

Forster's Orientalism

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Abstract

In his study of Orientalism Professor Sa'id groups Forster with those Orientalists who approach the East with a sense of distinction mainly based on the will to power. Professor Sa'id considers the lack of reconciliation in the ending of **A Passage to India** an expression of Forster's conviction that the relationship between the Orient and the Occident is determined by a deeply - rooted distinction between the two worlds. I believe that Forster's ending where Aziz and Fielding fail to make a final reconciliation is related to Forster's evasive mind which often tends to reject reconciliation. I further believe that Forster was not only unlike those Orientalists but also like Professor Sa'id in his criticism of the matter of distinction.

A close reading of **A Passage to India** may show how Forster saw the civilisation of distinction as the source of failure in reconciliation. The British arrive in India with the burden of civilisation which consciously or unconsciously blind them to the civilisation of others. This is enacted by the two different groups of characters.

The first group consists of the Anglo-Indians, the ruling class who have no reservation about distinction. The other group include those who have no official status. In the characters of the first group Forster probably saw what Professor Sa'id did: the lack of sympathy and understanding which would help realize reconciliation.

On the other hand the characters of the second group are presented with genuine sympathy and good will but with the sense of distinction lurking in the background of their mind limiting the potential of action altogether. The characters of the two groups arrive in India with the civilisation of their own, but while one group promotes it as a power the other sees it as a burden. However the result is the same, failure on the both sides.

What neither group realizes is the fact that India rather than Indians is the main partner in the conflict. Forster ends the narrative with India rejecting reconciliation which can be made neither by the rulers nor by the ruled.

In his most penetrating well-known study: **Orientalism**, Professor Edward Sa'id groups E. M. Forster with Orientalists, like Daughy, Barres, Loti and T. E. Lawrence who are themselves in line with other Orientalists including Lane, Burton, Scott, Byron, Vingy, Disraeli and others. Professor Sa'id remarks that "All these writers give a bolder outline to Disraeli's great Asiatic mystery." He goes on to say that "In this enterprise there is considerable support not only from the unearthing of dead Oriental civilizations (by European excavators) in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria and Turkey, but also from major geographical surveys, done all through the Orient," (sa'id, 1979:99).

On another occasion Professor Sa'id comments on the "sense of the pathetic distance still separating "us" from an Orient destined to bear its foreignness as a mark of its permanent estrangement from the West," demonstrating his point from "the disappointing conclusion corroborated (contemporaneously) by the ending of E. M. Forster's novel, where Aziz and Fielding attempt, and fail at, reconciliation: . . .", (sa'id, 1979:244). Later in his argument Professor Sa'id describes the situation as the Westerner's "intimate estrangement" from "the Orient's essence," remarking that "For Lawrence as for Forster, this sensation produces the despondency as well of personal failure; . . . (sa'id: 248).

I have no intention here of disputing Professor Sa'id's approach to **Orientalism** whose merit has been fully acknowledged by modern scholars and thinkers alike. However it is anticipated that a work of such magnitude as **Orientalism** which encompasses the work of many authors, is bound to lapse occasionally into some inadequate presentation of one author or another. I believe that Forster receives unfair treatment, and my discussion here is more related to my acquaintance with Forster and his work than to my objection to the vigorous argument which characterises the thesis of **Orientalism**.

Professor Sa'id's inadequate reading of Forster is two-fold: first there is the limitation he imposes on Forster's art, the other is the dismissal of Forster's own writings on the politics of the Orient, most of which were probably inaccessible for him, at least, at the time of composing **Orientalism**.⁽¹⁾

Forster's artistic mind is elusive enough to invite further investigation into his art and thought. I argued elsewhere that the multiplicity of vision is a main aspect which dominates Forster's writings.⁽²⁾ For his understanding between people is often curbed by division in individual consciousness which he thinks, results from various factors extending from the psychological to the cultural. In this division Forster sees the human predicament, and around this division hovers Forster's vision which is dramatized in different powers, and out of this division emerges Forster's motto which embraces the conflict in his writings, "learn how to connect." However the attempt is often unsuccessful; sometimes it is comic, at other times pathetic, or altogether futile.

The division which separates people is always a major characteristic of Forster's art, and it can be seen as early as his first novel **Where Angels Fear to Tread**

(1905). For example the gap between England and Italy in this novel is probably deeper than that of England and India in **A Passage to India**. This division extends to the English themselves. The marriage between Lilia Theobald and Charles Herriton is described in terms of vulgarity marrying respectability. Mrs. Herriton, who stands for the Sawston of England and its English rules is alienated from the Italian Gino as well as from her son Philip. Caroline, as well as Philip, see in Sawston "the idleness, the stupidity, the respectability, the petty unselfishness." (Forster, 1975:60) And the war of division in and between the people of **Where Angels Fear to Tread** flows throughout the whole narrative.

Later in **Howards End** the division is further intensified; it is partly historical and partly cultural and the interplay of the two creates a delicate aesthetic conflict. In general terms the conflict is between what Wilfred Stone terms as the "red-blood and mollicoddles" of England. It is between urban and rural England; the Wilcoxs and Schlegels, Blast and the Schlegels, not to mention the conflict in the Wilcoxs and in the Schlegels themselves as individuals. Out of this dilemma, Forster makes his dear Margaret emerges with the ideal of connection:

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its light. Live in fragments no longer. (Forster, 1973:183-84)

Reconciliation in **Howards End** may have its roots in Forster's changing sensibility as "the last end of the Victorian fag", to use his own description, emerging into the new Edwardian sensibility of hope and optimism. Had Forster finished **A Passage to India** at about the time when he first began it and shortly after his first visit to India (1912), he perhaps would have made Fielding and Aziz reconcile the different historical interests of the Orient and the West. But the sense of ending is always complex, and its complexity often comes with the developing vision of the author. In the meantime an examination of the ending itself may help demonstrate such a generalization about Forster's vision relevant to the ideal of connection.

