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**A PASSAGE TO INDIA:
"CRITICAL APPROACH"
A Novel By E-M FORSTER**

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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T.R.N.C.**

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PREFACE

The English language and literature has always been attractive to my personality; because since I was a boy, I decided to educate myself in the area of the English language and to receive all the benefits it would give me. Therefore, I have chosen to study on one, of the greatest figures of the English literature, E-M Forster and, his best novel A Passage To India.

I would like to give my special thanks to my chairperson, Associate Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan for her great help through my 4- year education in the department.

Murat Ilhan,

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T.R.N.C.

INTRODUCTION

A Passage To India is E-M Forster's most ambitious, and surely one of the classic modern English novels, a work both of modern chaos and aesthetic order. The echo in the Marabar caves levels all meaning to one declares "Everything exist; nothing has value". In which the janus-face of the universe is visible, where its horror and smallness are simultaneously known, where "neither ignore nor respect unity". At the same time Forster's aspiration for rhythmic wholeness drown together the book and makes it a symbolic unity. This is the work that most embodies the neo-symbolist aspirations of aspect of the novel, giving it an imaginative texture different from the pre-war novels.

Many of the same liberal themes continue; here once more are those powers in social life and nature, the claims of public and private, seen and unseen social conventions and personal desire and relations which divide the universe and produce the need for reconciliation.

The book is based in the testing ground of human relationships in the need of the liberal mind of "good will plus culture and intelligence" to overcome the grids of interest, ignorance and custom that divide individual from individual and race from race. So his literary methods are moving between poetic evocation of mystery and the comic world of human muddle, maintaining both a symbolist and a social mode of fiction. But the balance has changed. The novel is about the final gap between chaotic human life and the intractable infinite. The novel tells us a story, a social and political story told in a sprit of comedy and human muddle about the life of the British Raj, the strict, bloodless conventions of British behavior, the rituals of class, the rules of behavior and racial duty.

They hold "bridge parties" with the Indians but they dissolve into misunderstanding; even those who try harder like the mystical Mrs. Moore or the liberal school teacher Fielding fail to encompass the sum that India represents. "Nothing embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing" says the young Hindu doctor Aziz.

Sects and races are divided among themselves; so is the earth itself. "The fissures in the Indian soil are infinite: Hinduism, so solid from a distance, is river into sects and clans, which radiate and join, and change their names according to the aspect from which they are approached".

The human never quite touches the infinite: "Trees of poor quality bordered the road, indeed the whole scene was inferior and suggested that the country side was too vast to admit of excellence.

In vain did each item in it call, "come, come. There was not enough god to go round". Mrs. Moore and Fieldings try hard. Forster as novelist tries harder, seeking to incorporate everything, not with a whitmanesque barbaric yawp, but with a wry sense of human comedy, which sees how we generally fail when we seek generally fail when we seek to grasp diversity.

E-M FORSTER

1879-1970

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London; his father was an architect of Welsh extraction and his mother a member of a family distinguished during several generations for its evangelical religion and its philanthropic activities. He was educated at Tanbridge School (the "Sawston" of the longest journey), where he suffered the tribulations of a day boy at a boarding school, and King's College, Cambridge. The friends he made and the intellectual Greece and spent sometime in Italy in 1901, and this experience also had a permanent influence on him; throughout his life he tended to set of middle-class England. Both Greek mythology and Italian Renaissance art opened up to him a world of what Matthew Arnold called "spontaneity of consciousness", and most of his work is concerned with ways of discovering such a quality in personal relationships amid the complexities and distortions of modern life. He

began writing as a contributor to the newly founded liberal independent Review in 1903, and in 1905 published his first novel, Where Angels Fear To Tread, a tragicomic projection of conflicts between refined English gentility and coarse Italian vitality. English tutoring in Germany; and extended visit to India in 1922; continuous intellectual companionship with a lively circle of friends; and in 1946 and honorary fellowship at King's College, Cambridge, where he mostly lived after words, through with a good deal of traveling abroad, all this existence, and (as Forster himself insisted) an unusually happy one. His main interest was always in personal relations, the "little society" we make for ourselves with our friends. He was a member of the "Bloomsbury group" so called because of its more prominent figures lived in the Bloomsbury district of London that included such writers as Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf; the art historians Clive Bell and Roger Fry; and the economist John Maynard Keynes. Looking beyond that "Little Society", he was cast a critical and performing eye on the abuses of the

world, his point of view being always that of the independent liberal, suspicious of all political slogans and catch words.

Forster's second novel **The Longest Journey** (1907) examines the difference between living and dead relationships with much incidental satire of English public-school education and English notions of respectability.

