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FORSTER'S A PASSAGE TO INDIA

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Edward Forster's

A Passage to India

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Life of E. M. Forster

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London in 1879, the son of an architect. He attended Tonbridge School, which he hated; he caricatured what he termed "public school behavior" in several of his novels. A different atmosphere awaited him at King's College, Cambridge, which he enjoyed thoroughly.

After graduation, he began to write short stories. He lived for a time in Italy, the scene of two of his early novels: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), and *A Room with a View* (1908). Cambridge is the setting for *The Longest Journey* (1907). It was in this year that he returned to England and delivered a series of lectures at Working Men's College. His most mature work to date was to appear in 1910 with the publication of *Howards End*.

Forster then turned to literary journalism and wrote a play which was never staged. In 1911 he went to India with G. Lowes Dickinson, his mentor at King's College. During World War 1, Forster was engaged in civilian war work in Alexandria. He returned to London after the war as a journalist.

In 1921 he again went to India, to work as secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas State Senior. He had begun work on *A Passage to India* before this time, but on reading his notes in India, he was discouraged and put them aside. The book was published in 1924, having been written upon his return to England. This was his last novel. It is considered to be his *magnum opus,* and it won for the author the Femina Vie Heureuse and the James Tait Black Memorial prizes in 1925.

In 1927 Forster delivered the William George Clark lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge. Titled *Aspects of the Novel,* the lectures were published in book form the same year. Also in 1927 he became a Fellow of Cambridge.

Forster's writing after that time has been varied. A collection of short stories (*The Eternal Moment*) was published in 1928. *Abinger Harvest* (1936) is a collection of reprints of reviews and articles. During World War 11 he broadcast many essays over the BBC. He has written a pageant play (*England's Pleasant Land*), a film (*Diary For Timothy*), two biographies (*Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* in 1934 and Marianne Thornton in 1956), a libretto for Benjamin Britten's opera, *Billy Budd* (with Eric Crozier), and numerous essays. In 1953 he published *The Hill of Devi,* an uneven collection of letters and reminiscences of his experiences

in India.

In 1960 *A Passage to India* was adapted for the stage by Santha Rama Rau. After playing in London for a year, the play opened on Broadway on January 31, 1962, and ran for 110 performances. Although Forster was "delighted" with the adaptation, most of the American critics felt the play did not measure up to the novel. Forster has never agreed to film versions of his novels.

In 1946, Forster moved to King's College in Cambridge to live there as an honorary fellow. Mr. Forster's numerous awards included membership in the Order of Companions of Honour, a recognition bestowed in 1953 by Queen Elizabeth II.

The British Raj in India

India was accustomed to invaders by the time the English arrived in the seventeenth century. Beginning with the great Indo-Aryan invasion (2400-1500 B.C.), the natives of the Indian subcontinent had seen parts of their land overrun by conquering armies of Huns, Arabs, Persians, Tartars, and Greeks. Buddhists, Hindus, and Moslems had ruled over parts of the vast country. None had succeeded in ruling all of India—none until Great Britain came onto the scene.

The English arrived at an opportune time, during the disintegration of the Mogul Empire, which had controlled most of India from 1526 until the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. As the empire dissolved, wars for power between Marathas, Persians, and Sikhs began. The English took advantage of these conflicts.

The English did not come as invaders or conquerors; they came as traders. When the British East India Company was formed in 1600, its agents were in competition with the French and Portuguese traders who had preceded them. Whereas the other European traders kept aloof from Indian affairs, the English became involved in them. Trade was their most important consideration, but fortifications and garrisons were necessary to insure security. Warring princes were very interested in obtaining European arms and military skills for their own purposes and willingly paid for them with cash, credit, or grants of land.

In this way power was gradually gained by the British East India Company until in 1757 Robert Clive gained control of India in the Battle of Plassey. In 1774 Warren Hastings became the first governor-general of India; during his regime the foundations of the civil service system were laid and a system of law courts was organized. The power was still in the hands of the East India Company; the company agents extended their control and obtained the right to collect taxes.

The Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 was an attempt by the Mogul emperor to regain power, and it showed a desire on the part of Indians to win back control of their own country. The rebellion, which lacked organization, support, and leadership, left widespread bitterness. In 1858 the British government took over rule of India, with power in the hands of the British Parliament. Great Britain indirectly controlled various territories, known as "Indian States," where the rulers were rewarded for support

during the rebellion: titles were conferred, autonomy was granted, and protection against possible revolts was assured.

In 1885 the Indian National Congress was formed. Little more than a debating society, it did represent every geographical area and all religious groups and castes. In 1906 the Moslem League was formed to advance the cause of Mohammedanism in India.

From 1858 to 1914 England firmly established its rule over the country. English governors at the head of each province were responsible to the governor-general (or viceroy) who was appointed by the King of England and responsible to Parliament. In 1877 Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India.

In return for helping Great Britain in World War 1, Indians were promised a share in their own government. This was far from independence, for repressive measures were directed against India. More Indians, however, were elected to the legislature and Indians, for the first time, sat on the Viceroy's Council. There was a constant struggle for independence. The Amritsar Massacre in 1919 indicated the extent of unrest and trouble among the Indians.

India was guaranteed independence before it agreed to help the Allies in World War 11. In 1946 Clement Atlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain, offered complete independence as soon as Indian leaders could agree on a form of government that could manage a free India. By 1947 it was clear that only partition could resolve the conflict among the Indian peoples. India and Pakistan became dominions in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In 1949, the new constitution declared the Union of India to be a sovereign democratic republic.

General Summary

A Passage to India was divided by E. M. Forster into three parts. The first part, "Mosque," begins with what is essentially a description of the city of Chandrapore. The physical separation of the city into sections, plus the separation of earth and sky, are indicative of a separation of deeper significance that exists between the Indian and English sectors.

This novel deals with human relationships, and the theme that determines its plot line is introduced in this section: "Is it possible for the Indian and the Englishman to be friends?" To show both sides of this question, the reader is first introduced to Dr. Aziz and his friends. Aziz is a Moslem doctor who practices at the government hospital in Chandrapore under the supervision of Major Callendar. Among Aziz's friends are Hamidullah, an Indian barrister who has lived in England; Nawab Bahadur, an influential landowner; and Mahmoud Ali. In the opening chapters these men are shown discussing the English officials who govern under the British Raj in India.

Among the English faction, who also discuss the Anglo-Indian relationship, are Mr. Turton, the Collector; Major Callendar, the English doctor; Mr. McBryde, the police magistrate; and Ronny Heaslop, the city magistrate and the latest official to assume duties in Chandrapore.

Between these groups, or outside them, are Cyril Fielding, the English principal of the government school, whose allegiance belongs to neither group; Mrs. Moore, mother of Ronny Heaslop, who has come to India as chaperone to Miss Adela Quested, Ronny's intended fiancee; Professor Godbole, a Hindu who is separated from the Moslems by his religion and* from the English by his religion and nationality; and the English missionaries, Mr. Graysford and Mr. Sorley, who share none of the arrogance of English officialdom as they attempt to convert the Indians to Christianity.

The story opens with Aziz's arrival at Hamidullah's house, where he is to spend a social evening with his friends. Their conversation centers upon the indignities that the Indian must suffer at the hands of the English officials and their wives. Young Ronny Heaslop, whom they dub the "red-nosed boy," is a particular object of ridicule.

Aziz is summoned to the house of his superior, Major

Callendar. He is late in arriving and when he arrives, he finds the major gone. Two English women preempt his tonga and on the walk back to his house he encounters Mrs. Moore at the mosque. The old lady endears herself to Aziz by her innate understanding of him and of Moslem custom; he calls her an Oriental.

Later, at the English club, Adela Quested expresses her desire to see the "real India" and is advised by a passerby to "try seeing Indians." To humor her Mr. Turton offers to give a "Bridge Party," a garden party ostensibly designed to bridge the distance between the English and the Indian, and to give Adela and Mrs. Moore the opportunity to meet socially some of the upper-class Indians.

At Mrs. Moore's cottage that night Ronny and his mother discuss her encounter with Aziz at the mosque. Ronny shows his unmistakable prejudice and Mrs. Moore is appalled at his inhumane attitude. On her way to bed, she exhibits a sympathetic response to a wasp, one of the least of India's creatures.

On the outskirts of the town, Mr. Sorley, the younger and more liberal of the two English missionaries, while willing to accept that there may well be a heaven for mammals, cannot bring himself to admit the lowly wasp.

The garden party given by the Turtons only serves to show more clearly the division of peoples, as each group keeps to itself. Cyril Fielding, who mingles freely with the Indians, is impressed by the friendliness of Mrs. Moore and Adela and invites them to tea at his home. They are also invited for a Thursday morning visit—which never materializes—to the home of the Bhattacharya's, a Hindu couple.

That evening, in a discussion with Ronny, Mrs. Moore is again appalled by her son, and quotes to him from the Bible, reminding him that God is love and expects man to love his neighbor (though she herself has found Him less satisfying in India than ever before). Ronny humors her, reminding himself that she is old.

At tea at Fielding's house, Mrs. Moore and Adela visit pleasantly with Aziz and Professor Godbole, enigmatic Hindu associate of Mr. Fielding. The kindness of Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested prompts Aziz to invite them on an outing to the Marabar Caves, which they accept. Ronny Heaslop arrives at Fielding's cottage to take his mother and Adela to a game of polo; his discourtesy to Aziz and his arrogant demeanor toward all Indians

causes Adela and Ronny to quarrel, and Adela tells Ronny she cannot marry him.

Later the young people go for a ride with Nawab Bahadur, and when the automobile is involved in an accident with an unidentified animal on a back road, they are drawn together once more and announce their engagement. Mrs. Moore accepts the news calmly, but when told of the accident she murmurs, "A ghost!"

Aziz, pleased with the friendship shown him by Cyril Fielding, shows the English professor a picture of his dead wife, a courtesy equal to inviting Fielding behind the purdah, the highest honor an Indian can give.

The next section, "Caves," begins with a detailed description of the Marabar Caves, the peculiar hollow caverns within the equally curious Marabar Hills that rise from an otherwise flat area outside the city of Chandrapore.

It is to these caves that Aziz has planned an elaborate trip for Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested. He has also included Fielding and Godbole in the invitation. Unfortunately, Fielding and Godbole miss the train and Aziz is left in full charge of the expedition, which begins with a train ride and ends with an elephant ride to the immediate vicinity of the caves. In the first cave Mrs. Moore is terrified by an echo and the press of the crowd and declines to go farther.

Aziz, a guide, and Adela go on alone. Adela, pondering her engagement to Ronny, unwisely asks Aziz if he has more than one wife. The excitable little Indian, upset by her queries, dashes into a cave to recover his composure. Adela wanders aimlessly into another cave and is supposedly assaulted by someone there. She rushes down the side of the hill, where she meets Nancy Derek, an English companion to a maharani, who has brought Fielding to the caves. Nancy returns the overwrought Adela to Chandrapore.