Aspects of division in **A Passage to India** are dramatized rather than reconciled. This time the division is too wide and deep to promote a reconciled conclusion, and the hundred voices Forster found in India seem to have provided him with the appropriate form for his evasive mind which is inclined to view the contraries in action rather than in reconciliation. India gives a wider horizon for his characters and a deeper vision for his point of view. We are aware of the fact that Forster tends to view his English characters against a different background; sometimes it is Italian, at others German (the Schlegels) and this time it is India itself. In his earlier fiction it is the Hebraic against the Heilenistic, and in **A Passage to India** it is wider and deeper. I do not believe that Forster's concern coincides with this Disraeli's 'great Asiatic mystery' as Professor Sa'id remarks; or that Forster's preoccupation is with the "intimate estrangement" from "the Orient's essence" as he also thinks. Forster is not the type of writer who would find the Orient exotic or who would be later disenchanted with its exoticism. After all it took Forster over a decade to finish the novel, and it would not

be possible for him to suspend the "Asiatic mystery" for that long; but what Forster was able to suspend at least throughout the time of composing the novel, is the artistic vision the Englishness of the British in India. Professor Raymond Williams, greatly admired by Professor Sa'id, believes that in **A Passage to India** Forster concerns himself with the English middle class, and that the novel can be called "English middle class in India."⁽³⁾ This implies that Forster's focus is on the education, morality, and politics of the English middle class particularly the Anglo-Indians ruling class in India.

The concluding scene between Aziz and Fielding seems to be designed as an encounter between dream and reality. It is an encounter rather than a conflict, because Fielding does not discard dream altogether, for he views the negation of reality only as circumstantial. History proved that Forster wrote the novel with a perspective whose realization was only postponed. Forster probably saw in his fellow Anglo-Indians what Professor Sa'id saw in Disraeli and similar Orientalists: the lack of sympathy and understanding which would help realize reconciliation.

A fair portrait of the Orient, Forster seems to believe, may not be reached by Loti's sentimentality, or Pickthall's exaggeration, or Blunt's championship, or Lawrence's Don Quixotism. Nor can it be grasped, Forster thinks, by a professional amorist. In his evaluation of Pickthall's and Loti's picture of the Oriental woman, Forster (1946:268) says that "a woman novelist may one day tell us what does happen in the Harem,... But she must be a novelist, not a journalist or a missionary".

This suggests Forster's confidence in fiction as an effective means of exploring the complex world of the Orient; and I would like to propose here that **A Passage to India** is a remarkable contribution by Forster to this exploration. Yet my approach here is based on what the characters in the novel bring with them from their home origin to India rather than what they see in India itself.⁽⁴⁾ It is the attitude they have towards the foreignness of the orient which I believe needs emphasis in reading the novel, and I hope the following analysis will show how Forster's fictitious account stands in agreement with Professor Sa'id's basic ideas on Orientalism, and that it promotes rather than negates them.

When writing **A passage to India** ⁽⁵⁾, Forster had behind him the nonfiction prose he had already written as well as the writings of contemporaries who wrote on the Orient. Over the twelve years which the novel took to complete, Forster presumably felt that he was "getting the work", to use I.A. Richards' term, "right". He must have realized that a complex India demands a complex vision to present its inner "cave" reality rather than represent its external "mountain" appearance. Hence the design was, I think, to transcend the attempts already available to Forster, whether they were in non-fiction prose, fiction or journalism. For example, the picture of Aziz in his novel is very reminiscent of that of Pickthall's Iskender in the **Valleys of Kings**, and reading the two pictures together one may assume that Forster conceived Aziz as a counterpart to Iskender after he had found that of Iskender quite faulty. For example, in a conversation between Hamidullah and Aziz, Forster records the latter's white lying as being most casual: "The average woman is like Mrs. Turton, and Aziz,

You know what she is...." and Forster comments "Aziz did not know, but said he did." In comparison the English traveller was ruthless to Iskender when he discovered that Iskender was lying to him.

The Oriental sentimentality and fantasy in Iskender which the Englishman finds horrifying and demoralising would, in comparison, carry little or no weight between Aziz and Fielding; for Forster dismisses such behaviour as being a major issue, and views it in the wider context of the contact of the Orient and the Occident. The visit to the caves is similar in its pattern and presumably in its motive to the visit to "The Valleys of Kings" and the result is equally disastrous in the sense that, just as the Englishman is bitterly disappointed in his Iskender, so, in the same way the Anglo-Indians find Aziz disappointing after the crisis in the caves. Yet the difference between the two situations lies in the different perspectives. In *Pickthall* the picture of life diminishes as the Englishman despairs of his oriental guide and severs his contact with him without any regret: in Forster, however, the disastrous scene at the caves leads to further conflict and consequently exposes the weakness and fantasy already inherent in the English characters, and this what makes Forster's picture expand to integrate the microcosm of division between characters into the macrocosm of divisions in the whole of India.

Yet Forster's picture of the division here should not be identified with what Sa'id sees in the "very large mass of writers who have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories (and) novels (Sa'id, 1979:2) Forster shows that division (hereafter referred to as distinction) is not abstract or metaphysical but rather a state of consciousness enacted by English characters in India. This state is directly animated by Anglo-Indian Character, and indirectly suggested by other English characters. Forster's English characters may be related to what professor Sa'id calls the "non-Orientalist in the West who exploited... a reduced model of the Orient suitable for the prevailing, dominant culture and its theoretical (and hard after the theoretical, the practical) exigencies" (Sa'id:153). Or it may be argued that these characters promote the state of cultural domination which precedes as well as accompanies imperial exploitation, making the distinction stand in relief. All this is demonstrated by the two different groups of Characters.