A Room With A View (1908) explores the nature of love with a great deal of subtlety, using (as with his first novel) Italy as a liberating agent.

Howard's End (1910) probes the relation between inward feeling and outward action, between the kinds of reality in which people get involved in living "only connect !" exclaims one of the characters.

"Only connect the prose and passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will soon be at its height". But no one knew better than Forster that this is more easily said than done, and that false or premature connections made by rule and not achieved through total realization of the personality, can destroy and corrupt. The half way house to salvation is often grimmer than the

starting point. In his last novel (for Forster wrote no more fiction), **A Passage To India** (1924) he takes the relations between the English relations, between the English and Indians in India in the early 1920's as a background against which to erect the most searching and complex of all his explorations of the possibilities and the limitations, the promises and the pitfalls of human relationships.

This remain his best known novel as well as his best. Published posthumously was another novel, **Maurice** written more than fifty years before in which Forster tried to define his life. It was a brave attempt but, as a work of art, not a success.

His short stories are as a rule much simpler in theme and treatment than his novels; many of them draw on Greek mythology to project the moment of escape or illumination for a character struggling against the meshes of convention. The road from colonus develops themes from Greek tragedy to present a modern ironic picture of the moment of escape seen but no seized with the inevitable consequence of loss and degeneration.

There is a conscious use of symbolism here (for example, in the running water that so enchants Mr. Lucas in the magical spot in Greece, and his horror of the noise of running tap water at the end of the story) which is more successful than in most of his other short stories. Forster has also written critical, autobiographical and descriptive prose, Notably aspects of the novel (1927) which as a discussion of the techniques of fiction by a practicing novelist, has become a minor classic of criticism.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1879: Edward Morgan Forster was born 1, January of 1879.
- 1880: Father dies of tuberculosis.
- 1883: Mother moves with Forster to Rookarest, the house that becomes the model for Howards End.
- 1887: Death of great-aunt, Marianne Thornton, a figure in the clamham sect (bankers, abolitionist) she leaves Forster bequest of 8.000 pound and thus provides for his later education and travel.
- 1890: Attends Kent Hause School.
- 1893: Day boy at Tanbridge School.

1897: Enters King's College, Cambridge studies classics.

1900: First published writing appears in Cambridge Review and in Basikona. Takes upper, second class in classical Tripos: receives B.A. (Bachelor Of Arts).

1901: Stays at Cambridge for forty years to read history; begins work on a novel, Nottingham lace (never completed); elected to the Cambridge conversazione society (the Apostles), a secret undergraduate debating society, founded 1820, whose members, included G-E-Moore, Roger Fey and John Maynold Keynes. Begins a year's travel in Italy and Austria; this trip and a subsequent one in 1903 to Italy and Greece will influence much of his early fiction as well as his historical essays.

1902: Begins work on a novel that will eventually become "A Room With A View" gives Latin classes at the working

Men's College (London): will continue lecturing there for the next 20 years.

1903: First story "Albergo Empedocle", published in Temple Bar; begins publishing essays and stories in the newly founded Independent Review.

1905: Goes to Germany to tutor to the children of the countess Von Arnim; published "Where Angels Fear To Treat".

1907: Published "The Hanged Journey".

1908: Published "A Room With A View", begins reading the Koran.

1910: Publishes "Howard's End".

1911: Publishes "The Celestial Omnibus".

1912: In preparation for trip to India, learns some Urdu, rereads the Bhagavad Gita, takes riding lessons.

- 1913: Returns from India in April.
- 1914: Finishes "**Maurice**", which remains unpublished until after Forster death; works as catalogues at the National Gallery.
- 1915: Begins friendship with D.H. Lawrence goes to Alexandria as searcher for the Red Cross (November 1915 to January 1919).
- 1916: Meets the Greek poet C.P. Cavafy, whose poetry Forster later arranges to have translated and published in England.
- 1917: Begin relationship with Mohammed El Adl. Publishes articles in the Egyptian Mail.
- 1918: First World War ends (November) returns to Britain in early 1919 and writes for several newspapers and magazines.
- 1921: Begins attending meetings of Bloomsbury club: takes second trip to India: visits Masood: goes to Dewas as private secretary

to the Maharaj: attempts unsuccessfully to continue his India novel.

1922: On return to India, stops at Mansourah to see/ El Adl, now dying of tuberculosis. In Britain, publishes essays on India, and returns to work on "A Passage To India" after journeying many of his rotic stories: publishes Alexandria: A history and a Guide. Begins friendship with J.R. Ackerley.