In the meantime Aziz, knowing nothing of what has happened to Adela, entertains his other friends and returns with them by train. At the station he is met by Mr. Haq, the police inspector, who arrests him for assaulting Miss Quested.

Fielding alienates himself from the English by siding with Aziz. The English rally around Adela and press for a quick conviction. Mrs. Moore, now sunk into a state of apathy, refuses to admit that Aziz may be guilty but also refuses to testify in his

behalf in court; Ronny arranges passage for her to England. On the way she dies; her name, however, becomes for a time a legend to the natives of Chandrapore.

At the trial, Adela Quested, who has been in a state of shock since the incident at the caves, suddenly finds her mind clear again and exonerates Aziz. Her withdrawal of the charge against Aziz causes her to be ostracized by the English. Fielding reluctantly offers her the use of his cottage while he is absent on official business, and Ronny eventually breaks their engagement. Disillusioned by her experience in India, Adela returns to England; and Fielding persuades Aziz to drop a damage suit against her.

Two years later the setting of the novel shifts to the Hindu state of Mau in a section entitled "Temple." Following the trial, Fielding had returned to England, married, and was then sent on a tour of central India to inspect government schools. Godbole has become the Minister of Education at Mau, and through his influence, Aziz has become personal physician to the Rajah of Mau.

The opening chapter of this section describes a Hindu ceremony honoring the birth of the god Krishna. Professor Godbole directs the temple choir and, in an ecstasy of religious fervor, dances his joy. While in this almost trancelike state he remembers Mrs. Moore and a wasp, associating them as he contemplates the love of God. The biblical statement "God is Love," with which Mrs. Moore had exhorted her son, is repeated in the Hindu ceremony, although through an error in its printing it becomes "God si Love."

Aziz is annoyed when he discovers that Fielding is visiting Mau in line with his official duties. He has become thoroughly disillusioned with the British and even with Fielding; when he learned that Fielding had married in England, he concluded that the wife was Adela Quested and henceforth refused to read any of Fielding's letters. Aziz has married again and has his children with him. Although he does not embrace Hinduism, he is tolerant of their festivals and is finding peace and contentment away from British domination. He has, however, let his practice of medicine degenerate until he is little more than a glorified medicine man.

When Aziz meets Fielding again, he learns that Stella Moore, not Adela Quested, is Fielding's wife. Stella and her brother Ralph have accompanied Fielding to India. Aziz forms a special

attachment for Ralph, whose bee stings he treats, because Ralph shows many of the traits of his mother, Mrs. Moore.

The Hindu festival continues after the celebration of the birth of the god. Fielding and Stella go out in a boat to better observe the ceremony, as do Aziz and Ralph in another boat. In the storm the boats collide with each other and capsize. In the general confusion that follows, the ceremony comes to an end and the English return to the guest house. Aziz has confided to Ralph that the rajah has died, but the announcement of his death is suspended until after the festival.

Hinduism affects both Stella and Ralph, but Fielding cannot understand the effect it has on them, though he is intrigued by it. Aziz believes that Ralph, at least, has an Oriental mind, as Mrs. Moore had.

Although Fielding finds that the school that Professor Godbole was to superintend has been neglected and the building turned into a granary, he does nothing to rectify the situation. The floods, which have kept Fielding in Mau, abate, and he and his party make plans to leave. Before they go, Fielding and Aziz take a final horseback ride together. Good-naturedly, they argue about the Anglo-Indian problem. Aziz excitedly declares that India must be united and the English driven out. Sensing that this is the end of their association, Aziz and Fielding attempt to pledge eternal friendship in spite of their differences, but the path narrows and their horses are forced apart, signifying that such a friendship is not yet possible.

List of Characters

Adela Quested
A young woman newly arrived from England, expecting to be the fiancee of Ronny Heaslop.

Mrs. Moore
Adela's chaperone and Ronny Heaslop's mother, by her first marriage.

Ronny Heaslop
The City Magistrate of Chandrapore.

Doctor Aziz
The Moslem doctor at the Government Hospital.

Major and Mrs. Callendar
A Civil Surgeon and Aziz's superior; and his wife.

Cyril Fielding
The English Principal at the Government College.

Professor Godbole
The Hindu colleague of Fielding's.

Hamidullah
Aziz's uncle and eminent Moslem barrister.

Mahmoud Ali
Pleader (attorney) in the court, and friend of Aziz.

Ram Chand, Syed Mohammed, and Mr. Haq
Friends of Aziz.

Mr. Das
Ronny's assistant and the Hindu judge at the trial.

Nawab Bahadur
The wealthy, influential friend of Aziz.

Mr. and Mrs. McBryde
The District Superintendent of Police and his wife.

Nancy Derek
A guest of the McBryde's and the companion of a maharani in a native state.

Mr. and Mrs. Turton
Collector, head of British officialdom and social leader of Chandrapore; and his wife.

Mr. Armitrao
The lawyer from Calcutta who takes Aziz's case.

Nureddin
Grandson of Nawab Bahadur.

Ralph Moore
Mrs. Moore's son by her second marriage.

Stella Moore
Mrs. Moore's daughter, who becomes the wife of Cyril Fielding.

Mr. and Mrs. Lesley
A British official and his wife.

Karin, Ahmed, Jamila
Children of Aziz.

Doctor Panna Lal
Hindu colleague of Aziz.

Mohammed Latif
Poor relative who lives in the house of Hamidullah.

Mr. Graysford and Mr. Sorley
Missionaries who live on the outskirts of Chandrapore.

Lord and Lady Mellanby
The Lieutenant Governor and his wife.

Mrs. Bhattacharya
The Indian woman who invites Adela and Mrs. Moore to her house and then neglects to send a carriage for them.

Chapter Commentaries

Part I

Chapters 1-3

Chandrapore is an undistinguished Indian town except for the outlying Marabar Caves. The language that Forster uses to describe the town creates the feeling of monotony, vast space, and infinity. The separation of the English settlement from the Indian is as distinct in the character and attitudes of the people as it is in the physical appearance of the houses and grounds.

Forster uses the sky as the symbolic arch which is almost the only common link between the two national groups. By implication, he contrasts the infinite power and mystery of the immense sky with the discordant affairs of earthbound men.

Changes in weather and types of weather are common symbols used by authors to indicate changes in moods or deeper meanings. In this book, Forster shows the sky as a source of strength as it governs the weather and the seasons. The earth is shown to be dependent upon the caprices of the sky. Words such as "glory" and "benediction" give the sky divine attributes. In his notes in the Everyman Edition, Forster records that the three parts of the book correspond to the three seasons of India: the cold season, which is just ending in the Mosque section, the hot season, which dominates the Caves section, and the rainy season, which occurs during the Temple section.

A central question of the novel is presented in Chapter 2: "Can the Indians and the English become friends?" The problems involved in interracial relationships determine the main lines of the plot's structure.

The Indians are introduced as intelligent and perceptive people who resent their treatment by the British but generally accept it with a humorous cynicism. Forster, although he depicts Indian failings, quite frankly sympathizes with the Indian attitude rather than with the English. Part of his concern was to show the evils of political rule of one nation over another. The major Indian characters in this novel are educated men who are capable of independent action. They must serve under minor or major British officials who rarely make any effort to consider the Indian

viewpoint about anything. The Indians are expected to obey the British without question.

Some of the older Indians judge the English both as a group and as individuals: Hamidullah, for example, recalls the fine English people with whom he lived in Cambridge. In India, however, only the English are free to make overtures of friendship. The Indians know from past experiences, too, that the friendly English newcomers usually become tiresomely condescending in a short time under the influence of the career British officials. (It will be seen throughout the book that most of the English think of the Indians as a group. It is a rare English person who dignifies an Indian as an individual.)

The reader meets Aziz's aunt, a Moslem woman in purdah (an Indian custom by which women live in seclusion). The only men to see women's faces were the men in their immediate families. It was commonly thought that Indian women were unimportant shadows in the background. Forster suggests that the sheltered Indian women were often women with lively minds whose opinions were sought and valued. Their men enjoyed visiting with them as equals.

Part 1, therefore, begins with an introduction to India from the Moslem viewpoint. (The term "Mohammedan," used by Westerners as a synonym for "Moslem," is considered objectionable by the professors of this faith. Mohammed, or Muhammed, was not divine; he was simply the messenger of Allah. The terms "Moslem" to define the person and "Islam" to mean the religion are considered correct.) This viewpoint is shown primarily through the warm, impulsive, young Aziz.

It is important to remember that Aziz calls Mrs. Moore an Oriental. The conflict of the Oriental mind and the Western mind is an important one in this novel, because it is the basis of much of the misunderstanding. Mrs. Moore has the ability to cross the lines. It is further important to remember the inscription that Aziz would choose for his tomb: he cherishes the "secret understanding of the heart" and values that quality in others.

Forster uses Chapters 2 and 3 to contrast Indian and English customs, attitudes, and beliefs. He shows the Indians at home discussing the English, followed by the English at the club discussing the Indians. Both groups are revealing likes, dislikes, and preconceived judgments about each other. Only the reader is seeing both sides and the elements that shape the problem of

Anglo-Indian dissension in India.

It is well to review these two chapters in detail to gain the feeling of differences between the groups. Look for contrasting viewpoints. For example, notice the difference in attitudes in the Major Callendar-Aziz episode. The major expected Aziz promptly; Aziz tarried with his friends and was delayed further by an accident to his bicycle. The underlying conflict is in the attitude toward time.

Highly organized nations and people put a premium on promptness; visitors to foreign lands, where life is slower, often notice that their time has only relative value. Punctuality, to a native of a country such as India, is not a major virtue; but courtesy is. The major, however, waiting to go to the club, becomes impatient at the delay and dashes off to settle the matter without leaving a message, without considering that Aziz may have a social life which would take him away from his house. Both men feel a sense of injustice.

Such opposing points of view serve as a constant source of irritation on both sides. Very few of the characters are able to overlook such petty differences and to find planes of common respect. Underlying these surface differences is, of course, the feeling of superiority of the British ruling class and the sting the Indian feels as the subject race.

The principal characters begin to emerge more distinctly from this point. Mrs. Moore and Aziz are revealed as persons of spirit and determination. Fielding's one line at the club, "Try seeing Indians," discloses that he shares their broader thinking.

Ronny Heaslop is shown for what he is: the kind of person who seems to have been stamped out with a cookie cutter. He is a product of England's public school system and adopts quickly and completely the attitudes of his British colleagues in India. This solves the inconvenience of thinking for himself and, of course, simplifies his relationship with his colleagues.