First the Anglo-Indians. Forster presents them against the main background of the English institution, the Club, which, under all the circumstances of distinction, they successfully transplant in India. The Club is the place where those characters socialise to maintain their Englishness, and Forster makes it stand in sharp contrast with everything Indian around it, extending from the mosque to the caves. Within the borders of the Club the Anglo-Indians practise their Englishness, and view the surrounding hostile environment with indifference. Commenting on Adela's situation after her disastrous visit to the Caves, McBryde says: "I wish the Marabar Hills and all they contain were at the bottom of the sea. Evening after evening one saw them from the Club, and they were just a harmless name" (P.159).

The Club is evidently viewed by the Indians as a strong establishment. on one occasion Hamidullah says to Aziz "If God himself descended from heaven into their

club and said you were innocent, they would disbelieve Him." (P. 257)

Also the club makes a barrier between the Anglo-Indians and their fellow English people like Mrs. Moore and Fielding. Early in the narrative Mrs. Moore is apologetic to Aziz for not being able to invite him to the Club because she herself is not a member. While he fellow Englishmen were seeing **Cousin Kate** at the Club, Mrs. Moore was wandering around exploring a different world. When Fielding expresses an independent view concerning the crisis, the members of the Club try to inflict on him the penalty of suspending his Club membership (not that he is affected in the least).

In order to show what the Club further stands for, Forster associates it with the most important motif in the novel, the echo; as he makes a juxtaposition which seems to help us see one through the other. Since the Club has England as its origin, in India it can be envisaged as an echo. Forster suggests that the echo is man made at different times and places (perhaps in an alien environment). The subjectivity of the echo seems to be identified with the typicality of the club as representing two aspects of the same static reality. This is how Fielding imagines the situation as he meets the members of the Club:

He talked to Major Roberts, the new Civil Surgeon and to young Milner, the new City Magistrate, but the more the Club changed the more it promised to be the same thing. "It is no good," he thought, as he returned past the mosque, we all build upon sand; and the more modern the country gets, the worse'll be the crash. In the old eighteenth century, when cruelty and injustice raged, an invisible power repaired their ravages. Everything echoes now; there's no stopping the echo. The original sound may be harmless, but the echo is always evil (p. 264).

Another institution which the Anglo-Indians bring with them to India is the public-school, which is too well-known to elaborate on here. A typical product of this institution is Ronny whose character articulates its spirit:

Ronny's religion was of the sterilized public-school brand, which never goes bad, even in the tropics, Whenever he entered mosque, cave or temple, he retained the spiritual outlook of the Fifth Form. and condemned as "weakening" any attempt to understand them (p. 245).

With their institutions at their disposal Anglo-Indians have no inhibition about distinction whether it is expressed in relation to the superiority of the English or the inferiority of the Indians. As early as Chapter 2 the question of distinction is hinted at when Mrs. Callendar helps herself to Aziz's tonga without his permission after she has turned down his offer to help her with transportation, and this, as we know, hurts

Aziz immensely, and drives him to take shelter in the mosque for contemplation. Later in the narrative Mrs. Callender expresses her attitude more explicitly in a conversation between herself and Mrs. Moore:

"What I mean is, I was a nurse before my marriage, and came across them a great deal, so I know. I really do know the truth about the Indians. A most unsuitable position for any Englishwoman - I was a nurse in a Native State. One's only hope was to hold sternly aloof. "Even from one's patients?" "Why, the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die," said Mrs. Callender. "How if he went to heaven?" asked Mrs. Moore, with a gentle but crooked smile. "He can go where he likes as long as he doesn't come near me. They give me the creeps" (pp.21-22).

In a response to Miss Quested's desire "to meet Indians whom you come across socially - as your friends," Mr. Callendar laughs and replies "We don't come across them socially" despite the fact that "They're full of all the virtues", and he rather regrets not being able "to go into the reasons as the time was too late at night." To satisfy Miss Quested's desire, Mr. Callendar proposes a "bridge party"; a phrase he invents but it is a typical Forsterian practice to sum up a situation like that of Mr. Callendar's hidden hypocrisy. The bridge party, as we know, ends in total failure.

A main source of confusion in Adela's mind comes through a recollection which may be viewed in the light of what Professor Sa'id calls (1979:5) "that regular constellation of ideas as the pre-eminent thing about the Orient." Miss Quested's recollection occurs at a critical moment when she was having an intimate conversation with Aziz and thought to herself:

Probably this man had several wives - Mohammedans always insist on their full four, according to Mrs. Turton. And, having no one else to speak on that eternal rock, she gave rein to the subject of marriage and said in her honest, decent, inquisitive way: "Have you one wife or more than one?" (p. 144).

Miss Quested's question here indirectly betrays her attraction to Aziz' physical appearance which seems to upset her as we see earlier in the narrative:

She did not admire him with any personal warmth, for there was nothing of the vagrant in her blood, but she guessed he might attract women of his own race and rank, and she regretted that neither she nor Ronny had physical charm. (P. 144).

The question evidently shocks Aziz as well as it intensifies Miss Quested's confusion. The disastrous crisis happens almost immediately.

However, the climax of distinction comes in the aftermath of the crisis, as if the Anglo-Indians had been waiting for an occasion to release their ill-feelings against Indians. In the middle of their hysterical reaction, the sense of English justice is lost, for the Anglo-Indians are certain that Aziz would not or should not be acquitted. Anticipating this certainty about the verdict, Lesley comments that old Das is more "frightened of acquitting than convicting because if he acquits he'll lose his job" (p.205). In the meantime Ronny "liked to maintain that his old Das really did possess moral courage of the public school brand. He pointed out that - 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." (p.205).

The trial scene is comic but revealing. It shows how distorted an image of justice those Anglo-Indians can make for themselves. This is, for example, Mr. McBryde caught in a state of contemplation :

Here Mr. McBryde paused . He wanted to keep the proceedings as clean as possible, but Oriental Pathology, his favourite theme, lay all around him, and he could not resist it. Taking off his spectacles, as was his habit before enunciating a general truth, he looked into them sadly, and remarked that the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but not vice versa - not a matter for bitterness this, not a matter for abuse, but just a fact which any scientific observer will confirm, "Even when the lady is so uglier than the gentleman?" The comment fell from nowhere, from the ceiling perhaps. It was the first interruption, and the Magistrate felt bound to censure it. "Turn that man out," he said. One of the native policemen took hold of a man who had said nothing, and turned him roughly. Mr. McBryde resumed his spectacles and proceeded. But the comment had upset Miss Quested. Her body resented being called ugly, and trembled (P. 208).