1923: Publishes "Pharos And Pharillon".

1924: Publication on H. June of "A Passage To India" his aunt Laura dies, leaving him the leasehold of her West Hackhurst house in Abinger Hammer, to which he and his mother move: The celestial omnibus published in United States.

1925: Publication of Eliza Fay's original letters from India (1779-1815), with introduction and Terminal Notes by EMF.

- 1927: Delivers Clark lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge; published as Aspects of the novel.
- 1928: Publishes "The Eternal Moment" and other stories; with Virginia Woolf, protests the censoring of Radclyffe Hall's The well of loneliness.
- 1929: Travels to Africa.
- 1930: Meets Bob Buckingham; beginning of intimate friendship that lasts until Foster's death.
- 1932: Begins series of broadcasts on books for the BBC. Forster begins work on Dickinson's biography. Begins friendship with Christopher Sherwood.
- 1936: Publishes Abinger Harvest (a collection of his essays).
- 1937: Syed Ross Massood and the Maharajah of Dewas die.

- 1938: Writes England's pleasant and first publication of essay, "**Two Cheers For Democracy**", revised as "what I believe"; Neville Chamberlain. British prime minister, signs Munich pact with Germany. Claiming to have secured "peace in our time".
- 1939: 3 September, Britain declares war on Germany immediately following Germany's invasion of Poland.
- 1940: Publishes Nordic Twilight in the Macmillan war pamphlet series; is instrumental in the publication of Ahmet Ali's first novel, Twilight In Delhi.
- 1941: Suicide of Virginia Woolf on 28 March. Delivers Rede lecture in Cambridge on her work (published in 1942) begins broadcasting to India in the series some books on BBC overseas service (renamed Eastern Service in 1942).

- 1944: Death of his mother; end of war in Europe on 7 May; third visit to India to attend the all India writer's conference in Jaipur.
- 1947: Visits United States to deliver lecture "the raison d'être of Criticism in the Arts", at Harvard University Symposium on Music Criticism: publication in the United States of "the collected Tales of E.M Forster"; receives honorary doctorate from the University of Liverpool.
- 1949: Second visit to the United States; delivers lecture "Art For Art's Shake" to the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and letters; receives honorary doctorate from Hamilton College.
- 1950: Receives honorary doctorate from Cambridge University of Nottingham.
- 1951: Publication of Two Cheers for Democracy (a collection of his essays): premiere of Billy Budd, libretto by Forster and Eric

- Crozier, music by Benjamin Britten,
published for following year.
- 1953: Receives The Companion of Honor from
the Queen; publication of *The Hall of Devi*
moves into King's College.
- 1954: Receives honorary doctorates from the
University of Manchester and Leiden
University.
- 1956: Published *Marianne Thornton*, a biography
of his great-aunt.
- 1958: Receives honorary doctorate from the
University of Leicester.
- 1959: Gives the presidential address to the
Cambridge Humanists.
- 1960: Adds a "Terminal Note" to *Maurice* (the
novel remained unpublished): is a witness
for the defense in the obscenity trial of
Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's* lover.

- 1961: Is inducted into the Royal Society of literature as companion of literature; published his lat. review, which is of Leonard Woolf's *Growing: An Autobiography of the years 1904-1911*.
- 1962: Writes introduction to Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.
- 1963: Published short story "Arctic Summer: Fragment of an unfinished novel".
- 1964: Suffers slight stroke.
- 1969: Receives The Order Of Merit.
- 1970: Dies on 7 June in Coventry home of Bob and May Buckingham.
- 1971: Publication of *Maurice* and of "Albergo Empedacle" and other writings.
- 1972: Publication of "The Life To Come" and other stories.

1978: Publication of "The Life To Come" and
The Commonplace Book.

1980: Publication of Arctic Summer and other
fictions.

WHAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THE PASSAGE?

A passage which occurs in Peter Burna's "Introduction to the Everyman Edition".

The subject of the passage is life and the fact that for the most part of it, life is dull and that not a lot happens. Life is on par with the universe when thought about so it can be said that it is an important topic. However, others have written about life being a magnificent stage, but they write solely because something positive must be written about life. If no interest is shown in life, then why bother existing.

Our spirit seems, according to the passage to exist purely for the shake of existing. It survives from day to day, not really absorbing anything new or bringing any enjoyment into our lives. Even the most exciting days are spoilt by the fact that for some periods nothing happens.

Life seems to have lost its meaning and therefore people have lost the will to survive. If whatever is done brings no thrill to an individual's

life, then let's leave and make way for a new generation. In reference to the novel itself, the fact that nothing much happens is very true. Similar to Virginia Woolf novel, the only apparent incident which occurs in Forster's novel is the rather underpar experience of Adela in the Manabor Caves.