Contrast Ronny's statement about the subject race with the ideas of the newcomers, Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested. One should give careful consideration to the way Mrs. Moore begins her acquaintance with India. She respects what she cannot understand, as at the mosque. She puzzles her son, Ronny, by describing Aziz as a "young man" rather than as a young native. Later, she is almost swayed by Ronny's interpretation of the

incident until she realizes that Ronny does not really know Aziz and that he is judging him simply as an Indian. Aziz is, to Ronny, not a young man to whom one accords the dignity of his position, but a young Indian who has dared to converse on an equal basis with an Englishwoman.

Adela Quested develops as a possible "thorn-in-the-side" person because she questions blanket judgments. She is a plain, fair-minded young woman with a questing mind and with (so she believes) an interest in knowing the Indians as they really are. She has the perception to wonder if she can be happy with a "rubber-stamp" British official as she questions Ronny's acceptance of the opinions of the 20-year men in the British Raj.

Fielding's comment, "Try seeing Indians" is a key to understanding this man's broader thinking. He seems to be saying: Stop looking at India. Try seeing the Indians as people with all the common problems that people everywhere have to meet.

The comments and thoughts of Fielding and Mrs. Moore should be observed closely. Their viewpoints, although different from each other, are unusually objective, and through their eyes the reader is able to view the problems more objectively.

In the opening chapters observe Forster's use of symbols. These symbols carry a thread of meaning throughout the novel. For instance, in the first chapter special significance is given to the sky. In Chapter 3 the moon becomes a symbol of universality: Mrs. Moore wonders if she is looking at the other side of the moon, the side never seen in England. A person passing by overhears, and comments that even on the other side of the world, it is still the same old moon.

Consider the implied meanings. Geographical location may change, but the same moon shines down upon everyone. There is a universal oneness—the oneness that might be achieved among all people, but which now exists only in the natural world. Later, when Mrs. Moore looks up at the moon, she feels a curious kinship with all heavenly bodies. This is the first portent of the transcendent nature of Mrs. Moore's thoughts.

The wasp symbol which crops up throughout the novel appears here for the first time. It is associated with Mrs. Moore's spiritual sensibility; and later the Hindu, Professor Godbole, is to associate the wasp with his memory of Mrs. Moore when he is participating in a religious ceremony. Both Mrs. Moore and the professor have

an appreciation for the importance of everything—people, animals, insects, and even inanimate objects—in the divine scheme.

The geniality with which Collector Turton offers to give the "Bridge Party" (a party supposedly intended to bridge the gap between nationalities), to satisfy Adela Quested's desire to see Indians is indicative of the courtesy the English tender to their own kind. This serves as a contrast to the lack of courtesy they show to their Indian subjects.

Chapters 4-6

The central event of these chapters is the Bridge Party. When the Indian gentlemen receive their invitations, Nawab Bahadur, a wealthy landowner, makes a significant statement about long-distance sympathy. Some of the Indians believe that the invitation to meet the English socially is due to pressure brought to bear by the lieutenant governor. Nawab Bahadur announces his intention to accept the invitation, believing that it is local in origin; he says, in effect, the governor is too far away to understand the problem of Chandrapore. A problem that is too uncomfortable to face can always be ignored if one maintains a safe distance from it.

By this time, the actions and reactions of the two large groups are generally evident. One is accustomed to the feeling of suspicion that the groups hold for each other, with nothing accepted at face value.

A part of the English colony that is seldom mentioned is the missionary compound on the outskirts of the city. To lead into the discussion of the work of the missionaries, Forster writes, "All invitations must proceed from heaven perhaps . . ." The missionaries, Mr. Sorley and Mr. Graysford, are trying to teach that God loves everyone. The Hindus question if that includes monkeys, jackals, and even the lowly wasp? (Recall Mrs. Moore's appreciation for the wasp, one of the least-appreciated creatures of India.)

The younger of the missionaries, Mr. Sorley, though he will admit mammals to a heaven, cannot quite bring himself to include wasps; and he balks completely at plants, mud, and bacteria. Forster seems, by implication, to be indicating another difference between the cultures. First, from the missionaries' (and the Western) point of view, everyone must omit something from his consideration: if everyone and everything is equal, how can there

be anyone or anything to look down upon to increase one's sense of self-importance? Second, from an opposing standpoint, Forster emphasizes an important Hindu concept, that the Divine excludes nothing and no one.

The term "Bridge Party" is an ironic one, for the party serves only to intensify the division of peoples. Fielding, who chooses to socialize with the Indians, does so at the cost of alienating himself from the English. The English use of "they" in speaking of the Indians again demonstrates that the English think of the Indians en masse, not as individuals.

In describing the party, Forster presents many types of women. Mrs. Turton typifies the "official Englishwoman." She is the acknowledged leader of the British social class system. She considers herself superior to Indians, even to those who surpass her in knowledge. Contrast her Indian dialect for underlings, for example, with the Indian ladies' command of English.

Miss Quested, the newcomer, is the inquiring woman who is too much of an individual to accept the conformity required by the British group. To many of the Englishwomen in the strange world of India, conformity and security become companions. Conformity assures the insecure of a standard of thought and behavior, thus relieving them of the anxiety of making their own decisions. The insecure person feels threatened by new or different ideas, and the individual who questions, as Adela does, poses a threat. She is immediately set down as not being "pukka," or one of the right sort to live in India.

The Indian women, only recently liberated from purdah, are a puzzling combination of giggles, shyness, and unexpected knowledge. The purdah custom was subject to bitter discussion within Indian ranks for many years. At the time of this book, 1924, many women were emerging into a fuller life. Many more of the women were urged, often by their men, to forsake purdah. For example, the forsaking of this custom was often the subject of Aziz's poetry two years later, in Mau, though he still respects it in the earlier sections of the book. One realizes the rapid transformation of the Indian woman's status since 1924 by remembering that in 1966 a woman, Indira Nehru Gandhi, became India's prime minister.

Mrs. Moore emerges as a still more important figure. In her is centered what may be termed the "mystical" aspect of this novel—that aspect which makes it much more than a

propagandistic story about the problems of Anglo-India. She is an enigmatic character, and her significance has been the object of much critical discussion. Her sympathy with a wasp (and by implication with Hindu theology), has been indicated in the preceding chapters; here she shows the beginnings of her alienation from Christianity. She tells Ronny that "God is Love" and quotes to him the familiar passage from the New Testament (Corinthians 13) which emphasizes the importance of charity (love).

But the chapter ends with the statement that, although she thinks of God more as she grows older, Mrs. Moore has found Him less satisfying and more remote since she entered India. And, as will be seen later, her actions after the incident in the caves can by no means be termed "charitable."

Note the allusions to the weather, the sky, and the echo, which are recurring symbols throughout the novel. The weather has much to do with the temperament of both British and Indian in India. The sky, with its arches above and beyond it, relates the human condition to the infinite and indicates a quality of remoteness in the infinite. The echo, only casually mentioned here, becomes increasingly important in ensuing chapters in a mystical and highly complex manner.

Aziz, whom Forster chooses as the spokesman and principal representative of the Moslem faction in Chandrapore, is shown to be a man of excitable and changeable temperament. He is highly affectionate by nature and extends this affection to Indian and English alike when they exhibit traits of understanding and sincerity. This accounts for his quick acceptance of Mrs. Moore and Cyril Fielding. By the same token, he is quick to condemn both Indian and English for insincerity and lack of courtesy.

Some authorities see the name Aziz as symbolic: Aziz represents the range of human emotion from A to Z. He loves his children and makes great material sacrifices for them; and though the memory of his dead wife, with whom he had enjoyed an intellectual companionship, saddens him, he does not think of her often, and arranges to visit a brothel in Calcutta. His religion is important to him only for patriotic reasons, in relation to the past glories of Islam. He is tormented and delighted in turn by his ability, or inability, to relate adequately to other people.

An example of Aziz's acceptance of persons whose humanitarian instincts prompt them to disregard nationality and

creed is the affection he feels for Mrs. Moore following their encounter at the mosque. Later, when Cyril Fielding invites him to tea, even though Aziz had ignored an earlier invitation, the English professor is firmly established in Aziz's friendship. His tendency to act on impulse—as his heart, rather than his head, dictates—is indicated when he does not attend the Bridge Party; he had arranged to go with Dr. Panna Lai, but at the last minute was "seized with a revulsion" and decided to send a telegram to his children instead, since this was the anniversary of his wife's death.

Chapters 7-8

Fielding's tea party presents a contrast to the Bridge Party in that, without pretending to, it bridges the gap successfully. Present are English (Mrs. Moore, Adela, Fielding), Moslem (Aziz), and Hindu (Professor Godbole). There is mutual respect and tolerance, and the conversation is rewarding.

Several incidents and developments are noteworthy:

1. Aziz has a chance to reciprocate Fielding's friendliness. At a risk to his own dress (which Ronny Heaslop speaks of disparagingly later), Aziz removes his collar stud and gives it to Fielding, saying, out of courtesy, that it was in his pocket.

2. Adela mentions the Bhattacharya incident, which Fielding thinks is better forgotten. Perhaps the Bhattacharyas did not expect the Englishwomen to take the invitation seriously, or they became too worried about the visit to carry it through.

3. Professor Godbole is introduced by Forster as the enigmatic representative of Hinduism. He eats apart from the group, as becomes a Brahmin, but is included in the conversation. His quiet wisdom is contrasted with Aziz's quick judgments. One would do well to review the contrast between the two men. Note, in particular, their discussion of the Marabar Caves: Aziz tries to persuade Godbole to reveal concrete information about them, with the feeling that the Hindu is, probably unconsciously, concealing something—but he does not succeed.

It is important to notice Mrs. Moore's interest in Professor Godbole. She is quick to sense the wisdom he represents. The song that Godbole suddenly sings is especially important. In it he takes the role of a milkmaid and appeals to Krishna, who refuses to come to him alone, or to a multitude of his companions; in fact, Godbole—calmly says the god does not come in this or in any

other song, despite appeals. (See the discussion of Chapter 33 for the role of Krishna in Hindu theology.) This song is a factor in furthering the apathy of Mrs. Moore—an apathy the beginnings of which have already been indicated, and which becomes more prounounced after her visit to the caves.

4. Fielding, as host, is the broadminded man who embraces all ideologies, because, in a sense, he embraces none. He is the worldly man whose "understanding heart" judges only on the basis of the worth of the individual. He professes to being interested only in education. As such he poses a threat to the smug English community: as Fielding educates the Indians, he gives them a view of a better life. This is what the British Raj' cannot countenance. Forster emphasizes the point that only a people kept in ignorance can be kept in submission.

5. Under the influence of the social compatibility she shares with the Indians at Fielding's tea, Adela sees her place in the English Club circle as impossible and inadvertently states that she does not intend to remain in India.