Later in the scene Mr. Callender urges Mr. Das to continue with the prosecution despite interruptions by various people pointing out "patronizingly" that they are not in the court to disturb him. The narrator continues to comment "Indeed, they had not so much disturbed the trial as taken charge of it." (p. 209)

The distinction which Anglo-Indians demonstrate is explicit enough. For them the division between India and Britain, between East and West, between the Orient and the Occident, is a flat opposition with little or no tension between the two worlds. Forster seems here to be using the technique (the term is, after all, his) of the "flat character" since he groups all these figures to represent the obvious fact: of the will to power of the British Empire. The narrative voice evidently makes a parody of this stand, a parody which is completed when Aziz is acquitted and British prestige defeated. It is the realism which represents the harsh reality of the situation.

However, the other aspect of distinction is demonstrated by other English characters who receive a different presentation altogether. In contrast, this is a comparatively higher level of realism which, in turn, explores a deeper dimension of reality. Unlike their fellow countrymen, Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested and Fielding come to India with no commitment to English institutions. They oppose the Englishness of those institutions in the same way their fellows cherish them, and the defeat of the British prestige obliquely means a triumph for Mrs. Moore and Fielding, if not for Miss Quested too. Yet the sense of distinction which this group of characters brings with them to India is so subtle that they themselves may not be aware of its potential. It is what Forster refers to as British civilization, which inevitably determines the life of those individuals. As they approach Indian life with an open mind rather via a limited institution, the tension between the two different civilizations begins to get a grip on their lives. Apparently it may not be uneasy to stand against an institution, which remains, in comparison with civilization, relatively something less integrated into the life of the individual.

In making civilization a partner in the conflict, Forster seems here to have used his round character technique to explore the main issue, and this obviously helps him distribute his point of view among the three characters (and not limit it to Fielding, as most readings of the novel often conclude). A close examination of the three characters may show that Forster's point of view is quite different from that of other writers whose picture of the Orient, professor Sa'id remarks, (1979:2) is not "merely imaginative" but an "integral part of European **material** civilization and culture." The English background, which is evidently identified with the "European **material** civilization and culture" remains lurking in the consciousness of these characters in a way which seems to determine the course of their action. The interplay of this "integral part..." with the Indian environment is made intricate enough to stand above or even confuse the narrative point of view which can be scrutinized from the interconnection between cause and effect (disaster and failure to connect the English consciousness with the Indian background). It is the way this interplay is enacted by each character that can provide an illuminating reading of the narrative voice in the novel. It may be worthwhile to remember here that while distinction is a power acquired in order to be used by Anglo-Indian characters, it is also a potential which seems to have a serious bearing on Mrs. Moore, Adela and Fielding.

First Mrs. Moore, who comes to India with an open mind but with the British civilization and culture deeply rooted in her upbringing. Mrs. Moore is old enough to find the adaptation of one environment into another not only disconcerting but (eventually) tragic. Yet she sincerely tries to accommodate the Indian environment into her consciousness and her successful attempts (no matter how limited they are in comparison to the total failure in the novel) provide the most gracious scenes in the novel. Who can, for example, forget the mosque scene where Mrs. Moore's fine sensibility and the sympathy she spontaneously extends to Aziz at a critical moment in his life make Aziz (momentarily, at least) transcend the barriers of distinction and say to Mrs. Moore: "Then you are Oriental". Mrs. Moore's blessing of the Indian "wasp" she found occupying the tip of the peg is another scene which occurs early in the

novel and recurs later to articulate the rhythm of tolerance and reconciliation within distinction.

In the novel English civilization can be identified with the sense of order and form. The crisis in Mrs. Moore's life begins to shape itself when she senses the discrepancy between the civilization of order she is used to and that of the disorder she finds herself caught in for the first time, and this of course, happens on the visit to the caves. It is no coincidence that Mrs. Moore finds the mosque appealing before the horrible experience of the caves. Here the mosque is a kind of border between the two states of order and disorder. The order of its arches helps Mrs. Moore to accommodate to **some** reality about India, but the fact that behind the last arch is the formless Indian earth and sky makes the attempt towards a complete accommodation impossible. Islam obviously stands between the two stages of civilization; Christianity which came to India after Islam, and Hinduism which is evidently older than Islam.

Mrs. Moore's dilemma lies mainly, I think, in not finding the usual medium of expression in her civilization helpful enough to convey to her the new reality. As Mrs. Moore moves into the caves, she realizes that language loses its normal function as a means of order and form, and she finds herself face to face with a reality that cannot be equated with a verbal expression. Even before Mrs. Moore's arrival in India, Forster makes this rather explicit from the first sentence in the novel when he obliquely refers to the caves as extraordinary, and later in the caves scenes he makes a variety of allusions to this unspeakable reality. But what kind of language does Forster intend to show? It is the kind of language, I believe, which I. A. Richards calls referential language, where there is a direct correspondence between the signified and the signifier; contrasting it with scientific language, which carries no further effect beyond its usage as denotation; its function ends with its reference to the object concerned. Mrs. Moore finds it demoralizing to realise that the language she is used to is merely rhetorical and consequently of no help towards creating the elusive balance of order and form. For old Mrs. Moore, change would be disconcerting at the same time it would not be less easy for her to find an appropriate form (out of the deficient medium of language) which may help her articulate the irresistible new reality. This is how she withdraws as she finds herself caught between two irreconcilable worlds:

But suddenly, at the edge of her mind, religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from "Let there be Light" to "It is finished" only amounted to "boum". Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul; the mood of the last two months took definite form at last, and she realized that she didn't want to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God. She sat motionless with horror and when old Mohammed Latif came up to her, thought he would notice a difference. For a

time she thought: "I am going to be ill," to comfort herself, then she surrendered to the vision. She lost all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air's (p. 141).