A part from this, nothing else really happens therefore life passes dully for the characters of the novel and they continue to live each day as it comes. An example of perhaps a thrilling occasion in the novel, occurs when the Indians are invited to the party. They make every attempt to fit in with the British by dressing in a western way but for an occasion which at first seemed exciting, finished very bland with the British on one side of the tennis court and the Indians on the other.

WHAT IS THE TITLE ABOUT?

When considering the title on face value, means away into the country of India. Forster when he wrote this novel, was attempting to create some unity between the British and the Indians. The theme is obvious enough but the act of carrying it out seemed to be difficult for the British inhabitants of India. After all having come from a foreign country whether to rule or to settle effort must be shown by these people to create a harmonious relationship with the Indians in this case.

It seems that Forster showed his readers real-life in this novel more than often when a country is inhabited by foreign rule that new rule sees itself a superior. Unfortunately superiority should be left to one side and good communication should be looked for. This is something that the British, with the exception of Fielding and Mrs. Moore did not do. From the opening chapters it could be seen that there was an entire gulf between the British and the Indians.

Chandrope, the setting for the novel had been split in two, the British occupying the beautiful side with its civil station, whereas the Indians had to make do with the run-down filthy slums. This division continued with the club being only for the British people.

The Indians were made to feel like outsiders in their own country but this eventually turned and it was the British, mainly due to Adela, who were looked down upon. Even a small incident like the British party was enlarged because Mr. Turton arranged it solely to impress the ladies and not purely because he thought of the Indians.

It can be clearly seen that whereas you would imagine the title meaning to find a pathway into India, it was infact a pathway out of India (The British), which was discovered: The hard, cold attitude of British unfortunately made this possible.

THE PLOT AND STRUCTURE

The plot of A Passage To India is human which set largely round the city of Chandrapore, evidently in the 1920's, hinges on Adela Quested, who comes to India to marry, has doubts when she sees what Indian service has made of her fiancée and tries to see more. She goes on an expedition with her fiancée's mother Mrs. Moore to the Marabar caves, arranged by the friendly Indian doctor Aziz. In one cave, she thinks she is sexually attacked by him. Meanwhile Mrs. Moore hears her echo, and suffers her "twilight of the double vision". Adela accuses Aziz of attempted rape, and through she retracts her words at the trial the incident, sows discord and exposes the political stresses and the radical crisis in the country.

While Fielding seeks for personal and political reconciliation, Mrs. Moore haunted by her glimpse of eternal abyss, dies on the way home and Adela returns to Britain unwed.

The characters are of sufficient size for the plot. They are not large enough for the story and

indeed that is the point of the story. Progressing though three large blocks of experience Mosque, caves and Temple it opens through the figure of the Hindu mystic professor Godbole, the Hindu ceremony and the strange return of the spirit of Mrs. Moore among the Indian crowds on a hint of wholeness. What it does not offer is the certainty of it. At the close of the book, the earth still says "No, not yet" and the close of the book, the earth still says "No, not yet".

The echo at the edge of Fielding's consciousness persists: "Everything aches now; there's no stopping the echo. The original sound may be harmless but the evil is always evil".

The two aspects of novel the social realism, the comedy of the human plot, and the patterned, symbolist hunger for the "one orderly product" remain in suspension, and that too is the point of the story.

Forster avoids the closure of the symbolist plot. Both material realism and symbolism ask, in the different ways for everything to be included and Forster did neither.

THEMES OF A PASSAGE TO INDIA

The tensions are between the culture (1924) of East and West, between the British colonial way of life and the local culture of India. The story is centered on an English woman, Adela, who has gone to India to marry a colonial official but who quickly makes friends with local Indian people.

In 1900 economy (Britain's) became industrial. People lived in cities. The British Empire grew to include lots of countries. However, the Boer war in south Africa was not a successful war for the British and colonies throughout the world began to rebel and British control of other countries began to disappear.

First world war 1914-1918 changed for many people their view of the world. Religious and political beliefs were questioned by more people. Communism grew in Russia and fascism grew especially in Germany and Italy and the rise of fascism happened at the same time as Germany became a powerful nation and fascist

beliefs were a main cause of the second world war 1939-1945. Also, workers in large industries became more interested in socialism and joint trade unions. British labour party grew. Women were allowed to vote for the first time in 1928.