6. When Ronny Heaslop appears, he sounds a discordant note and all the old animosity returns. Aziz becomes irritable and rude. Mrs. Moore is embarrassed, Adela is resentful, and Godbole retreats into silence, breaking it only to sing his song. On the way home from the tea the annoyance deepens; Ronny's chief concern seems to be that his mother and Adela have not behaved as the British in India should.

Forster indicates the influence of new locale on human behavior:

1. Ronny criticizes Aziz for what he calls the "fundamental slackness" of the race because Aziz, otherwise impeccably dressed, has apparently forgotten a collar button (the one which he gave to Fielding). On the other hand, when they are away from the Indians, he shows great tolerance and understanding when Adela tells him she cannot marry him.

2. Adela is disturbed because she acts so "British." She seems to feel that she should act differently now that she is in India.

3. Forster introduces the little green bird which neither of the young people can identify to remind them and the reader that in spite of their British attitudes, they are in an India which they do not really know and cannot understand, and India will continue to intrude.

4. Mrs. Moore shows further traits of her affinity with Hindusim when she abruptly withdraws from Adela and Ronny's quarrel. Remember how Godbole withdraws into himself at any mention of dissension.

Ronny and Adela are shown interacting in the incident of the quarrel and the subsequent ride, which ends in an accident. They are shown almost as half-characters who, although they are reasonably honest and reasonably fair, are coolly restrained and not capable of any depth of feeling or real involvement. The main difference between them is that Adela is more perceptive about herself and others, and basically therefore more honest with herself; Ronny, whose notions are those of the accepted group, seldom questions his motives.

Ronny and Adela's ride in Nawab Bahadur's car and the subsequent accident bring out several interesting points:

1. The uninspiring scenery seems to call out "Come, come" in vain, as in Godbole's song.

2. Ronny and Adela's engagement is brought about by the slight sensual thrill that they feel, showing once more the lack of depth in their affection.

3. Miss Derek is introduced as another quite different part of the English community in India. Ronny feels that her position in the household of a maharani is detrimental to English prestige.

4. Mr. Harris, the half-English, half-Indian chauffeur, expresses the despair of so many of his kind; he feels that he belongs to neither group.

5. Nawab Bahadur's condemnation of superstition following the accident is defensive rather than deeply felt; he secretly believes that the cause of the accident was the ghost of a drunken man whom he had run over and killed years earlier.

6. When Mrs. Moore, after being told of the incident, mentions a ghost, she exhibits once more her unconscious affinity with the Oriental mind.

Forster makes a facetious play on words as Ronny's servant Krishna (like the Krishna in Godbole's song) does not come, although Ronny storms angrily at him.

Chapters 9-11

When Aziz becomes mildly ill, he exaggerates his illness and

is visited by representatives of the many groups of Indians. This meeting gives Forster an opportunity to demonstrate subtle humor in conjunction with inter-racial tensions in India. Should the British depart, there would be no Indian unity. The Indians would lose their only bond—their common dislike for the English. Now, the Indians blame the English for their problems, rather than seeking understanding and agreement within their own ranks. In a sense, the British save the Indians from themselves. The widely differing opinions of the group around Aziz's bed show the dissension within the groups of Indians and their opinions of the causes.

Into this group comes Fielding. His blunt answers to the Indians' questions demonstrate the Englishman's highly valued virtue of honesty, which often seems impolite to the Indian mind. Recall earlier chapters where the Indian, as a courtesy, has gone to great lengths to give an answer that "saves face" for himself and embarrassment for his listener. This is part of the reason that the Indian will sometimes refrain from saying what he means; instead he will say what his listener wants to hear. In his viewpoint courtesy takes precedence over honesty.

Another reason for the vague answer with which the Indian skirts the truth is that, when the Indian admits something, he is often judged by the British on the basis of his race and is then penalized without further investigation. After a number of episodes such as this, the Indian becomes cautious and self-protective. This characteristic is not limited to the Indian. People who are dominated by a person, or a group, tend to be elusive to save some particle of independent thought or action.

For further contrasts in the Indian-English viewpoint, look to Aziz's thoughts on sex and his comments to Fielding. Aziz holds that it is wrong to offend God or a friend, but that there is no wrong deceiving society because society is not injured unless the wrong is discovered. Later, Aziz implies that having an illegitimate child to carry on one's name is preferable to having no children. In contrast, Fielding is content to let his name vanish.

Time, as pointed out previously, is not naturally important to the Indian. However, under the influence of Western thinking, the educated Indians realize that this lack of attention to time is one of their problems.

When Aziz's guests leave him they are conscious of the heat; even the thought of it is oppressive. Forster makes it plain that the

weather governs India. The hot weather of April saps man's strength and taxes his disposition; it is a period when tempers flare and troubles increase.

Fielding, who has been purposely detained by Aziz, is paid the highest compliment that an Indian can bestow upon an Englishman. He is shown a picture of Aziz's dead wife. This is equivalent to lifting the purdah and Aziz says that this is done only for a man whom he can call "brother." The mutual trust and affection that Aziz and Fielding feel for each other is the beginning of a strong friendship. Both have understanding hearts and educated minds, and each has some knowledge and appreciation of the other's cultural and social customs. This is a firm basis for friendship and only time and circumstance will tell if this is enough to withstand the differences that exist between them.

Through the eyes of Fielding, the individualist and the objective observer, the reader may see more clearly the emotional events into which the Indians and English will be plunged in Part 11. While Fielding is objective, he is also human and capable of error in judgment. Realizing this, the reader can more clearly understand what happens when a subjective, highly sensitive, and insecure person such as Aziz is faced with disaster.

Part II

Chapter 12

In the introductory chapter of Part II Forster describes the Marabar Caves. Though he describes them physically—their great geological age, their lack of shrines, their perfectly polished walls, their rough-hewn, manmade entrances—what remains in the mind is their sense of mystery, which Forster suggests but does not attempt to explain. There is "something unspeakable" in them; visitors come away with uncertain impressions; if the unopened caves were excavated, "nothing would be added to the sum of good or evil." Recall here Godbole's unwillingness to describe the caves in Chapter 7; the assumption there is that he understands their mystery, and they are thereby related to Hinduism.

It might be suggested that the caves symbolize in part the total negation of self, the complete rejection of the importance of all material things, which is the goal of the practice of Yoga; the sense of such negation and rejection would be terrifying to a totally unprepared person, especially to a Westerner reared in an individualistic environment. Yet even this interpretation is too simple; it will not bear the weight of all that the caves imply in the novel, the "something very old and very small . . . incapable of generosity" that dwells in them.

Chapters 13-16

Having set the stage in Part I, Forster leads the reader into the height of his drama in Part II.

Aziz, with his peculiar combination of Eastern and Western thinking, has impulsively invited the guests of Fielding's tea party to an excursion to the Marabar Caves. The irresponsible, courteous Eastern half of his mind made the invitation; the Western half is obliged to carry it out. His plans include a curious, almost ludicrous, mixture of Indian and English entertainment. He provides a "purdah" car on the train for Mrs. Moore and Adela and serves them an English breakfast. At great expense he provides an elephant ride from the train to the caves—the one thing to which all tourists are treated and which Adela and Mrs. Moore did not want. Mrs. Moore, with her usual innate understanding, assures Aziz that he is the perfect host.

There is an ironic note on the subject of time, for it is Fielding, the Englishman, who misses the train. However, Professor Godbole is the real culprit, for he has been too long at his prayers.

Although the trip is busy with human activity, there is a spiritual atmosphere enveloping the participants. Mrs. Moore and Adela are in a state of apathy dating from the tea party and Professor Godbole's song. The impression that this has made upon them keeps them from being excited about the visit to the mysterious caves. Adela confesses to herself that she cannot get excited over Aziz's arrangements because they will not "bite into her mind," and she resolves to spend the time planning her wedding.

Mrs. Moore feels detached from the reality of any human activity, reflecting that "though people are important, the relations between them are not." In her reflections she senses the necessity for an understanding between men, an understanding that has not progressed despite all centuries of human relationships.

Several phrases are dropped by Forster to keep the spiritual note predominant. There is a "spiritual silence" during the elephant ride: nothing is important; everything is elusive and illusionary. Aziz cannot answer questions about the caves because he knows nothing about them. He wishes for Professor Godbole, for the professor is a spiritual man, the man most likely to be able to explain a mystery.

There is an early portent of the catastrophe about to take place when Aziz allows extra time for misfortune, which he says often happens "among my people."

Mrs. Moore suffers a violent reaction to her experience in the first cave. The whole party surges in; the press of the crowd stiffles her; and the echo terrifies her. Whatever is said in the cave produces a meaningless "bourn" or "ou-boom." As she sits alone, everything—poor little talkative Christianity," people, the universe—becomes meaningless, and she surrenders herself to complete apathy.

Forster, who has related Mrs. Moore's receptivity to Hindu philosophy, does not make her adopt Hinduism. Though she senses the universality of all creation, she does not consciously subscribe to it; though she feels at one with the heavenly bodies and, at the other end of the continuum, takes delight in the lowly wasp, she cannot conceive of a religion that is adequate to teach such a concept, and this disheartens and frightens her.

When Adela, Aziz, and the guide, in accord with Mrs. Moore's request, continue the investigation of the caves by themselves,

Adela is pondering her marriage to Ronny. Her questions to Aziz about marriage are innocent attempts to find some answers to the dilemma of her engagement. She fails to see the agitation she engenders in Aziz when she asks him how many wives he has. Forster makes the point that Aziz is offended because he is proud of his Westernized thinking, which forbids polygamy. As Forster says, "it challenged a new conviction.... and new convictions are more sensitive than old."

This lack of understanding causes Aziz to leave Adela for a short time while he dashes into a cave to regain his composure. As Adela wanders aimlessly into another cave, pondering her feelings for Ronny, she precipitates a crisis that, for one thing, results in the resolution of her problem.

Because the caves are so much alike, Aziz is unable to locate the spot where he left Adela. When he sees her going down the hill he rationalizes away the peculiar circumstances of her hasty departure, such as the broken strap of her field glasses, which appear to have been unceremoniously dropped, and the disappearance of the guide. Fielding, with his logical English mind, is uneasy. Mrs. Moore remains unmoved.

By now the reader is aware of the many references which Forster makes to the differences in Oriental and Occidental thinking. As another example, note the contrast between the maxim which Aziz makes up to explain how frugality must give way to hospitality and the care of one's poor relatives, and the old, stuffy maxims upon which, Fielding says, "the British Empire rests."

The caves, which suggest infinity and menacing mystery when seen close-up, become "finite and rather romantic" seen from a comfortable distance.

Aziz reflects the Indian attitude toward the British Raj when he is arrested. He thinks of the disgrace to his name and his children, showing that in his opinion, being arrested is the same thing as being found guilty.

Chapters 17-24

Forster shows his attitude toward a nation that dominates another as he directs bitter satire toward the British Raj. Adela's supposed assault becomes an excuse for the British officials to exercise authority over their Indian subjects with Aziz as the "example." Feelings that have smoldered between the two

nationalities suddenly burst into flame. Forster shows the strength of mob psychology when emotions that have been held in check have something to feed upon.