Mrs. Moore's silence, then, can be viewed as a failure in the means of communication, which is indirectly a failure in the civilization of form and order. For her, reality becomes an inexpressible vision with which she survives and then dies, and the narrative voice offers only a few allusions towards the revelation of this vision; she then lives as a vision lurking in the background of the novel. Also she establishes the total rhythm of the novel in silence and without language.

Mrs. Moore's vision may be considered the highest level of the narrative vision altogether, and she attains it at the expense of a great deal of suffering, spiritual or otherwise. First, she is the only character who sees India as "part of the earth", and, by implication not part of the British Empire: "And God has put us on this earth in order to be pleasant to each other. God ... is ... love". She hesitated, seeing how much he [her son] disliked the argument, but something made her go on:

God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding." (p. 45)

Mrs. Moore is evidently upset by the discrepancy between the conception of God in England and how this is put into practice in India, and this is what leads her to discredit the religious belief as well as its language, "poor little talkative Christianity". Second, Mrs. Moore is the only character who sees the discrepancy between vision and explicit reality as something determined by silence, and this is what mainly characterises her point of view. The narrative voice records the situation as follows:

What had spoken to her in that scoured-out cavity of the granite? what dwelt in the first of the caves? Something very old and very small. Before time, it was before space also. Something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity - the undying worm itself. Since hearing its voice, she had not entertained one large thought, she was actually envious of Adela. All this fuss over a frightened girl! Nothing had happened, "and if it had," she found herself thinking with the cynicism of a withered priestess, "if it had, there are worse evils than love. "The unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love: in a cave, in a church-bourne, it amounts to the same. Visions are supposed to entail profundity, but - wait till you get one, dear reader! (p. 198).

Mrs. Moore dies in Aden, and this is, I believe, quite significant particularly when we remember that this strategic place is "the passage to India". After her experience

in the caves Mrs. Moore survives and dies in limbo, and it is also significant that she does not survive long enough to reach Europe, the place of civilization as represented in form and order. All this shows the maximum degree of honesty in Mrs. Moore, who could neither accommodate to the new environment nor fight to the end, the old frame of consciousness, but once the distinction between the two different worlds is annihilated by Mrs. Moore's death, the spirit of "connection" survives until the end, and this forms a main part of the perspective.

Another portrait of English civilization represented in order and form is enacted by Fielding, whose picture is less implicit than that of Mrs. Moore, simply because he is closer to the narrative voice than any other character in the novel. In Fielding civilization takes the form of the liberal humanist:

The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of goodwill plus culture and intelligence - a creed ill suited to Chandrapore, but he had come out too late to lose it. He had no racial feeling - not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the hard-instinct does not flourish (p. 56)

Like Mrs. Moore, Fielding is old enough to resist any assimilation or integration into the India of his "brother civilians". We know that "This Mr. Fielding had been caught by India late" and that he was over forty when he arrived at "that oddest portal - the Victoria terminus at Bombay." (p. 55)

With Fielding Forster seems to promote the potential as well as the limitation of the liberal humanist tradition which, in his previous fiction had often the mere perspective of triumphant potential, and this is what makes Forster, I believe, see this tradition now from a multiple perspective. But first to its positive effect.

Fielding is evidently protected by this tradition when he refuses to side with his "brother civilians" in Aziz' case, and instead, adopts an altogether independent attitude. It is this tradition which makes Fielding further defend Aziz even at the expense of becoming alienated from those Anglo-Indians and from their institution, the club. Another aspect of the positive value of this tradition is implied in the aesthetics which Fielding develops.

For example, Fielding views the Marabar Hills with the eye of the aesthete, at least when he looks at them from the upper veranda for a moment:

At this distance and hour they leapt into beauty; they were Monsalvat, Valhalla, the towers of a cathedral, peopled with saints and heroes, and covered with flowers. (p. 181)

But the point of view soon shifts in a subtle way to imply that the aesthetic of beauty is

ephemeral, and that the aesthete himself becomes sad as a result of this awareness:

It was the last moment of the light, and as he gazed at the Marabar Hills they seemed to move graciously towards him like a queen, and their charm became the sky's. At the moment they vanished they were everywhere, the cool benediction of the night descended, the stars sparkled, and the whole universe was a hill. Lovely, exquisite moment - but passing the Englishman with averted face and on swift wings. He experienced nothing himself; it was as if someone had told him there was such a moment, and he was obliged to believe. And he felt dubious and discontented suddenly, and wondered whether he was really and truly successful as a human being. After forty years' experience, he had learned to manage his life and make the best of it on advanced European lines, had developed his personality, explored his limitations, controlled his passions - and he had done it all without becoming either pedantic or worldly. A creditable achievement, but as the moment passed he felt he ought to have been working at something else the whole time - he didn't know at what, never would know, never could know, and that was why he felt sad (p. 181).

Fielding betrays further loyalty to the civilization of order and form (and consequently further limitation of the tradition) on his way back to his homeland when he sees Europe and India in terms of order and muddle respectively. When the "Mediterranean harmony" comes in view, Fielding begins to feel relief under the impact of order and form:

He re-embarked at Alexandria - bright blue sky, constant wind, clean low coastline, as against the intricacies of Bombay. Crete welcomed him next with the long snowy ridge of its mountains, and then came Venice (p. 270).

The whole of Chapter 27 is apparently intended to articulate the potential order and form in Fielding who survives the crisis of distinction between East and West and goes home with a reconciled vision. In comparison, Mrs. Moore has no such potential to make her survive it beyond Aden:

A ghost followed the ship up the Red Sea, but failed to enter the Mediterranean. Somewhere about Suez there is always a social change: the arrangements of Asia weaken and those of Europe begin to be felt, and during the transition Mrs. Moore was shaken off (p. 244).