In the arts, one clear change was that many artists felt they had to express their ideas very differently in new forms which were sometimes difficult to understand. On the other hand, some artists felt it their duty to communicate simply and power forms to wider and better educated audience. A mysterious incident at the Marabar caves, involving Adela quested, newly arrived from England and presumed guilty of charming and mercurial Dr. Aziz are at the centre of Forster's magnificent novel of India during the Raj.

Topical now, as in 1924, in its evocation of the dangers and ambivalence inherent in colonialism, as Forster said, it is about something wider than politics, about the search of the human race for a moral lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the Indian earth and the sky, about horror lurking in the Marabar caves.

E-M FORSTER PORTAYS MANY CHARACTERISTICS OF STYLE IN HIS NOVEL

The novel is suspense, unity, true life attitudes and symbolism are a few to mention. He makes it simple for his readers to understand him and therefore the novel can be appreciated more.

One of the main characteristics to his style is the suspense factor. The mentioning of the caves as early as the first chapter shows their mysticism and eerie atmosphere. Forster believed in a gradual build up of events. By mentioning the caves early on, it leads to what will be said later having a powerful effect. The incident in the caves is therefore more intriguing due to the atmosphere having been built up slowly. Forster also strongly believed in unity. Not only in this novel but generally. Forster thought that unity was important and he did attempt very much so as to show this in this novel. Unfortunately it was not possible because Forster believed in



being honest and decided it would be better to show true life instead.

True life was indeed shown by the stark difference between the races. Forster made it clear that the British had a very cold attitude and always felt superior to others.

Symbolism was another characteristic Forster enjoyed. He used the caves, the hills, wasps and sun to enlarge upon his meanings. The hills and caves created mystery, the sun was a sign of worship and the wasp an important characteristic-Duality. This could be seen clearly in both Chandrapore, the dirty run-down sector and the beautiful well-incept sector- Also when Mrs. Moore examined the wasp, she saw two sides to it: the beauty and the stinging danger.

Finally , another characteristic of Forster, was to show the finite. India was infinite and could not be fully grasped or totally conquered. It was something that was out of reach, and eventually the British realized this and handed control back to the Indians. The novel showed that it was impossible for the two to ever live harmoniously.

Dr. AZIZ

The young Indian doctor, was one the first characters to appear in the novel. Aziz was a bubbly young man who seemed religious, friendly, emotional, intelligent and a patriot. Aziz is first encountered at Hamidullah's home, arriving on his bicycle. A doctor riding on his bicycle showed that he was not a rich man, working for major callendor, the Head surgeon, Aziz was not a free man. On this occasion, whilst sitting down for dinner, Aziz thought time and time again about resenting this openly, but he knew he had three motherless children to support. His intelligence prevailed.

The mosque scene where he first met Mrs. Moore, showed Aziz's religious character, shocked character and his friendly character. Although having no place in the mosque, Mrs. Moore was made to feel welcome by Aziz. He was very friendly and not only advised her about the dangers of walking alone at night in

chandropore, but amused her by saying that the snakes "don't dare bite me, I'm a doctor."

Aziz was the type of person who longed to make friends. He enjoyed speaking to others and even after his encounter with Mrs. Moore had immediately built up what he felt was a good understanding with her. His friendliness extended to a picnic and on one occasion with Fielding, he gave him his collar stud because Fielding lost his own.

Aziz loved his country and supported it wherever he could. Surprisingly he was not terribly fond of the British and even on one occasion said something about not talking of them and longing to change the subject. However, this seems strange because Aziz built up a good relationship with the Englishman. Fielding. This was due to Fielding who accepted that he was living in a foreign country and respected the Indians. The fact that they had made such good friends led Aziz opening up about his personal life to Fielding and infact showing him a picture of his deceased wife. Therefore it can be seen that Aziz was a good

man, innocent man (count case) and possessed a good character and personality.

The showing of his wife's picture, amazed Fielding but it shows that Aziz had trusted his English friend and believed that making good relationships was far more important than keeping your distance.

CONCLUSION

A Passage To India one of the great novels of all times, it owes its greatness principally to ingredients very different from the political bricks and mortar on which the early critics so largely concentrated.

Some of them, indeed, did notice something transcending the social and political problems of particular group of people at a particular moment of history.

The book is not really about politics, though it is the political aspect of it that caught the general public and made it sell. It is about something wider than politics, about the search of the human race for a more lasting home, about the universe as embodied in the India earth and the India sky, about the horror lurking in the Marabar caves and the release symbolized by the birth of Krishna.

Forster had spent most of the last fourteen years not in writing this very fine novel but in wondering whether there was indeed anything on

earth, or in the heaven above, or in the waters
under the earth, worth writing about.

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