Because Fielding always thinks first of the individual, and because he knows Aziz is incapable of the crime of which he is accused, he feels he must defend Aziz; his stand earns him the hatred of his countrymen. He tries to temper his defense of Aziz to Mr. Turton with courtesy, but the collector is crazed with emotion and cannot understand Fielding's lack of the "herd instinct," his failure to rally to the cause.

McBryde, the superintendent of police, is less emotional about the incident but comes to the same conclusion as the others. He has a theory that the climate makes the Indian criminal; he believes Aziz is guilty and refuses to accept any evidence to the contrary. He is upset by Fielding's defense of Aziz primarily for official reasons: if Fielding refuses to come into the English camp, he will weaken English rule, and McBryde says they can afford no "gaps."

Fielding wants to see Adela himself, because he believes she is being abetted in her accusation of Aziz by people whose only desire is to see him convicted. But he is not allowed this privilege.

Every scrap of evidence available is brought in against Aziz. A letter is found addressed to Aziz from a friend in Calcutta who is believed to keep a brothel. When Fielding objects to this, McBryde changes the subject. The later revelation that McBryde's wife is divorcing him for adultery reveals the irony in this conversation. The crowning insult to Aziz is the confiscation of his wife's picture, which he has kept hidden from all except those he calls "brother."

As the Indians begin to gather their forces, Fielding realizes just how much in the middle of things he is. While the English are coldly furious with him for standing by Aziz, the Indians frustrate him with their illogical thinking and their fear. Forster states that "fear is everywhere and the British Raj rests on it." As long as the Indians can be kept in fear and ignorance, British domination will remain intact. Fielding has been busy fighting ignorance by educating the Indian; now he sets about to give him courage. As a result of Fielding's talk with him, Hamidullah turns from obsequiousness to aggressiveness, to the unfortunate extreme of insisting on hiring a notoriously anti-British Hindu lawyer for Aziz's defense.

To understand in any measure the strange dialog between Fielding and Professor Godbole, the student must understand something of a central dogma of Hinduism. Essentially it is this: All the universe, animate and inanimate, is one perfect design or image. This image is seen perfectly only by a few holy men, or Brahmins, when the activity of the mind is brought to complete stillness by the practice of Yoga. After seeing this complete image of the universe, the mind once more returns to activity, but ever after the Brahmin sees everything as a part of the whole and every part is equal in the sight of the Divine Spirit, for every part is necessary to complete the divine image.

In a sense then, good and evil are both a part of the same thing and the people who perform good and evil acts are not only a part of the whole scheme, but also a part of each other. Likewise, cows, stones, mud, and wasps have a part in the whole design and are as sacred as any other part. This concept is hard for the Western mind to grasp, for to the Western mind only man is of God.

Chapter 20 is characterized with the greatest quantity of fine irony in the book. Adela Quested, who had been condemned as not belonging—not being "pukka"—suddenly becomes the "darling" of the English Club circle. The men become charged with chivalry and the women take her to their bosoms. Mrs. Blakiston, formerly ignored because her social standing is not equal with that of the wives of the British officials, is now the symbol of all that is good and pure which must be protected from the colored horde of India.

Collector Turton now finds himself in a quandary. He must keep a precarious balance between righteous indignation toward Aziz and a full-scale riot. It is not only that a riot might be difficult to control, but also that the lieutenant governor would most certainly look with disfavor upon it.

Fielding, who prides himself on maintaining a neutral position between the Indian and the English, is forced to make an open break with the British when he is provoked by accusations leveled at him by the subaltern. Though his "understanding heart" senses Ronny Heaslop's distress, he is made to appear discourteous and unfeeling to the city magistrate in maintaining that Aziz is innocent. After resigning from the club, Fielding goes to join his Indian allies. On the way he resolves to examine some of the cave incidents—the echo and the guide—further.

There is much activity in Chandrapore in preparation for the Moslem festival, Mohurram, a one-time sacred worship of Allah, which has degenerated into a hassle over the height of the floats in the parade. The festival also serves to heighten the emotional pitch brought on by the arrest of Aziz.

Godbole, whose training as a Brahmin has taught him to be detached and indifferent, refuses to be drawn into the controversy and leaves quietly for his new job in an outlying Hindu state.

Chapter 22 is essentially Adela's inner struggle. The reader should note especially the many references to the echo she keeps hearing, which disappears when she suddenly cries that Aziz is innocent. Ronny does his best to convince her that she is mistaken and confused, and that his mother's defense of Aziz is just as mistaken. Adela is an intensely honest person in an emotional crisis, and her inability to think logically of what actually did happen in the caves distresses and horrifies her.

Mrs. Moore, to whom Adela turns, repudiates her. Forster chooses specific expressions to show that Mrs. Moore withdraws from the situation, much as Godbole has done except that his withdrawal is peaceful. Mrs. Moore says that when she settles the marriages of her children she will "retire . . . into a cafe of [her] own." In another instance she remarks, "Oh, why can't I walk away and be gone?" Godbole has already gone.

Although Ronny fears that his mother will probably help Aziz if she remains in India, it is Mrs. Moore who decides to return to England before the trial. She sails for England as the guest of Lady Mellanby, wife of the lieutenant governor of the province. Ronny, always impressed with rank and station, basks in the glow of this unexpected honor.

As the omniscient author, Forster reveals Mrs. Moore's meditations. He shows her pondering immorality. She had come to India satisfied with her view of man and his relation with infinity. She played her game of "patience," secure in the traditions of her Christian belief. Her experiences in India, and particularly her experience in the cave, resulted in a change of attitude. The evil of the Marabar was for her "the undying worm" itself. This presumably has reference to Mark 9:44, "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." The subject is hell, for Mrs. Moore, the hell of meaninglessness.

It should be noted that the caves do not effect everyone

equally. Mrs. Moore reacts violently to her experience in the first cave; Adela does not react until she reaches the second one, and her reaction is different; and Aziz and Fielding seem unaffected.

In Chapter 24, Forster brings together many of the forces upon which he has been focusing his attention.

First there is the weather. Just as the trial brings emotions to fever pitch, the heat descends upon the city of Chandrapore.

The British officials turn out in force to convict Aziz; by his conviction they hope to get a tighter grip upon their Indian subjects.

The Indians, strengthened by the friendship of Fielding and a growing discontent, show an unusual spirit of rebellion. There are strikes, and some Moslem women have declared a fast until Aziz is free. Stones drop on, or near, the car of the collector. At the beginning of the trial, through the calculating wisdom of the Hindu lawyer, the English are humiliated by having to come down from the dais in the courtroom where they hoped to lend superiority to their position by being physically above the Indians.

In the midst of the political struggle, Adela, who has started the whole thing, is nearly forgotten. On the strength of her testimony against Aziz, the English expect to put down the "changing tide" in Chandrapore, and this is almost the extent of their regard for her.

Mrs. Moore, safely on her way to England, still lends the spiritual impetus that changes the complexion of the trial. Adela's buzzing echo, which becomes worse as the trial approaches, has kept her mind confused and wavering; but when she thinks of Mrs. Moore and hears the chant ("Esmiss, Esmoor") of the natives who have deified Mrs. Moore, she is suddenly able to remember the day in detail, in a sort of vision, and she exonerates Aziz.

The unexpected exoneration sets the courtroom in an uproar. As the English lose their grip, the women who have clasped Adela to them lash out at her in uncontrolled fury. (Forster sometimes tempers his criticism of the English officials with mercy—that of their wives, almost never.)

The strikingly handsome young outcaste who operates the fan is apparently a symbol of the gods' disregard of man. Men come, create a furor, and go, and he continues to fan the air.

Chapters 25-32

The trial that vindicates Aziz has some strange results, but an expected result is the mass hysteria of the natives of Chandrapore.

If Adela's honesty had freed a Caucasian, she would have been a heroine to him and his friends. The Indians, however, are unable to understand or appreciate the honest effort to be fair that prompted Adela to rescind her accusation; it is too cold and unemotional for them. Aziz not only does not feel gratitude toward her, but he violently resents having his name linked with hers on a sexual charge, because she is physically unattractive. Although technically he has been declared innocent, the stain on his character remains. He states that all he has left is the affection of his friends.

The English are furious because the outcome of the trial weakens their political superiority and their prestigious social position.

Fielding resents having to protect Adela from the rioting crowd. He has no feeling for her because his hardheaded approach to life made him doubt her veracity from the first.

When the first surge of the victory celebration breaks over Chandrapore, one senses the strength and the menace of the revolutionary spirit. Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali, usually quiet and thoughtful, suddenly turn against the English with loud and angry voices. One can almost see the guillotine fall on the necks of the Turtons and the McBrydes. This is India, however, and not France: Dr. Parma Lai, Aziz's unprincipled colleague, saves the riot from more disastrous results by playing the fool at the hospital; and finally the weather has the last word. The heat saps the strength from the momentary rebellion and it dies.

Nawab Bahadur, whose attitude has been one of appeasement, significantly changes his name back to Zulfiqar. Bahadur means "brave one." Perhaps the events of the trial make him feel that reconciliation between the nationalities is futile, and that the name bestowed upon him by the English no longer has meaning.

Chapter 26 deals with the interaction between Fielding and Adela, which is brought about by her enforced stay at his cottage. Adela's earnest attempt to analyze the situation at the cave and her complete honesty earn Fielding's grudging admiration. He thinks she has had a hallucination; she agrees that that may be true—or she may have been attacked by the guide who

disappeared, or by someone else; they will never know, and it no longer seems important.

Forster inserts a bit of comic irony as he has Hamidullah announce Ronny Heaslop's coming by saying, "He comes, he comes, he comes." Krishna will not come when Godbole calls, and He is God, but the English come unbidden. They come with their superiority, their blunt English manners, and their lack of understanding.

Fielding is particularly disappointed in Hamidullah. The barrister has been the most stable of the Indian gentlemen, but he is far from any kind of understanding. The trial, which should have proved that someone connected with the British officials could be fair, does nothing to soften the hearts of the Indians toward their rulers—though of course it is true that the entire affair was caused by Adela's mistaken accusation.

After the victory celebration dinner, Fielding and Aziz talk about the damages that Aziz feels Adela owes him. It is a curious exchange in that Aziz, through his confinement, has acquired a way of thinking that is in some ways hard, blunt, and very much Western. Yet when Fielding chides him on the disproportion of his emotional feelings for the two women—his strong affection for Mrs. Moore, who has done nothing for him, and his strong dislike of Adela, who has freed him at great cost to herself—Aziz objects to this unemotional common sense.

Forster comments on the difference in the Western and Eastern ideas of leisure and on the natural grace, the civilized "restfulness of gesture" of the Oriental—the social equivalent of Yoga."