The potential for survival in Fielding is comparatively stronger because of the

deeper effect of the civilization on him. He evidently has greater command of the language, the medium of form and order, than Mrs. Moore does, and consequently he can create a rationale to survive with in England and India. Instead of "poor little talkative Christianity" which Mrs. Moore finds useless as a support in crisis, Fielding has the liberal humanist tradition whose rhetorics and discipline are more convincing and up-to-date. The difference here between Mrs. Moore and Fielding is that the one withdraws from life, whilst the other detaches himself from it. This is how Fielding achieves reconciliation, by going back to England, marrying Stella and then returning to India, almost as an official Anglo-Indian. In India he survives with the rhetoric of the liberal humanist and although he has no sympathy for the British Empire in India, he justifies his own presence as an employee, not being unaware of the fact that it is at the expense of unemployed Indians.

Fielding's concluding remark "It's what I want. It is what you want" which he delivers towards the end of the novel is typical of his evasive mind, and in this evasion lies, I believe, the perilous limitation of the tradition of liberal humanism.

Adela is the third character in the group whose life is determined by the civilization of form and order. In one sentence, which is effectively dramatized throughout the novel, Forster initiates Adela into India and explores her character with comedy and irony. "I want to see the **real** India" Adela says, and by placing emphasis on the word "real" the author apparently needs no further utterance to express his comic irony; and the real, here, means for Adela something with the concrete existence of form and order which she is used to in England. The brevity of the discourse may be reminiscent of Jane Austin (much admired by Forster, as we know), and it certainly yields suggestive implication. For example, Adela's strong desire to see the real India may be identified with the similar desire in those Orientalists and travellers who, as Professor Sa'id believes, turn to the East with the gospel of unveiling the hidden mystery of the exotic Orient. Adela (unintentionally though) sums up a whole attitude of these writers towards the East, an attitude which may appear, at its face value, to include some objective observation but is in fact a subjective impression, the origin of which lies in the civilization of the observer rather than in that of the observed.

Certainly Adela has already read and heard India from her "brother civilians", but she tries to have her own picture or impression out of her first-hand experience. She is like the French journalist caught by Professor Sa'id at the outset of his study, writing "regretfully of the gutted downtown area", after the civil war of 1975-76 in Lebanon, that "it had once seemed to belong to... the Orient of Chateaubriand and Nerval". (Sa'id, 1979:1) Both Adela and the French journalist yearn for the "authentic" picture of the East they themselves heard or read about in travel accounts.

Professor Sa'id obviously regrets the insensitivity the French journalist (and those Orientalists) show towards the suffering indigenous people. Adela equally betrays such a kind of insensitivity which is captured by Fielding at a later stage in the narrative when he tells her:

The first time I saw you, you were wanting to see India,

not Indians, and it occurred to me: Ah, that won't take us far (p. 248).

Although Adela attempts to obtain her own "real" picture she ends up with the similar unreal picture which the French journalist seeks in the French Orientalists. As soon as she meets Aziz she takes him to be India, and the picture she forms is both romantic and confused. She cannot rid herself of the notion that Aziz would insist on "full-four" wives.

However, Adela is a particularly interesting character, and she has more liveliness than the narrative voice appears to allow her. She stands between the gracious Mrs. Moore and the rational Fielding. Being young enough, she aspires to see the "real" India, an aspiration which neither Mrs. Moore nor Fielding would like to contemplate, as they are more aware of their limitations than she is. Despite the fact that she has sympathy for one and admiration for the other, Adela can neither have the gracious spirit of Mrs. Moore nor the rational mind of Fielding; rather, she oscillates between the two. In Forster's technical term she would attempt roundness of character.

What makes Adela lively and attractive is, I believe, the portrait of her character in association with the echo which Forster integrates into the consciousness of character with remarkable subtlety.

Adela wants to see the **real** India but with an echo. The echo here can be identified with the civilization which has already shaped Adela's life before coming to India. It is a voice from the past which cannot be curbed in the course of present action. Looking at the scene which immediately precedes the crisis, we find that Adela's confusion, like Mrs. Moore's, begins when she faces an objective world which, for her, has no form and order. Ronny's remark in the aftermath is quite suggestive when he assures Adela that "the Marabar Caves were notoriously like one another; indeed, in the future they were to be numbered in sequence with white paint." (p.190) Adela is more confused than Mrs. Moore, because she had more on her mind to cope with before the disaster had taken place. She must have been tortured to feel suddenly attracted to Aziz, with Ronny on her mind and her relationship with him still being unsettled. Also she must have been horrified by the notion that she was attracted to a man who would insist on his "full-four" wives. With her middle-class morality, Adela would not dare reveal her personal feelings, and she was frightened that she might be driven to such end in front of the court; and, this inevitable suppression of feeling seems to transform the crisis into an echo which keeps reverberating into Adela's mind.

The echo, then, can be described as an ordeal of reticence which Adela lives with after the crisis. It is a state of awareness remembered in retrospect, and Adela describes her echo as being bad when she realises how subjective she was in her response to the experience in the caves. The echo is better when Adela attains some control over her subjectivity and collects her courage in preparation for getting Aziz acquitted. Before Adela surprises us with her decision to acquit Aziz she expe-

periences a divided life enacted in an alternation with the echo.

For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not only did the crush and stench alarm her; there was also a terrifying echo (p. 138).

Later on the effect of this echo is intensified :

For a time her own logic would convince her, then she would hear the echo again, weep, declare she was unworthy of Ronny, and hope her assailant would get the maximum penalty (p. 185).

yet on one occasion she confesses to Ronny that Aziz is innocent and that she "made an awful mistake". She adds that her echo is better (P. 193). But when she anticipates that she might break down in the court, Adela comments in the presence of Mr. Callendar and the Turtons: "My echo has come back again badly." (P. 203) And finally the echo seems to disappear when she talks to Fielding after Aziz has been acquitted:

My echo has gone - I call the buzzing sound in my ears an echo. You see, I have been unwell ever since that expedition to the caves, and possibly before it (p.227).

