distinct nature of Indian culture and society. The Malabar Caves symbolize the cultural encounter between the spiritual East in contrast to the material West. The novel reflects the psychopathic nature of the British colonizers in both personal and collective consciousness. Forester's attempt to create a compromise space between the two poles fails, as the momentary suspended act of forgetting the entrenched notions of racial superiority and colonial supremacy is buried in the unconscious foil of the British colonizers, who pessimistically reject the possibility of tolerance and disavow the belief in compromise. All the attempts to create a negotiable interlocutor space are overshadowed by cultural misperceptions and ideological predetermination.

What the novel conveys is that any liberal intellectual inquiry that encourages East-West accommodation will fail as long as institutionalized negation of the "Other" is still prevalent. The "bridge-parties" prove to be a failure. The fragile relationship between Aziz and Mrs. Moore, Adela, and Mr. Fielding collapses. Aziz-Fielding's "conversations went awry" (p.274) because "something racial intruded" (p.260). Eventually, Aziz's desire to crave some sort of friendship collides with Fielding's instinctively patronizing tone "the scale, the scale. You always get the scale wrong, my dear fellow" (p.99). Mrs. Moore's attempts to bridge the cultural divide are ultimately unsuccessful due to her own limited understanding of Indian culture and her inability to transcend her own biases.

The discursive view of the relationship of the British and the Indians shows a colonial suppression of any cultural tolerance or intellectual curiosity. They build their intellectual episteme on cultural divide and

social supremacy of master–slave, superior–inferior, subject–object, civilized–savage, and ruler–ruled dichotomy, therefore, "social intimacy is taboo" (Parry, 1972, p.273). The estrangement of Indian life, people and environment is suggestive in this regard: It is "a muddle" (p.69), and "a poisonous country" (p.171).

Forester projects in Indian context a possible experience for a successful East–West twain meeting, due to ambivalent social structure and disinterested political temperament. Unlike, the colonial experience in Egypt where "clean sands ... seemed to wipe off everything that was difficult or equivocal" (p.265), India appears "the strangest experience of all". (p. 282)

Aziz's poignant outburst at the end of the novel reinforces the idea that "the two shan't never meet" as long as the colonizer is still occupying the land and othering the people. He verbalizes the colonized–colonizer relationship, stating that only when "we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea," then "you and I shall be friends" (p.322). Not only Indian people shows resistance to the colonizers' appropriation, but also Indian nature and landscape: "the horses didn't want it – they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which the riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House... they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.'" (p.322)

Colonial mindset rejects tolerance and equity, whereby the "Other" can't be in equal position or friendly relation with the "Self". This colonial discriminatory and dividing mentality is reinforced in the novel through the depiction of the geography of Chandrapore, which is divided into two distinct parts: the Indian–inhabited side of the city is "So abased, so monotonous is everything that meets the eye ..." while "the Civil Station"

created by the British "has nothing hideous in it, and . . . the view is beautiful" (pp.31–32). The formless landscape and architecture of Indian life and environment mirror the ontological confusion and cultural disparity that characterized the British colonial experience in India. It also subverts the colonial propensity to reduce complex cultural realities to simplistic binary oppositions, such as civilization vs. savagery or East vs. West the colonial enterprise's to (Parry, 1995). Commenting on this conflictual relationship, Forster reported Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1914) as saying: "The barrier on both sides of incomprehension is almost impassable. I feel this incomprehension very strongly myself" (p.137)

The novel begins with a question: can the English and Indian races be friends? The answer appears at the end no, "No, not yet." Forster's question finds echo in the twenty-first century Anglo-American interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and recently in Gaza, with an ultimate message that nature and culture resisted, are resisting, and will be resisting foreign element or force, regardless of its form, time and power.

Conclusion

The paper presents a re-reading of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, and its relevance to contemporary narrative history in light of Edward Said's and Frantz Fanon's theoretical perspectives. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Said's and Fanon's theories, the study reveals that Forster's *A Passage to India* is a typified text of colonial fetishization of authority and erasure of native agency. The study aims to explain the novel's fundamental question, which appears relevant to present-day scenarios: can British and Indians be friends in a colonial context?

Aziz's words and nature's response at the end of the novel "No, not, yet" illustrate why this is not possible rather than providing a definite answer

to the question. As such, Aziz–Fielding friendship proves a failure due to the entrenched colonialist and orientalist mindset. Adela's desire to see the "real India" is eclipsed by her preconceived knowledge, while Mrs. Moore's empathy is thwarted by her paranoid egotism.

Interestingly, the novel is thematically structured on binary oppositions: Adela–Mrs. Moore, Aziz–Fielding, civil – savage sides of the city, English–Indian, superior–inferior, etc., which highlights the impossibility of the twain to meet in Western mentality. This epistemic divide creates a psychic chasm, which gets correlated in the physical. Marabar Caves encounter showcases the failure to establish a friendly relationship between an "out-of-home" settler with an "in-home" native. Adela's description of the Caves as dark and exotic reflects her constructed imaginary about what India is. Her accusation of Aziz is a result of her colonial anxiety. She perceives the Indian nature (the Caves) as a threat and finds her superiority at stake. On the other hand, Aziz and Malabar Caves represent the real Indian identity and culture, that defy British appropriation policy.

The Britishers' segregated social policy, dichotomous architecture of geography, racialized language supported by epistemic construction of Indian nature and culture buttresses the cultural divide, and leaves no room for the twain to meet. Subsequently, the paper subverts the Eurocentric colonial claim of civilizational mission and rational supremacy over the Orient through exploring exposing the colonial physical and linguistic violence against Indian place and space. The critical investigation of the novel reveals that "Othering" and "colonial anxiety" are two British colonizers' psycho–political tools for perpetuating their rule in India.

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