Chapter 28 reveals three significant attitudes toward Mrs. Moore's death:

1. It is an inconvenience to Lady Mellanby; it spoils her homecoming.

2. In Chandrapore, the natives begin a short-lived "Esmiss-Esmoor" cult, and a legend grows up that Ronny has killed her for trying to save an Indian's life.

3. Ronny Heaslop at first feels guilty, but with his customary rationalizing, he manages to lay the blame for his mother's death on her, because she had "mix[ed] herself up with natives." He decides to forget the matter, planning a memorial tablet to her in her church in England.

Ronny is shown rapidly hardening into the pattern of the "twenty-year official." Having taken care of his mother, he turns his thoughts to Adela. He feels that she will be detrimental to his career, no doubt because she has shown that she can never be an adequate part of the British Raj, and he plans to break their engagement.

The lieutenant governor reinstates Fielding at the club and murmurs the usual glib clichés of the observer who is not personally involved in an affair.

For the second time Forster says that Adela gets "the worst of both worlds." She has gained the enmity of the English, but she has not earned the gratitude of the Indians. The Indians cannot understand the generosity of her honesty, so they mistrust her motives. She is not physically attractive, so she cannot gain their admiration. She, in turn, has no real affection for them and only waits in India for Ronny to make up his mind about her.

When the subject of the damage suit arises again, Fielding uses what he knows of Oriental thought to persuade Aziz to drop the charges. Having failed to arouse him to a feeling of sympathy for Adela, Fielding turns to Aziz's affection for Mrs. Moore. Her memory is the only key to any leniency that he may expect from Aziz, and Aziz cannot override it; he drops the suit.

Although Fielding uses the thought of immortality to help convince Aziz that Mrs. Moore would not want him to trouble Adela, he himself takes no stock in the afterlife. Adela agrees with him in principle. Their conversation occasionally approaches matters beyond their understanding—such as Adela's suggestion of. Mrs. Moore's telepathic knowledge - - but they both shy away from anything which their honest intellectuality cannot comprehend. However, they are vaguely aware of the immensity of what they avoid; and as they shake hands in parting, Forster records that they are as "dwarfs."

With the thought of England and her job, Adela returns to stability. She is really untouched by India, because without the "understanding heart" she cannot meet its demands.

The trial accomplishes nothing as far as the Anglo-Indian problem is concerned, except to deepen the ill-feeling between the races, but it does bring about at least a temporary and local tolerance between Moslem and Hindu. Aziz is invited by a Hindu (Mr. Bhattacharya, brother-in-law of Das, the magistrate at the

trial) to write a poem for a new Indian magazine for both Hindus and Moslems. However, despite his realization of the need for a unified India, he never writes the poem, but rather decides to leave British India.

When Hamidullah tells Aziz of the rumor of an affair between Fielding and Adela, Aziz is resentful at the thought that Fielding did not tell him of the affair; such an omission indicates a lack of trust and affection. (Later he assumes that Fielding talked him out of the damage suit because he intended to marry Adela, and, in effect, have the money himself.) When Aziz mentions the matter to Fielding, the latter in his surprise calls Aziz "a little rotter," much to the distress of both.

Later, as they strive to salvage the remnants of their friendship and are discussing poetry, Fielding makes an important observation about Hinduism. Though he is an atheist, he says that "there is something in religion that may not be true, but has not yet been sung.... something that the Hindus have perhaps found." Since this remark comes from Fielding it carries much weight.

When Fielding leaves India and sees the harmony between the works of man and nature in the Mediterranean countries, he is more conscious than ever of the disharmony, the muddle, of India; he has returned to the "human norm," to that which he understands well.

Part III

Chapters 33-37

The apparent confusion of the Hindu festival in the opening chapters is indicative of the disorder that characterizes India, but with a difference: there is harmony among the people, a harmony achieved through love and a momentary transcendence of self. "Talkative" Christianity coined the phrase "God is love". Hinduism practices it. Love exists and dominates the scene.

A brief discussion of some aspects of Hinduism here may be of some help to the reader in understanding at least the outward aspects of this festival.

In the Hindu religion, the eternal and infinite is usually called "Brahman" rather than "God"; the essential teaching of the religion is the oneness of all living things, all of which partake of Brahman; the ideal is the loss of the ego and of individuality—a concept not congenial, or even understandable, to most Westerners. It is a highly complex philosophy, and no attempt will be made to explain all of its ramifications here; those interested may read the pertinent books listed in the bibliography.

The importance of Krishna in the novel, however, may be somewhat clarified by a statement of his place in Hindu mythology, according to which there are three aspects of God: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. There have been nine chief incarnations of Vishnu, in which God is assumed to have taken human form. The most important of these are Rama and Krishna, and the latter is the more popular; his story, as Forster indicates, is in some respects similar to that of Christ (who in Christian theology, of course, is an incarnation of God the Father). Krishna, however, has amatory experiences, which the Hindus interpret symbolically; one of the legends concerning him (referred to several times in the novel) deals with his flirtation with the milk maidens and his affair with one of them (Rahda). It is the birth of Krishna that the festival is celebrating.

In the trancelike state brought on by Godbole's religious fervor, the thought of Mrs. Moore enters his mind, followed by that of a wasp. This would seem to be an indication that her sympathy with the tenets of Hinduism was recognized, perhaps intuitively, by Godbole.

Aziz, through Godbole's influence, has become the attending

physician to the rajah of the state of Mau. He has found peace and contentment among the Hindus. The secret of his peace among them is due to one thing—tolerance. He does not understand their religion and does not attempt to do so, but continues to write his poems, into which Islam continues to intrude. The one remnant of Islam in the Hindu state is a decaying shrine about which Aziz's children play.

Into this Hindu state comes Fielding with his bride and her brother. At first Aziz has no desire to see Fielding, believing him to have married Adela Quested; he feels that she would be a disrupting influence, bringing ugliness and trouble. When he learns that Stella Moore is Fielding's wife, he is torn between embarrassment and happiness, for the memory of Mrs. Moore is still a tender one.

Floods attend Fielding's arrival. The hot weather broken, men's spirits revive, and the promise of life is renewed. This is first symbolized by the birth of the god. The festival continues after the initial ceremony and everyone is caught up in it. Forster makes a point of the precedence of religious matters over the affairs of state.

Contrast to this the attitude of Ronny Heaslop and the British in general; for them, political matters always predominate and religion is subservient.

Forster also points up the difference that Mrs. Moore noted earlier between the wisdom of Godbole and the simpler mind of Aziz, who felt "like a baby" in Godbole's presence.

Two things are significant in the incident of the bee stings. One authority says that the bees are significant of the hostility of India to interracial relationships. This, coupled with Mrs. Moore's appreciation for the wasp, would confirm Aziz's opinion that she has an Oriental mind and therefore is one of them. Another facet of the bee-sting episode is that when Aziz treats Ralph, Ralph tells him that his "hands are unkind." He has sensed that Aziz's rough treatment has an emotional source; it is retaliation for the unkindness with which Nureddin, grandson of Nawab Bahadur, was rumored to have been treated by Major Callendar, and also retaliation for Aziz's general mistreatment by the English.

But when Ralph shows signs of his mother's understanding, Aziz typically warms to him. Forster stresses many times that what India needs most is kindness, and Ralph tells Aziz that

kindness is the one thing he "always knows." In return for this confidence, Aziz classes Ralph with Mrs. Moore, calling him an Oriental.

The collision of the boats, one carrying Aziz and Ralph, the other Stella and Fielding, with the holy tray borne by the servitor, serves again to emphasize the "muddle" of India; it is not a dignified climax to the ceremony, but the Hindus are not unduly disturbed by it, nor by the downpour which follows. It also serves to ease the tension between Fielding and Aziz.

One of the most significant points in Part III is Fielding's reaction to Hinduism. By marrying an English girl Fielding travels less light (he has earlier contended that he "travels light"). He has aligned himself with the British Raj. However, he is intrigued by the effect of Hinduism on his marriage—his relationship with Stella is better here than it had been previously—and for the first time he seems consciously aware of, and interested in, matters beyond his comprehension. This interest in the spiritual is an important admission by Fielding, but Aziz is not interested in his questions, for he has no such interest himself.

One of Forster's conceptions is that of the cyclical nature of life. With the acquaintance of Ralph, Aziz sees everything "beginning all over again." The expanding symbol, the ever-widening circle, seems to be operating at the end of this book.

Aziz makes a portentous statement about future generations driving the English out of India. The concept of universal love and understanding that India—and all the world—needs, Forster leaves to another circle of time. This is symbolized by the rocks that force Fielding and Aziz apart and by the sky that speaks for all the discordant voices which come to it from India.

Character Analysis

Doctor Aziz

Aziz is a warmhearted, passionate, excitable people whose quick changes of mood lift him to heights of exuberance and cast him into the depths of despair within an exceedingly short space of time. He is high-spirited, fun-loving, and hospitable to an exaggerated degree. When he is found in error, he is tremendously sensitive.

His feelings are genuine, however, and his loyalty to his friends is unquestioned. His response to Mrs. Moore is one of quick affection that remains constant even after her death. Although he refuses to read Fielding's letters, his deep sense of betrayal is caused by his great love, which he feels has been offended. Aziz's quick response to Mrs. Moore and Fielding is a part of the secret of the "understanding heart" which Forster emphasizes as the key to understanding among men. Aziz's name embodies the "beginning" and the "end" (A to Z) of human frailties, but he makes no mistake about the people who have the ability to judge on the basis of individual worth.

Aziz is a skilled surgeon and a well-educated, intelligent doctor, but the science of medicine is not a matter of deep concern to him and he gives it up quite readily to live and practice in a more primitive way in a remote Hindu state. Here he is free to write his poetry extolling the past glories of Islam and pleading for the freedom of women. His poetry exemplifies his quandary. He is a man at the crossroads. One way leads to Western civilization, which would abolish the purdah and establish sanitary practices; the other would retain Eastern customs, traditions, and the primitive practices of the medicine man. Like Janus, Aziz has two faces; one faces back toward the India of the past, the other turns toward the West, the civilizing force of which can help conditions in India. Whoever deals with Aziz can never be sure which face he is presenting. Aziz is partly influenced against Western thought by the high-handed ways of the English, who do not make the Western way of life attractive.

Mrs. Moore

Mrs. Moore, endowed by nature with an understanding heart, is steeped in Christian tradition. Apparently it has served her well in England. In India, where the problems are more complex, she finds it inadequate. And although her innate sympathy with many of the tenets of Hinduism is indicated—her appreciation of all of

God's creation, for example—that religion is also inadequate for her: While Professor Godbole withdraws peacefully into himself from human turmoil, Mrs. Moore's own withdrawal is far from peaceful. Therefore she may be somewhat disappointing to the reader; she brings to India everything that is needed—kindness and the "understanding heart"—but she turns morose and peevish. She refuses to become involved in helping Adela or Aziz in their time of need. She has, however, imparted her understanding nature to her younger children and has left an indelible mark upon Aziz; and, at the trial, it is her chanted name that helps to clarify Adela's mind.