Had Adela met Fielding in the caves, or perhaps shortly after the birth of the echo, the crisis would probably have been curbed as she would have been helped by him to express her subjective feelings or communicate objective reality. Adela's main problem lies in her failure to give form or order to what she thought happened to her in the caves, and the problem is aggravated by the fact that those who volunteered, patronisingly to help her were least helpful. The situation is appropriately rendered as follows:

I'll thank you this evening, I'm all to pieces now," said the girl, forming each syllable carefully as if her trouble would diminish if it were accurately defined. She was afraid of reticence, in case something that she herself did not perceive took shape beneath it, and she had rehearsed with Mr. McBryde in an odd, mincing way her terrible adventure in the cave, how the man had never actually touched her but dragged her about, and so on. Her aim this morning was to announce, meticulously, that the strain was appalling, and she would probably break down under Mr. Amritrao's cross-examination and disgrace her friends. "My echo has come back again badly," she told them. "How about aspirin?" "It is not a headache, it is an echo." Unable to dispel the buzzing in her ears, Major Callendar had diagnosed it as a fancy, which must not be encouraged (pp. 202 - 3)

Adela's experience in the caves, then, disarms her of the defensive medium of communication and reduces the content of this experience as well as its language of expression to a mere echo. Her experience recalls Eliot's picture of human disintegration in "The Hollow Men".

"Shape without form, shade without colour / paralysed force, gesture without motion," and a similar picture occurs in the **Cocktail party** where the psychiatrist says: "What we know of other people/ Is our memory of the moments".

Adela's project of seeing the real India consequently proves to be a failure and the experience in the caves is merely a proof of its futility. Seeing normally demands some reasonable competence in language to communicate what is seen or discovered. Judging the situation by the practical result of action, the narrative voice records the failure of the project with bitter irony and comedy:

Beneath her were gathered all the wreckage of her silly attempt to see India - the people she had met at the Bridge party, the man and his wife who hadn't sent their carriage, the old man who would lend his car, various servants, villagers, officials, and the prisoner himself (p. 209).

As a result of this state of inexplicability or the failure to see, Adela appeals to Mrs. Moore, Seeking in her the function of an oracle. But Mrs. Moore herself becomes incommunicative. Only Fielding with his rational control over the language could help Adela articulate the situation which led to disaster.

But how does Adela tend to see India? Forster, I think, makes an important allusion when he refers to the field-glass in the course of the crisis:

She had struck the polished wall - for no reason - and before the comment had died away he followed her, and the climax was the falling of her field-glass (p. 185).

The reference can further suggest that Adela sees India as an extension of her own subjective power. Seeing, here, is an act of possessing which eventually leads to dominance over the seen. This leads us to what may be considered a most revealing remark about Adela and perhaps about the whole perspective of the novel. The remark occurs in a scene where Aziz contemplates on the Guest House boat towards the great Mau tank:

Those English had improvised something to take the place of oars, and were proceeding in their work of patrolling India. The sight endeared the Hindus by comparison, and looking back at the milk-white hump of the palace he hoped that they would enjoy carrying their idol about, for at all events it did not pry into other people's lives.

This pose of "seeing India" which had seduced him to Miss Quested at Chandrapore was only a form of ruling India; no sympathy lay behind it; he knew exactly what was going on in the boat as the party gazed at the steps down which the image would presently descend, and debated how near they might row without getting into trouble officially (pp. 296 - 97).

Adela, as mentioned above, was not horrified by what she imagined was an assault on her by Aziz, but rather by what she wished to have, that is herself taking the initiative for the assault. At the same time this wish was prevented from fulfillment by the imperative demand of her middle-class morality. The crisis in the caves was bound to happen, as the demarcation line between the id and super-ego was getting thin enough to invite confusion. Sexual assault would mean for Adela a violation of the order of her civilization (a kind of middle-class code of morality). This would rather mean for her the abolition of distinction between British and Indians, i.e. between Ronny and Aziz, and at the moment of crisis Adela experienced this abolition and (due to her limited vision) found it horrifying.

Adela wakes up from her crisis (and this is, of course, to her credit) and realizes the big but tragic discrepancy between seeing India and seeing Aziz. She must have realized that Aziz could not be seen as intimately as she wished with a field-glass. Hence comes the significance of the field-glass whose fall permits Adela to see Aziz cosequently to achieve her wish imaginatively, but momentarily.

Fielding's comment on Adela's situation as a result of her failure to see India is apt:

Still, there should be some way of transporting this lady back to the Civil Lines. The resources of civilization are numerous (P. 231).

Realizing how unrealistic (from her point of view) it would be for her to marry Ronny and continue to live in India. Adela says to Fielding:

I am not astray in England. I fit in there - no, don't think I shall do harm in England. When I am forced back there, I shall settle down to some career. I have sufficient money left to start myself, and heaps of friends of my own type. I shall be quite all right (p. 250).

"The resources of civilization are numerous", Fielding says. He implies that one resource is that of order and form, another is that of disorder and muddledom. He further suggests that the test of one against the other results in the failure of order and form rather than in the defeat of disorder and muddledom. In the three characters discussed above Forster shows how the civilization of order and form is engulfed by a mystic vision forever, as in Mrs. Moore; reduced to a rationale of rhetoric as in Fielding; and transformed into an empty echo as in Adela.