Adela Quested

Adela Quested's name may not have significance, but it suggests the "Questioner." This is the role, at any rate, that Forster assigns to her.

She is presented as a plain young woman whose best qualities are her innate honesty and a kind of courageous decency. Her approach to life is completely intellectual. She is sensible, but not sensitive. She serves as an antithesis to Mrs. Moore, who is ruled by emotional intuition. This difference in personality affects their understanding of each other, and of others.

Adela's passionless disposition makes her unfit for marriage and her frank objectivity helps her to realize it. It is this guileless attitude that wins Fielding's grudging admiration.

Her response to India is one of reason, but since India, with its highly complex problems, cannot be approached through the intellect alone, Adela can never comprehend it. However, she is appalled at the smug and snobbish ways of the British in India.

The reader may find himself sympathetic with Adela and at the same time smile agreement with Aziz at his unkind, but comic, remarks about her; her cold honesty is admirable but not endearing.

Her lack of sensitivity is pointed up when Fielding has to suggest that perhaps she should apologize to Aziz. She is willing to make amends, but she does not have the compassion to do it without being told. Her remorse is of the head, not the heart; her primary feeling is one of guilt for having been the cause of so much trouble to everyone.

Cyril Fielding

Cyril Fielding is a man of the world. He has not only

associated with many people, but he has learned to judge them on the basis of merit alone. He is intellectual, kind, and committed to helping anyone in need. The injustice manifested toward Aziz in this novel has nothing to do with color or creed as far as Fielding is concerned; it is rather a matter of the violation of a man's rights. Fielding does not defend Aziz because he is an Indian; he defends him because he is innocent. Fielding is Forster's "top man" to demonstrate the kind of understanding that the world needs. He is dwarfed, as Forster puts it, only because he is committed to earthbound affairs.

At the end of the story he is shown aligning himself with the English by marrying an English girl. This separates him from Aziz, but at the same time he establishes a direct relationship with Mrs. Moore by marrying her daughter. Although Stella is a shadowy figure, Hinduism impresses her, and this awakens an interest in Fielding. He feels that contact with Hinduism has somehow improved his marriage and he admits that perhaps the Hindus have found "something."

Forster leaves the reader to speculate about what might happen if Fielding should become interested in the spiritual side of life. Adela is said to get the worst of both worlds; Fielding, endowed as he is with natural graces, could very well find the best of both worlds. With a combination of human and spiritual understanding, Fielding would certainly be the man "most likely to succeed" in promoting world understanding.

Ronny Heaslop

Ronny Heaslop is pictured as the "rubber-stamp" product of the Public School crowd for whom Forster had so much contempt. He is the typical follower, influenced by power, prestige, and a set pattern of behavior. These traits make it easy for him to be led into the Turton-Callendar-McBryde camp, for they represent to Ronny the peak of social and political prestige.

As a disciple of the Public School tradition, Ronny is the epitome of the class-conscious Englishman. He does not judge on the basis of merit, but rather by position on the social ladder. As a result of his training, he cannot countenance, or understand, anyone who questions these standards. This is why Adela is unsuitable for him and why he cannot be reached by his mother's arguments.

Ronny is the issue of Mrs. Moore's first marriage. It is possible that, when he was young, she had not reached the level of

maturity and perception that would have influenced his life as it seems to have affected the lives of her younger children.

Professor Godbole

Professor Godbole, "Ancient Night," represents Hinduism in the novel. Although Hinduism does not appear to dominate the book until the final section, a backward look will show the effect of it in the other two sections. It is the professor's haunting song that affects both Adela and Mrs. Moore; in a sense it haunts them as Hinduism haunts every part of the book.

Forster records, "Ever since Professor Godbole had sung his queer little song, they [Mrs. Moore and Adele had lived more or less inside cocoons." The idea expressed by the cocoon is that of a dormant life soon to be awakened to full beauty. Ironically, however, they both awaken to experiences that are far from beautiful—Mrs. Moore to terror that leads to total apathy, and Adele to the horror of her experience in the cave, and the trial.

Although Forster seems to hold Godbole, and Hinduism, in esteem, it should be realized that he is not advocating Hinduism as a panacea for all evils, even though he admires some of its tenets and practices; Forster is not a "preacher." The thinking reader will realize that Hinduism, too, has its less appealing aspects—at least to the Western mind, with its respect for the value of the individual—such as the caste system (outlawed in 1950). He will also realize that Godbole cannot be effective in promoting universal understanding so long as he holds himself aloof from the mainstream of life; it will be people like Fielding who will do more to break down racial prejudice and national barriers. Yet a world composed only of Fieldings would be an unbalanced one; Forster undoubtedly respects various human qualities on various levels. He is too complex a writer to suggest one simple answer for the world's ills.

Names seem to have significance in this book. The name Godbole may symbolize something because it contains the word "God," as the man seems to contain God. At least he is God-conscious.

Hamidullah

Hamidullah is a Cambridge-educated Indian whose experience with the English includes the kindly friends in whose home he stayed when a student in England twenty year's previous to the time of the story. He tries to reconcile his Indian friends to a more charitable attitude toward the English officials in Chandrapore. He

is fair-minded and willing to work for amiable relations between nationalities until his nephew Aziz is falsely accused and unfairly treated by the English.

A closer look at the efforts of Hamidullah shows the student how the English muff a chance to use this good, clear-thinking, intelligent man to improve the situation in Chandrapore. Hamidullah's disillusionment is evident when his usual affability turns to bitterness after Aziz's trial.

The Turtons

Mr. Turton is the government and social leader of the English sector of Chandrapore. Under a pretext of good fellowship, he brings the newcomers into contact with the Indians. His high-handed and jocular manner puts the Indian where Mr. Turton wants him—in a class below the English. His is the lead that Ronny Heaslop imitates, Fielding refuses to tolerate, and Adela Quested cannot understand.

Mrs. Turton is even haughtier than her husband. She relegates all Indians to the servant class. She intends to preserve as much of England in Chandrapore as possible and to allow as little encroachment of India into her society as she can. She is bitterly hostile to Adela after the exoneration of Aziz, not because she necessarily believes him guilty, or really cares what becomes of Adela, but simply because she thinks the English have been betrayed.

The other English officials fairly well follow the pattern set by the Turtons. McBryde is somewhat more broad-minded and less conventional than the others, but in the final analysis his attitude is the same as theirs: the Indians are inferior.

The Missionaries

Mr. Sorley and Mr. Graysford have one goal in mind, to convert the Indians to Christianity. Their aim is benevolent; their motives are pure. However, one can only be converted to something that seems to him better than that which he already has. The missionaries cannot quite agree that God loves all his creation equally, and the Hindu cannot accept a religion that does less than that.

Critical Analysis

General Meaning

The question that the Indians discuss in Chapter 2 --"Is it possible for the Indians to be friends with the English?"—is the focal point of the plot of A Passage to India. Can East meet West on a plane where each not only tolerates but also appreciates the other? In a larger sense Forster asks if universal understanding is possible. (It should be pointed out that this novel does not really suggest an affirmative answer to that question.) He then proceeds to introduce characters from the major factions in India and to show their interactions.

As he traces the interplay, he keeps before the reader symbols that show forces above and beyond the reach of most men's grasp. The sky and a hint of arches beyond it are prominent examples. To show that not only are there heights which only the most perceptive minds can comprehend, but also depths, he shows especially sensitive people finding beauty—and God—in the lowest of creatures, the jackal and the wasp. Within this framework he treats of three of the great religions, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

Islam is shown in a decadent state reveling in past glory. The Westernized Moslem finds it hard to maintain his belief. His festivals are empty ceremonies in which the participants bicker about inconsequential matters. Aziz, whom Forster chooses to represent Islam, professes to skepticism about the precepts of his religion; his poetry is devoted to flamboyant exploits of the past. All he appears to have left is a sadness because of the decline of Islam, and a contempt for the Hindus.

The phrase that Mrs. Moore uses to describe Christianity, "little talkative Christianity," seems to be Forster's view of that religion. He chooses to use many biblical allusions, often in an ironic manner, which point up what Christianity professes, but does not practice. The religion of the English in India takes second place to affairs of state and does not enter into the practical aspect of their lives; it is merely a conviction.

The events of the story lead the reader step by step to a consideration of Hinduism. Professor Godbole, its main exponent, is pictured as a man of peace, a man of wisdom, who refuses to become enmeshed in the petty quarrels of men. The short climactic section at the end of the novel shows Hinduism in

action. The religious zeal of the participants in the festival causes them at least to suspend momentarily, if not to disregard entirely, any self-seeking for position as leader, even though the rajah is near death. The adoration of the god is so intense that when the sick and aged rajah is brought to the ceremony, he is scarcely noticed.

The ceremony includes ecstasy, merriment, and solemnity, suggesting that religion should embody the whole of life. The biblical passage "God is love" has an error in spelling, but none in practice. The Hindus' faces are mild and serene, because "religion is a living force to the Hindus," and among its tenets, one of the most important is the "peace that passeth understanding." But Hinduism too has its imperfections; Forster points out that in Mau, though there is no strife between Moslem and Hindu, there is between Brahmin and non-Brahmin.

The key phrases in regard to the characters are "the understanding heart." Aziz, warmhearted and impulsive, possesses understanding, but his volatility reduces its effectiveness; Adela is cold, honest, and reserved. Mrs. Moore has both kindness and an innate understanding of people at the beginning of the novel, but the kindness at least does not withstand her experience in the caves, and understanding without kindness is of no use to her.

Fielding is the key figure who develops with the novel. He not only crosses racial and national lines, but he responds as though they did not exist. He professes atheism, but by the end of the novel he has at least become personally aware of spiritual influences: puzzled by the pleasing change in his wife after the encounter with Hinduism, he is intrigued by whatever it is that the Hindus seem "to have found."

Professor Godbole is not so much a character as a "carrier" for an ideology that suggests at least a theoretical answer to the question Forster poses at the beginning of the book, "Can the Indian be friends with the English?"

There is a historical aspect to this novel as well as a religious one. Forster's premise seems to be that no nation can subjugate another without inflicting wounds that leave deep scars. No nation can be of service so long as the ruling nation holds itself superior and aloof. The book is not a strictly historical account, of course, because Forster is more concerned with social relationships than he is with history. But he does indicate the spirit of rebellion that

is beginning to build in India and shows the English losing their grip on the government. The last few paragraphs of the novel seem almost prophetic of Indian independence, which did not take place until 22 years after the book's publication.