The story of Western imperialism as portrayed from **Heart of Darkness** to **Kim** can be summed up as the desire to extend or to impose the civilization of order and form on those countries of Africa and Asia, and the order and form which can be found in the civilization of those countries would not have been accessible to those European because their civilization carried with it the geneses of distinction. In simple words Europeans went there with the claim of having the banner of civilization to civilize what they thought was disordered and muddled. The narrative voice records that Adela and Fielding were unable to transcend the reality of the situation which surrounded the crisis so as to see beyond order and form despite the fact that they discussed the matter at length:

She was at the end of her spiritual tether, and so was he.
 Were there worlds beyond which they could never touch, or
 did all that is possible enter their consciousness? They
 could not tell. They only realized that their outlook was
 more or less similar, and found in this a satisfaction.
 Perhaps life is a mystery, not a muddle; they could not
 tell. Perhaps the hundred Indians which fuss and squabble
 so tiresomely are one, and the universe they mirror is one.
 They had not the apparatus for judging (P. 251).

Studies on Forster have often tended to underestimate the civilization of form and order as the major source of failure, and, instead, have given more attention to the other resource as a solid manifestation of triumph in silence. Examples of this are the studies by Wilfred Stone and Barbara Rosecrane who try to show the contrast between the energetic natural world (India) and the limited human power (the British presence in India) viewing the elements of struggle as microcosm and macrocosm. One reason behind this kind of critical evaluation lies in the emphasis Forster apparently puts on Indian nature as the protagonist of the novel; another in the concluding remark of "No, not yet; No, not there" which is given to the natural elements to express the last words in the novel. Forster presumably makes less **verbal** emphasis on the civilization of form and order so as to see it, instead, animated in character; one group of characters (the Anglo-Indians) are fully aware of its power, and therefore would not even question its negative force, the other group make themselves believe that they are free from the domination of their civilization because they apparently stand against distinction (one with her open-mindedness, another with his rational mind, the third with her spontaneous desire to see the real India). Instead of verbal emphasis by the narrative voice, characters enact the explicit as well as the implicit aspects of their civilization.

The case with the Indian nature (by which I mean the non human India) is bound to be different, as it cannot stand for itself in action like human characters, and this is what requires it to be treated by the narrative description, and which consequently tempts the narrator to tell on behalf of India rather than to show it in action. The words "no, not yet,... No, not there" have an appropriateness of ending mainly because they remind us that India ought to have the upper voice if not the final word. It is as if Forster sees that neither Aziz, the oppressed, nor Fielding who is part of the oppres-

sor (if not by race, then by the common ground of civilization) can qualify for settling the question of distinction by friendship. India, metaphorically speaking, is the only free party among those who are involved in the interplay of action. With his typical detachment Fielding declares that though Aziz and himself want friendship, Indian earth and sky stand in the way to declare, in their turn, that the achievement of such desire is out of time and place. Earlier in the narrative Aziz says that "Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war - aha, aha! Then is our time" (p. 311). The place for the achievement of friendship, the Indian earth and sky seem to suggest, should not be the land where the oppressed and the oppressor meet on unequal terms; and in the meantime we know that Forster and Massoud enjoyed friendship in England before and during the composition of the novel.

Commenting on the British presence in India on the occasion of the climactic crisis of the caves, Forster says:

Generations of invaders have tried, but they remain in exile.
The important towns they build are only retreats, their
quarrels the malaise of men who cannot find their way home.
India knows of their trouble. She knows of the whole world's
trouble, to its uttermost depth. She calls "Come" through
her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and august.
But come to what? She has never defined. She is not a promise,
only an appeal (128).

This is one place where the point of view is made explicit enough by means of this brief generalisation. The British are in India but not of it. They are exiled by India as well as exiled in their own civilization.

India "is not a promise, only an appeal." This is Forster's voice at its most explicit form. With the civilization of form and order some British actually see India as a promise (as in the Anglo-Indian group) others imagine it to be so (as in the other group). Forster's ironical voice shows that what appears or would appear a promise is only an appeal. Also he shows that although this appeal varies from one group to another, and from one person to another at the same time and in the same group, the result is the same: they all end up in the exile of the appeal.

The concluding finale Forster arrives at is, then, a further demonstration of the power which lies behind the dominant civilization, and by presenting a variety of characters, Forster, I believe, succeeds in showing the overt pattern of this civilization as well as its covert meaning.

By the time Forster was composing **A Passage to India** he might have realized that his accomplishment was only another "Salute to the orient", and this time it is not from the "passage to India", where the statue of de la Sepse stands but from the heart of India, where the Marabar caves forever exist. The salute in fiction may be different in kind from the salute in non-fiction prose Forster made earlier, it would ap-

parently suggest a deeper vision, where the picture of the Orient is presented with sympathy and depth. Yet the visionary salute makes no conquest of reality.

A reconciliation between Fielding and Aziz may not only imply a contradiction of the reality of the situation, but also an opposition to Professor Sa'id's thesis which is based on the distinction generated by the power of the dominant civilization of the West. One wonders whether a reconsideration of Forster by Professor Sa'id might lead to include Forster in the enlightened group of Orientalists, or at least exclude him from the group of Disraeli's great Asiatic mystery'.

NOTES:

1. Particular attention is drawn to Forster's Pamphlet : **The Government of Egypt: Recommendations by a Committee of the International Section of the Labour Research Department, with Notes on Egypt** (London, 1920), pp. 1 - 12.
Another Work by Forster on the subject is "Salute to the Orient" which will be quoted here later.
2. See author's discussion "Forster on Meredith", **The Review of English Studies**. 24 (73) 185 - 91 : "Forster on Meredith," **Modern Fiction Studies**. 29 (83) 240 - 5.
E. M. Forster, **Where Angels Fear to Tread** (1905 : Rpt. London :
3. Personal Interview with Professor Raymond Williams, 27 July 1980.
4. Various Studies Relevant to Indian background have been undertaken by Forster scholars. The most competent of those is G.K. Das's **E. M. Forster's India** (London: Macmillan, 1977) : another study is by V.A. Shahane «Symbolism in a passage to India: The Temple. in **perspective on E.M. Forster : A Passage to India** ed V. A. Shahane (New York : Barnes and Noble , 1962.
5. E.M. Forster , **A Passage to India** (1924 : rpt. London: Edward Arnold, 1978) p.8. All further references to this work appear in the text.

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