Nature in a Passage to India

This novel does more than stress the malignant effect of moral and political domination; it also emphasizes the coexistence of nature with human struggle. Someone has noted that Forster knew and appreciated many of the beauties of India's landscape, but this is not the novel that depicts them. The mud, the dun-colored sky, the buzzing flies, the evil caves, the floods, and the merciless heat constitute for Forster the setting about Chandrapore. It is a place of cheerless plains and "lumpy" hills which contain the "fists and fingers" of the Marabar. "Nothing fits," and man's creations are completely out of harmony with nature.

It is quite evident that Forster intentionally chooses a most unlovely part of India to show the disharmony among the people who inhabit it. He explores the extremes of benevolence and malevolence and uses nature to help with both. For example, the beauty of the moon illuminates the lovely friendship of Mrs. Moore and Aziz; the pale sun against an "insipid sky" forecasts the evil of the cave incident. The wasp enhances Mrs. Moore's and Professor Godbole's concept of God's love for His creation. The bee stings bring Ralph and Aziz together, but the rocks force Fielding and Aziz apart. This influence of nature on human affairs is in line with Hindu philosophy.

Mysticism

Much has been written about mysticism in Forster's novels, primarily in A Passage to India. It is not, however, mysticism per se with which Forster is here concerned, but rather the mysticism of Hinduism. Any understanding of the mystic element in this novel requires some knowledge of the religion on the part of the reader. (See the short paragraph at the beginning of the commentary on Part III, the "Temple" section.)

But even such knowledge will not bring complete or immediate understanding, for Forster is not attempting to explain Hinduism, or to proselytize for it; his method of dealing with it is, in the main, allusive rather than expository.

The novel is full of unanswered questions: "Mrs. Moore felt increasingly (vision or nightmare?) that, though people are important, the relations between them are not." "God si love. Is

this the first message of India?" The reader can find many others for himself; since Forster himself does not pretend to answer them, it would be presumptuous to do so here. In fact, part of the essence of mysticism is its inexpressibility; it cannot be reduced to words, to questions with answers.

However, the reader should at least be aware of those elements that have mystical overtones—primarily the character of Mrs. Moore, the echo and its effect on her, and many of the aspects of Hinduism.

Structure

A Passage to India falls naturally into three parts. The first is dominated by the educated Moslem gentlemen, with Aziz as the most prominent. It reveals the division of Chandrapore into two factions, the English and the Indians. It shows how each feels toward the other with a kind of uneasiness apparent in the differences between them. It is the period before the hot weather and on the surface, benign.

The Caves section plunges the groups into the hot weather. The cave incident that involves Aziz and Adela in a trial reveals the hatred that has lain below the surface in both groups. Evil and ugliness prevail and violence erupts briefly and then subsides, subservient to the oppressive heat.

Warily, in this section, Forster begins to sound the temple bells, and the voice of Hinduism becomes more and more prevalent.

The trial scatters the main participants in many directions. Mrs. Moore dies en route to England; Adela returns to England after her broken engagement; Fielding is promoted to a new position that involves travel; and Aziz and Godbole retire to the Hindu state of Mau, which is the setting for the final section of the novel.

The Temple section regroups three of the main characters, and, as the title suggests, brings Hinduism into the spotlight. Fielding, traveling less "light" than usual, is reunited with Aziz, but Fielding's marriage makes complete reconciliation impossible. The rainy season predominates and seems to give new life and to renew the life cycle.

Although some critics seem to believe that Forster ends the novel on a pessimistic note, the prevalence of Hinduism and its beneficent effect on Fielding somewhat denies the charge.

E. K. Brown discusses the rhythm in the book, saying that there is a rise-fall-rise pattern indicated in the events of the three parts of the book: in the first part, good; in the second, evil; and in the third, good again.

Godbole's song runs as a haunting melody through the part of the book that follows the tea party, popping up unexpectedly to produce strange effects. It finally comes to full fruition at the celebration of the birth of the god Krishna.

Techniques

Forster's narrative style is straightforward; events follow one another in logical order. Structurally, his sentence style also is relatively uncomplicated, and he reproduces accurately the tones of human conversation; his handling of the idiom of the English-speaking Indian is especially remarkable.

However, Forster's rhetorical style is far from unsubtle. His descriptions of the landscape, however unattractive it may be, frequently have a poetic rhythm. He makes lavish use of both satire and irony, and the satire is especially biting in his treatment of the English colonials, particularly in the events before the trial in the "Caves" section. But he is also capable of gentle humor, notably in his depiction of the high-spirited and volatile Aziz.

As has been noted earlier, there are numerous themes and symbols—such as the wasp, the echo, the "Come come" of Godbole's song—which recur throughout the novel; these are not introduced in an obvious fashion, and it is not until the end of the book that their full significance is apparent.

Some of the statements in the book are in the form of questions to which answers are obvious; but for many of them no answers are suggested or even implied—an indication of the philosophical nature of the novel. Forster is not the man with all the answers, and perhaps he is implying that he himself is not certain whether life is (in the terms he frequently uses) "mystery or muddle"—or both.

Glossary

Chapter1

maidan — In southern and western Asia, an open space as for military exercises or for a marketplace; an esplanade.

Chapter 2

hookah — A pipe with a long flexible stem, so arranged that the smoke is cooled by passing through water.

sais — A groom.

purdah — A curtain or screen used to screen women from public observation. This custom prevents women from participating in social and public affairs.

chuprassi — A messenger or servant wearing an official badge.

pan — The betel leaf; also the chewing of it.

tonga — A kind of light two-wheeled vehicle, usually for four persons, drawn by ponies or bullocks.

Huzoor — A respectful title of address used by native servants.

Chapter 3

sahib — The title used by natives when addressing or speaking of a European gentleman; a general title affixed to the name or official title of a European, e.g., Colonel Sahib.

burra — A title of respect to designate a father, elder brother, or a chief officer.

Hakim — In Moslem countries, a ruler or a judge.

pukka — Good or thoroughgoing of its kind; genuine, substantial.

topi — A pith hat or helmet, generally worn by Europeans in India.

Chapter 5

Mohurram Moslem religious festival, celebrated only by Indian Moslems, which commemorates the death of the grandson of Mohammed. It is similar to the Hindu Ganesh festival in which a clay figure of the elephant god is immersed in water when the worship is completed. In Mohurram, a replica of Iman Hussein's tomb, or "tazia," is erected of bamboo and decorated with paper. At the completion of the ten days of mourning and prayer, the tazia is buried in sand near a riverbank.

bhang A narcotic and intoxicant made of dried leaves and young twigs of the hemp plant; used for chewing, smoking, or drinking (when infused in water).

gram Certain leguminous plants grown especially for their seed.

Chapter 6

tum-tum A dog cart.

chukker A period of play in polo.

Chapter 7

babuism A disparaging term applied to the English written or spoken by natives of India. Derived from babu, a Hindu title which corresponds to our "Mr."

hammam A building or room designed for bathing, either public or private.

Chapter 9

saddhu A Hindu ascetic or holy man.

Chapter 11

chunam Plaster or stucco made from lime and sea-sand.

Chapter 13

tiffin Lunch.

fez A tapering felt cap, usually red, with a

	black tassel hanging from the crown (formerly worn by Turkish men).
pujah	Religious worship.
Chapter 14	
mullah	In India, a ravine or a watercourse. howdah A canopied seat on the back of an elephant for two or more persons to ride in.
shikar	Hunting.
Chapter 16	
chin-chin	A salutation; a toast (pidgin English).
Chapter 17	
punkah	A large fan made from the palmyra leaf, or a large, swinging fan consisting of canvas stretched over a rectangular frame and hung from the ceiling.
Chapter 20	
quod	Prison (slang).
Chapter 21	
tazia	See Mohurrarn (Chapter 5).
Chapter 22	
mali	Member of the gardner caste.
Chapter 24	
chota hazri	Breakfast.
peg	An alcoholic drink, usually brandy and soda.
punkah wallah	The operator of a punkah, usually a coolie or person of a low caste.
Andamans	Group of islands in the Bay of Bengal; formerly the site of a prison.
Chapter 25	
victoria	A low, four-wheeled carriage for two passengers with a folding top and a high seat in front for the coachman.
tatties	A fragrant grass mat which is kept wet

and hung at doors and windows of a house to cool the house during the hot weather.

Chapter 26

band-ghari A four-wheeler.

Chapter 31

almeira A wooden wardrobe.

durry A thick cotton cloth or carpet.

Chapter 33

Turkuram A Maratha poet.

ryot A peasant or tenant farmer.

Chapter 34

bhakti Religious devotion; love directed toward a personal deity.

Chapter 36

Chhatri A funerary monument; a chapel built over a tomb.

Ganpati Elephant god.

Questions and Essay Topics

1. Compare the attitude toward the natives of (1) Mrs. Moore; (2) Fielding; (3) Ronny.
2. Describe some of the barriers to understanding between the British civil servant and the natives.
3. Give instances of insensitive and uncivil treatment of the Indians by the English.
4. Discuss Oriental womanhood as shown in the novel.
5. In what specific ways does Mrs. Moore make herself agreeable to Aziz?
6. What is the effect of the exoneration of Aziz upon (1) Mr. and Mrs. Turton; (2) Ronny; (3) Fielding; (4) Aziz?
7. Give instances of satire in the novel.
8. What is the basis of the friendship between Fielding and Aziz? Between Fielding and Adela?
9. Does Cyril Fielding change in the course of the novel? Why, and in what ways?
10. Why does Mrs. Moore allow Ronny to send her back to England?
11. What is the effect of Professor Godbole's song upon Adela and Mrs. Moore?
12. What keeps the "Bridge Party" from being a success?
13. Why do the Hindus not respond favorably to the missionaries?
14. How does the Hindu religious festival of the Temple section differ from the Mohurram festival?
15. In what way does Adela get the "worst of both worlds"?
16. Why is reconciliation difficult for Fielding and Aziz at the end of the book?
17. What portentous statement does Aziz make to Fielding on their last ride together about the future generations of Indians?
18. What similarities do you see between Hinduism and Christianity as presented in this book? What differences?
19. What is the significance of the friendship between Aziz and Ralph?

20. Why does Fielding not reprimand Godbole for neglecting the government school?

21. Explore the use of any one of these symbols in detail, or all of them briefly: the echo, the sky, the wasp.

22. Adela may be said to approach life intellectually, Mrs. Moore emotionally, and Aziz impulsively. Compare and contrast these characteristics in any given situation.

23. Select a protagonist and defend your choice.

24. Take the scene of the "Bridge Party" and describe what might have brought the groups together.

25. What is the significance of the magnificent native who operated the fan in the court scene? Discuss his relation with the participants.

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Islam and Hinduism

Unless the reader is interested in a detailed study of these religions, these two books present a capsulated description of them:

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Fairchild, Johnson E. (ed.). *Basic Beliefs.* New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1959.